

Pediculosis (Head Lice) English

Administrative Procedure

Topic:	Pediculosis (Head Lice)
Status:	Active
Effective:	February 2009
Revision Date:	October 2012; 2016; 2017; 2019; 2023
Review Date:	October 2028
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education - Student Health

Intended Purpose:

To provide a standard procedure for the management of Pediculosis (referenced as Head Lice throughout the document) in all schools within the Halton District School Board.

Guiding Principles:

- Head lice is viewed by the medical community as a nuisance and not considered a medical disease.
- Both the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board support an Identification and Treatment protocol to children in schools with head lice.
- Children with head lice should be treated and then attend school or child care as usual.
- Confirmation of treatment for return to school will be completed by the parent/guardian.

Introduction:

Control of head lice includes the coordination of the following people:

Roles and Responsibilities

- 1. Halton Region Public Health x311**
 - Provides consultation to staff, parents/ guardians on current issues related to head lice, on request.
- 2. The School Principal (or designate)**
 - Promotes and institutes preventative measures in the control of head lice in the school environment.
 - Shares information (via a school newsletter or email update) about head lice with families including links to Halton Region Public Health including prevention tips especially following Summer, Winter and Spring breaks

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- Upon parent/guardian notification of a suspected/confirmed case of head lice, reports to all members in the student's class. Refer to Appendix A: Class (or school) letter re: Suspected or Confirmed Case of Head Lice
 - Ensures that a child's parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed of the requirements for returning to school following a confirmed case of head lice. Refer to Appendix C: Pediculosis (Head Lice) Return to School Parent Confirmation Letter) to school.
 - Confirms re-entry to school with receipt of completed Appendix C: Pediculosis (Head Lice) Return to School Parent Confirmation Letter).
- *Schools may also accept email confirmation.

3. The Teacher

- Actively promotes and institutes preventative measures for the control of head lice in the classroom.
- Is knowledgeable of the symptoms indicating a suspected head lice infestation. Refer to Appendix B: What is Head Lice? And information from the [Halton Region Public Health Website](#)
- Liaises with the parents to provide educational opportunities and resource materials to reduce the level of fear and misinformation about head lice.

4. The Parent/Guardian

- Notifies the school and other possible community contacts if head lice is discovered.
- Ensures treatment methods are carried out as required. Refer to Appendix C: Pediculosis (Head Lice) Return to School Parent Confirmation Letter
- Provide the principal with a completed Appendix C: Pediculosis (Head Lice) Return to School Parent Confirmation Letter confirming that a treatment procedure has been completed, prior to returning to school.
- Promotes and institutes preventive measures for the control of head lice in the home environment

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Appendix A

Class (or school) letter re: suspected or confirmed case of head lice

(sample)

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear (Name of Parent/Guardian):

A suspected or confirmed case of head lice, in your child's class, has been communicated to our school. Head lice does not reflect a lack of cleanliness, or poor hygiene and anyone can get head lice. They are a nuisance, but they do not cause illness. Head lice are not known to spread disease; they do not survive long when removed from the scalp; and are only communicable through head-to-head contact.

Head lice spread easily, especially where individuals are in close contact. They are very common among school aged children or children in childcare. It is recommended that you check your child's head once a week for two weeks, after school breaks and vacations. Discourage the sharing of hairbrushes, combs, hats, and hair accessories.

What To Do If You Discover Your Child Has Head Lice:

1. Inform the school immediately so that action may be taken to minimize the spread.
2. Talk to a pharmacist regarding head lice treatment products.
3. Administer treatment as recommended by your pharmacist. Your child will be readmitted to school once the treatment procedure has been administered and confirmed by you (parent/guardian).
4. Parents/guardians should continue to examine their child daily for 7-10 days. If there are still live lice or nits, follow product directions for additional treatments and consult Halton Region Public Health and/or pharmacist as required.

Parents and Guardians are advised to consult with [Halton Region Public Health for information](#) on head lice, recommended treatment procedures and prevention.

If you have any questions that have not been answered, please call me at the school.

Sincerely,

(Principal's name)

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Appendix B

Symptoms of What is Pediculosis (Head Lice)?

It is very important that parents/caregivers check their children's heads once a week for head lice. Do not wait for itchiness as a sign of head lice. Children can have head lice for many weeks before they feel itchy.

You know you have head lice if you see:

- Live lice in the hair. Head lice are tiny, wingless, greyish brown insects. They are difficult to see, as they move quickly when you part the hair.
- Eggs of the head louse. Freshly laid eggs are glued to the shaft of the hair and are laid very close to the scalp of the head. The eggs are smaller than the head of a pin, oval in shape and grey to brown in colour. These eggs will hatch in 7-10 days. Although head lice can lay eggs anywhere on the head, favourite spots are around the ears and the nape of the neck.

Public Health Nurse
Halton Public Health Department
Halton Region

Head lice have nothing to do with lack of cleanliness – anyone can get head lice. They are a nuisance, but they **do not** cause illness. Head lice are not a public health problem because they do not transmit disease.

- Live head lice:
 - Are greyish, six-legged insects that are 2 mm – 4 mm in length (as adults)
 - Can be difficult to see because they move quickly on the scalp
- Head lice eggs:
 - Are very small – about half the size of a pinhead
 - Can be whitish-grey, tan or yellow in colour
 - Are glued to the hair shaft less than ½ inch away from the scalp
 - Can take about 7 - 10 days to hatch

It is very important that parents/caregivers check their children's heads once a week for head lice. Do not wait for itchiness as a sign of head lice. Children can have head lice for many weeks before they feel itchy.

Note: Diagnosis of head lice requires the presence of a living louse. A head lice product should only be used if live lice are found in the hair (Canadian Paediatric Society, March 2022).

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APPENDIX C

(School Letterhead)

Pediculosis (Head Lice) Return to School Parent Confirmation Letter

(Sample)

(Date)

Dear (Name of Parent/Guardian):

Thank you for notifying us of your child's confirmed case of head lice.

Parents are required to keep their child at home until they have been treated for lice.

If your child has live lice, ensure that they avoid head-to-head contact with other children until the lice are gone. Children should not share combs, hairbrushes, caps, hats or hair ornaments.

Parents/Guardians are also advised to check all family members/siblings for head lice. Discourage the sharing of hairbrushes, combs, hats, and hair accessories. Be sensitive to your child's feelings and let them know that having head lice does not mean they are not clean.

To learn more about current recommended treatment options, please visit the [Halton Region Public Health - Head lice Information for Parents/Guardians](#) web page with a link to resources. They also recommend that you speak with your family pharmacist.

Please also visit the [Halton Region Public Health Website - Head Lice in Schools](#) for additional information and resources.

Please complete and return the following form to the Principal, prior to your child returning to school.

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Return to School Parent Confirmation Form:

- ☐ I am confirming that my child has completed a pharmacist recommended treatment for head lice.
- ☐ I also understand that I should examine my child daily for 7-10 days and will re-treat my child as per product/pharmacist directions as required.

Name of Student

Class

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Personal information is collected on this form in compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M56, and is collected under the authority of the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2. and will be used for purposes related to the regular operational requirements of the educational and administrative functions of the Halton District School Board. For additional information about how the HDSB uses personal information please see the HDSB Statement of Personal Information Practices or, contact your school Principal.

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Cross-Reference:

Other:

- [Halton DSB Website - Student Health Pediculosis \(Head Lice\)](#)
- [Halton Region - Head Lice in Schools](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society - Caring for Kids Pediculosis \(Head Lice\)](#)