



# Fisk Street Primary School

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## Fisk Street Primary School

### Headlice policy: to support family and community headlice management

This school policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Fisk Street Primary School community members in community efforts to control headlice. This school policy draws on information obtained from the Department of Health publication *Healthy Heads - Without Headlice* and the Department of Education and Children's Services publication *Headlice – the role of preschools and schools in community headlice control*.

All members of this school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage headlice effectively.

**Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate headlice but we can reduce the number of cases if all school community members work together in a coordinated manner. In this school community there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:**

- All families (i.e. the families of students, staff and others working in the school community) will check at home the hair of all household members, on a weekly basis, for live lice. They will aim to use a headlice comb, for greater accuracy, and will also use an effective treatment if necessary.
- Where an active case is detected, the school encourages immediate treatment and return to school the day after appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The principal or their nominee will contact the family to ask that a student be checked and receive treatment if necessary.
- Parents/caregivers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The school will notify parents/caregivers of children in a classroom when more than one case of headlice is detected in the classroom in a week, to alert these families of the need to check more frequently.
- Families will notify the parents/caregivers of their child's friends where appropriate, so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
- A sympathetic attitude will be maintained by the entire school community to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

**To support parents/caregivers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to headlice management the school will endeavour to:**

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of headlice to students, staff and their families at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Include information about headlice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school within the context of the state-wide school, preschool and childcare health support planning guidelines.
- Include information and updates in school newsletters.
- Maintain (anonymous) records of headlice cases detected through the school, for monitoring purposes.
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers).
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Encourage children to learn about headlice so as to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers) if required.
- Review the *School Headlice Policy* annually and seek endorsement from the School Community/Governing Council.
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing headlice.

**Blanket head inspections or headlice screening by Fisk Street Primary School staff are strongly discouraged. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that such programs:**

- Take away from student curriculum time.
- Are potentially intrusive of student privacy.
- Take over family rights and responsibilities.
- Convey the message that headlice management is a school issue rather than a household and wider community responsibility.

### **Parent/caregiver responsibilities:**

- Regularly check (weekly is recommended) students and families hair for live lice or nits.
- If headlice is detected, close contacts (other family members, friends) should be notified.
- Choose and use the correct type of treatment:
  - a. Chemical Pediculicides: Maldison (Malathion), Pyrethrins/Permethrins (applied twice once to start and the second 7-10 days after the first).
  - b. Non-chemical: Wet-Combing Technique (completed three times per week, for three weeks).
  - c. Other: Manual Combing, Electrical combs, Herbal/Essential Oil and Enzyme.
- It is recommended that wet-combing is used in conjunction with chemical pediculicide, however not for at least a day following chemical treatments.
- Treat hair of the student as soon as possible.
- Once a correct treatment of the students hair is conducted, so that there are no longer live headlice present, the child can be re-admitted to school with the consent form.
- If student has been in close contact with a person identified with headlice parents/caregivers should check their child hair daily for three weeks.

### **Fisk Street Primary School staff responsibilities:**

- Educate students about headlice.
- Notify parent/caregiver as soon as possible when headlice is detected or suspected.
- Inform parents that proper treatment must be carried out before the child returns to the site.
- Require that a child be treated before returning to school.
- If required, request confirmation from a general practitioner that effective treatment of headlice has occurred prior to the student returning to school.
- Inform parent in contact with infested child that a case is suspected.
- Provide parent/caregiver with relevant documentation, treatment methods and treatment information.

It is NOT the responsibility of the school to:

- Conduct mass inspections.
- Treat students.

## **Fisk Street Primary School**

### **Headlice Process**

Below are the steps that Fisk Street Primary School will take to minimise the number of cases of headlice:

1. Staff or student notices symptoms of headlice (frequent scratching or live lice).
2. If consent obtained: Staff member explains to student what they are going to do and why. Asks permission from the student to check their head for headlice.
3. If consent not obtained: Staff member sends student up for front office staff to contact parent/caregiver and notifies of a suspected case. Arranges for student to be picked up and meets with parent and/or meets with parent at the end of the day.
4. If consent obtained then staff member will check for headlice.
5. If no live lice or nits are found: Student returns to class and the parent/caregiver is notified that the students head was checked.
6. If live lice or nits are found: Student is sent to the front office and the parent/caregiver contacted by front office staff and will arrange a time to either pick up the student and meet with relevant staff or meet with relevant staff at the end of the day. If the student is staying at school for the remainder of the day then an alternate placement in the class and/or school for learning will be arranged.
7. At the meeting relevant staff will discuss with the parent/caregiver: the headlice consent form, types of treatments and family inspections.
8. A note will be sent home to all students in the infested student's class advising parent/caregiver to check their student's hair and return consent form clarifying a check has taken place and student is free of headlice.
9. The student can return to school the next day after treatment has begun with consent form completed correctly and signed.
10. A reminder will be given to parents/caregivers in 7 days' time to retreat students hair.
11. If further cases of headlice arise, staff may ask for a clearance note from a medical practitioner, clearing the student of headlice before they return to school.