

## PEDICULOSIS IN THE SCHOOLS

### Position Statement

It is the position of the Lee County School System that the management of pediculosis (head lice) should not disrupt the education process. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) head lice is not a disease and does not require that a student with nits be denied attendance in school. Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. This position is supported by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and the CDC.

Children found with live bugs or viable nits will be referred to parents/guardian for treatment either by phone call or a note at the end of the day. CDC recommendations will be followed. The school nurse, being the most knowledgeable professional in the school community, will provide guidance to parents/guardians regarding “best practices” for pediculosis management. The goal is to contain infestation, provide health education for treatment, prevent overexposure to potentially hazardous chemicals, and minimize school absences. Please note the following guidelines for managing pediculosis in the school setting:

- If a student is suspected of having pediculosis, the nurse will verify by visual examination with a positive or negative finding.
- The parent will be notified of positive findings, and instructions will be given on how to properly clean the hair, clothes, and other items that may contribute to the spread of head lice.
- The absentee policy as it pertains to pediculosis will be explained to the parent. Excused absences will be 3 days per school year.
- Parent/guardian or designated adult should accompany student to the school for nurse to make a determination as to whether a child can return to class based on visual examination.
- If after visual inspection it is determined that proper treatment has not been followed, the student will be sent back home and instructions repeated to the parent.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to follow proper procedures for removing lice so the child can return to school as soon as possible. Eliminating lice can be difficult parents are encouraged to continue to check student’s hair after returning to class.
- If it is apparent to the school nurse that a family is diligently working to correct the problem, the student may return to class and be closely monitored.
- Never initiate treatment unless there is a clear diagnosis of head lice

Devore, C & Schutze (2015). Head Lice. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 135, 1355-1365. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2015-0746

Center for Disease Control (2015). Head Lice. Retrieved on 6/19/2017 from:

[www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen\\_info/faqs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html)

Alabama Department of Public Health. (N.D.) Head Lice. Retrieved on 6/19/2017 from:

[www.adph.org/epi/](http://www.adph.org/epi/).

National Association of School Nurses (2016). *Head lice management in the school setting*. (Position Statement). Silver Springs, MD: Author.