

Headlice Factsheet



Dear Parents/Carers

We have recently had a few outbreaks of head lice. Please can we ask you to be vigilant in checking your child's hair over the coming days.

Below are some facts on head lice and how to treat them:

Head lice are very common, small grey-brown insects that live only on human scalps (adult lice are the size of a sesame seed). They cannot fly or jump; or burrow in the scalp. They can affect anyone, with long or short hair, no matter how clean the hair is.

How do you get head lice?

Head lice are usually picked up by head-to-head contact; it takes about **30 seconds** for a single louse to transfer from one scalp to another!

Head lice can affect anyone:

- Most common in children between the ages of 4 and 11
- More common in girls than boys
- Most often found at the start of the school year

Why is it important to treat them?

In most cases head lice do not lead to serious implications, but if left untreated it can cause emotional distress and sleep disturbance in children and in some cases, further health complications.

How to treat them?

Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing. You can buy a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb) online or from pharmacies to remove head lice and nits.

- Wash hair with ordinary shampoo
- Apply lots of conditioner
- Comb the whole head of hair, from roots to ends

Do wet combing on days 1,5,9 and 13 to catch any newly hatched head lice. Check again that everyone in the household's hair is free of lice on day 17. If on day 17 the head lice are not gone, **ask a pharmacist for advice.**