

## Regarding Head Lice - Information for Parents

### WHAT ARE LICE?

Lice are small gray-white insects approximately 1/16 to 1/8 inches long. Head lice (the most common) are located on the scalp. Other types of lice include body lice and crab lice (located in the pubic area). **Lice have no wings and do not fly. Lice cannot jump.** Lice lay their eggs on the hair shaft very close to the scalp. The eggs appear like tiny cloudy white droplets firmly attached to the hair. Lice eggs are called nits. It is difficult to remove a nit. Nits will not easily brush off the hair.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEAD LICE?

One of the first signs of lice is intense itching and scratching. Nits are not easily seen. It is difficult to find a louse on someone's head. Look closely around the ears and the back of the head. Lice may be present for up to 2 to 3 weeks before the itching is noticed.

### HOW DOES A PERSON GET HEAD LICE?

Lice are transmitted through close, direct personal contact. Anyone can get lice. Lice infestations are **not** the result of poor hygiene. Lice cannot spread through a classroom if students are simply sitting near each other.

### HOW IS LICE INFESTATION TREATED?

Special shampoos and rinses are available both by prescription and over the counter. Ask your school nurse, doctor or pharmacist for advice. It is important to follow the directions closely. Do not over treat. It is generally recommended to repeat the treatment in 7 to 10 days. Nits should be removed. This will require a special comb usually sold with the medicated shampoo or rinse. It is not necessary to spray carpets or furniture with the various lice sprays sold in stores. Head lice are acquired mainly by *direct head-to-head contact* with an infested person. Inanimate objects (such as combs, brushes, hair accessories and other such items) serve little, if any role in the transmission of head lice. Shared lockers or coat hooks pose even less risk as sources of contamination. For more instructions please check the following web site. A licensed physician maintains the site.

<https://identify.us.com/idmybug/head-lice/head-lice-FAQS/index.html>

**This website is full of evidenced based facts and is a reputable site for correct and factual information. Please be cautious when searching the web for lice information.**

School nurses are supportive advocates who will help you obtain lice shampoo and use it properly. School nurses will assist you in checking or rechecking as you work to remove nits and lice from your child's head. Just ask.