



## F.O.B.S INFORMATION SHEET: HEADLICE

A case of headlice has been reported in your child's class, so it is important that you check your child's hair as quickly as possible, and treat if live headlice are found. Lots of parents are alarmed when their child comes home with headlice, please don't worry. There's simply no way to prevent children getting them and, as awful as they may be, they're not a medical problem, just an unpleasant nuisance!

### Facts

- Headlice are equal opportunities parasites! It doesn't matter how often you wash, and headlice really don't care whether hair is dirty or clean, short or long. Anyone can get headlice.
- Headlice can't jump, fly, hop or swim, they can only crawl. They move from one person to another via close head to head contact. Children are more inclined to get headlice because of this.
- Headlice can be difficult to find in dry hair, but in wet hair they lose their grip, move slowly and can be combed out with a "headlice comb".
- Headlice are about the size of a match head when fully grown. "Nits" are the egg cases laid by the headlice and stick onto the hair shaft. These are small in size and white in colour. "Nits" are glued to the hair and cannot be removed by wet combing.

White empty egg cases (nits) do not necessarily mean live lice are present. Check for headlice in wet hair using the wet-combing method (see over), and remember that you only need to treat your child if **live** headlice are found.

Wet combing works because it interferes with the life cycle of the headlouse. Lice take seven days to grow fully, until this time they are unable to lay eggs or move to another head. If full grown lice are removed by wet combing, further eggs will not be laid and the spread of infection will be prevented. The three day follow up procedure removes the newly hatched lice before they become mature.

It is also possible to use insecticide lotion, available from the chemist, to treat headlice. However, it is recommended that water-based lotions are used, as they are less likely to irritate the skin and are more effective. If you choose to use a lotion, always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

## Wet Combing Method

- Wash hair as normal, rinse, apply conditioner and leave conditioner in hair
- Comb through with an ordinary comb to remove tangles
- Using a fine tooth headlice comb, part the hair into sections
- Comb through the hair, starting at the scalp and out to the end of the hair
- After each stroke, check the comb and wipe clean
- After combing the entire head, rinse out the conditioner and comb through again.

Repeat every three days for two weeks. If after two weeks you feel this method has been ineffective, please contact the school nurse, Hilary Blake on 01637 893661.

Headlice are not a school problem, but affect everyone in the community. If you find someone in your family has headlice, it is important that close contacts are informed. They may have them and not know. Think about anyone there has been close contact with:

- Parents/Guardians
- Best Friends
- Brothers and sisters
- Grandparents and other family members, aunts/uncles/cousins/nephews/nieces
- Other residents in the house
- School friends
- Work colleagues
- Ballet/Gym/Clubs ie Brownies, Guides, Scouts, Cubs
- Holiday Friends
- Playgroup/Toddler Group
- Baby sitters/Child Minders

***Early detection and treatment are vital in dealing with headlice.*** We advise that parents should check their child's hair once a week, and if your child has headlice, please let the school know as soon as possible.

If you are concerned and want to speak to someone about this issue, please contact a member of FOBS.

Thank you for your co-operation.