



# CHALONER PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Dealing with head lice

### Context

Head lice are insects that live in the hair and on the scalp of humans, they cannot jump and do not have wings so cannot fly. They are obligate parasites, which mean that they cannot survive without us, feeding only on human blood, which they take from the blood vessels in the scalp.

Head lice have been around for as long as humans, moving from head to head to reproduce and feed. Head lice do not have a preference for the heads that they live on and will move easily from one to another by simply walking across when two heads are touching.

As many as 3 million people a year in the UK catch head lice.

### School

We believe in being open and honest about head lice. Sometimes parents are shocked and upset when head lice are discovered. We urge all parents/carers to be pro-active in preventing the spread of head lice and to respond quickly if head lice are discovered.

We do not expect pupils to be kept away from school if head lice are discovered. We do, however expect children to be **treated immediately** and **before they come to school**.

The following steps should always be followed:

1. **Detection** - check regularly to see if there is an infection.
  - At least once a week and whenever the hair is washed
  - Be confident about what you are looking for
2. **Treatment** - use your treatment method of choice.
  - Remember regular use of the same product can render that method ineffective.
  - Whatever method you use you must use a fine-tooth comb to remove and destroy lice, eggs (unhatched lice) and nits (empty, hatched egg shells).
3. **Check** - always be sure to check that the treatment has been effective.
  - Proprietary lotions indicate how and when treatment should be given.
  - Following any infestation, check daily.

### Home

We recognise that having head lice can be an upsetting experience for both children and parents. We also recognise that even when parents have acted promptly, re-infestation can occur.

By being open and honest with children we can educate them to the problem of head lice and to ways of minimising the risk of infestation.

- Since head lice are passed on by contact between the hairs on two heads it is sensible to have hair tied back.
- If the scalp becomes itchy children should inform parents immediately so that the cause might be investigated.
- A course of treatment for head lice should be completed in line with the directions given.
- Regular combing and brushing of hair should be encouraged.

### **Notification**

There is no statutory requirement to notify the Authorities when an incidence of head lice occurs.

School is not able to screen pupils for head lice. However, we work closely with the Health Service to make sure that all information available to parents is accurate and up-to-date.