



ASCOT VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL HEAD LICE POLICY

Reviewed and updated September 2014. Passed by SC 15th September 2014

Rationale:

Head Lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

It is not advocated that the Principal team inform the whole school community each time head lice is detected. This could be onerous and may lead to complacency on behalf of the school community. The Department of Health Head Lice Management Guidelines indicate that most schools will have students with head lice at any one time.

With this in mind, a school could theoretically alert the whole school community every day of the school year, which could in turn create a perception of a pseudo-outbreak of a school being riddled with head lice. Principals should therefore use discretion if wishing to alert the school community about the infestation of head lice.

DEECD states "Each school is expected to develop a school based policy on head lice which reinforces an accurate, consistent approach to the management of head lice infections. The policy must be approved by the school council."

AVPS School Council have historically not agreed to and subsequently organised Head lice Inspections at school.

Managing Head Lice at AVPS/ what staff will do at school :

- Have a commitment to distribute up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians and staff at the beginning of every year and more frequently if required (available from website <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>)
- Full details about informing the community/ alert notices can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/alert.aspx> We will follow this advice and consult with the community as needed
- ***When students are deemed to have live head lice, they are to be excluded from school until no live head lice are present. Parents/ guardians will be contacted immediately to collect their child. Upon returning to school, parents/ guardians are to indicate the treatment used and when it commenced***
- Have a commitment to help reduce stigma and maintain confidentiality following students who have been found to have live head lice
- ***Require that parents/guardians refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. (It should be noted that students may be treated one evening and return to school the next day and that the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for***

exclusion. Parents/guardians need to be aware that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem. If a student re-attends school with live head lice the school may again exclude the student until the live insects have been removed.)

- the parents/guardians of those students found to have live head lice will be contacted immediately, asking parents/guardians to indicate the treatment used and when it commenced
- the Assistant Principal will be the head lice resource/support person (staff member) who parents/guardians can contact at the school at nominated times

Advice to families / what you can do at home:

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method
- That your child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001)
- Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary
- Parents/Carers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2001) – please complete an action taken form upon returning to school <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/actiontaken.aspx>
- Children with long hair will attend school with hair tied back
- Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice
- Notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice

This policy is to be reviewed every three years. Next review is due September 2017

- Reference: DEECD Head lice Management <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/headlice.aspx>
- DEECD Alert notice example (21 translated languages) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/alert.aspx>
- DEECD Action taken form (21 translated languages) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/actiontaken.aspx>
- Further DEECD resources
 - a) For schools - More information about head lice management for schools and Departmental staff can be found by referring to [Circular 017/2005 Head Lice Management](#) (secure site, edumail password).
 - b) For schools and parents - The Department of Health (DH) website provides useful resources for schools and parents regarding head lice. Information found in the Scratching for Answers information kits, including the *Treating and Controlling Head Lice* pamphlet can be obtained from the DH website [Head Lice](#).