

Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD

School Health Services

FACTS about Head Lice (Pediculosis)

- **The most common means of transmission is through physical/direct (head to head) contact.**
- Indirect transmission is uncommon but may occur via *shared* combs, hats, brushes or hair accessories that have been in contact with an infested person.
- Schools are **not** a common source of transmission.
- Lice cannot hop, jump or fly.
- You can't spread nits...only live lice.
- Head lice do not spread disease.
- Any child can get head lice. It doesn't matter where they live or go to school; boy or girl, black, white or brown. It doesn't mean the child is sick or unclean. It certainly doesn't mean they have bad parents.
- Children get head lice almost as much as the common cold. Millions get it at least once a year.

MANAGING PRESUMED HEADLICE

- Send for inspection by school nurse or other trained individual
- If live (crawling) lice are found on the hair, the parent/guardian shall be notified and the student will be sent home. The parent will be provided with information on head lice, the methods to eliminate infestation, and directions to examine other household contacts for lice and nits via phone, email, and/or note sent home with student. (Siblings in the same school will also be checked.)
- The nurse will re-inspect hair the following school day for the presence of live lice.
- If nits are found and no live lice, the nurse may re-inspect in 7-10 days.

UNJUSTIFIED RESPONSES TO LIVE LICE IN SCHOOL

- Exclusion or quarantine
- Notification of classmates parents unless 20% of a classroom is involved.
- Classroom or school wide screenings unless more than 20% involvement
- Insecticide treatments to the school environment
- Bagging of clothes, toys, etc. in the school environment
- Vacuuming; boiling linens; laundering all linens in the school environment
- Restricting use of headphones, equipment (helmets) at school
- Reporting to CPS in absence of other indicators

WHAT STAFF NEED TO KNOW IN RESPONSE

- Creating unnecessary panic in the school community is a disservice to students.
- We need to educate students, families, and ourselves based on fact and not fear.
- Don't let head lice interfere with students' opportunities to learn and achieve in the classroom. Missing school puts a child at risk for failure.

Sources-

Harvard School of Public Health <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), "Head Lice," published in the August print issue of *Pediatrics* (published online 7/26/2010)