

January 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Over the years many distraught parents have come to see me regarding the 'regular' infestation their children seem to suffer due to head lice. This is very distressing for the parent and, more importantly, the child.

I am therefore asking on behalf of all those parents who battle regularly with their child's hair for your help and support to benefit us all.

Please check your child's hair regularly for any lice or eggs. If you can see them in your child's hair please follow the advice and guidance below. It is essential that we all work together on this matter to limit the spread of this annoying and upsetting condition. Thank you.

### Who catches head lice?

- Anyone can catch head lice, but children and their families are most at risk.

### How do you catch head lice?

- Head lice are transmitted through direct, prolonged head-to-head contact with an infected person.

### What is having head lice like?

- The head lice are most commonly found behind the ears and at the back of the neck.
- A person with head lice may feel a tickling or itching feeling of something moving in the hair. Most people only realise that they have head lice when the itch has developed, which can take from one week to two-three months after initial infection.
- Itching may also occur due to an allergic reaction to the bites. Sores can develop due to scratching and can become infected.

### How serious are head lice?

- Head lice are not a serious health problem. Head lice rarely cause anything more than an itchy scalp.

### Can you prevent head lice?

- The best way to stop infection is for people to learn how to check their heads for lice.
- Good hair care only helps to control lice in as much as it will help to spot and treat lice early.

### Should a child with head lice be kept off school?

- No! The DfE/DoH guidelines for infection control in schools and nurseries state that there is no need for a child who has head lice to stay away from school.
- One reason for this is that if a child does have lice, he or she will have had them at school for several weeks before diagnosis.

### How can you treat someone with head lice?

- A diagnosis of head lice can only be made if a living, moving louse is found.
- Detection combing by parents/family members according to instructions is the best method of diagnosis.
- Chemical treatments are available, but must only be given after a doctor or experienced nurse has made a diagnosis.
- Close contact of the child living in the same house are usually checked and treated if they have head lice.

For more information please look at the following website:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice)