

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Policy Change



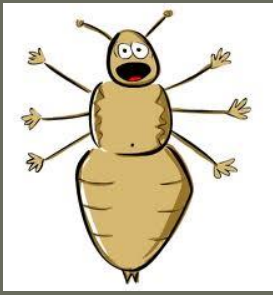
Newburyport Public Schools
Approved by the School Committee in
November 2015

This research based policy change is...

- Good for schools
- Good for children
- Good for families

- Bad for lice...





Lice: A review

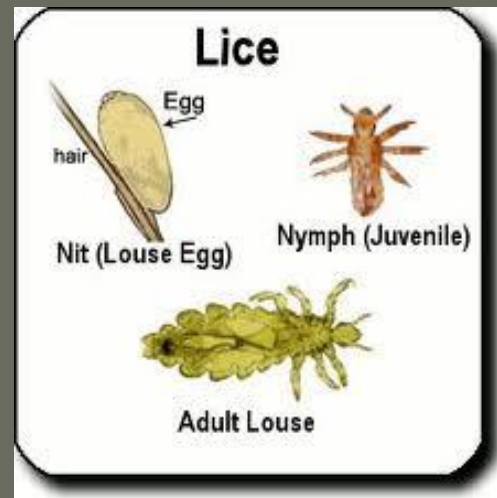
- Head lice are insects that live on the human scalp and feed on blood.
- Lice do not hop, jump, or fly.
- Lice do not carry disease.

REPEAT: Lice do NOT carry disease

- Lice are not a sign of uncleanness and they do not care about socioeconomic status

The Facts of Lice

- An adult is called a “louse” and is about the size of a sesame seed.
- The eggs are called “nits and are about the size of a dandruff flake.
- Nits are attached to the hair shaft at the scalp with a glue like substance.



The Facts of Lice

- Lice/nits are often discovered because a student is complaining of an itchy head.



- The symptom of itching may start weeks or even months after the lice move in.

If lice don't hop, jump, or fly, how are they transmitted?



- Direct head to head contact is the most common means of transmission.
- Indirect transmission is uncommon (shared combs, hats...)

Summary of the new policy

(i.e. 7 pages in 5 minutes)

- The old policy was an old fashioned “no nits” policy.
- The new policy is assessment based: The school nurse will work with each individual family to ensure treatment/ongoing nit removal.



Summary of the new policy

(i.e. 7 pages in 5 minutes)

- The old policy said a letter should be sent home to the classroom families for each case of lice.
- With the new policy, a class wide letter will only be sent after the school nurse confirms a cluster of cases.



Summary of the new policy

(i.e. 7 pages in 5 minutes)

- The old policy required the nurse to screen a whole class when one student was found to have lice/nits.
- The new policy will be more effective with targeted screenings (siblings, close friends, close contacts).



The school nurse is a resource

- Work confidentially with each family
- Screen parents and siblings upon request
- Screen teachers (confidentially)
- Provide ongoing support and education to families on an individual basis
- We will be providing year round public education

(and we do it with a smile 😊)



The new policy employs practices that
are based on fact and not on fear
recognizing that...

- Lice should not disrupt the educational process.
- There is no disease associated with lice.
- Frequent ongoing family education is our best way to combat lice



ITCHY YET???

