

Sherburne Elementary School

Head Lice

(Revised February, 2005 in accord with Vermont Department of Health Recommendations.)

Policy

The psychological, social and economical impact of head lice infestations can create a problem in the community. Recognizing that a sizeable number of cases exist from time to time, the Sherburne Elementary School District will take the necessary measures to reduce the loss of instructional time for students. This policy is based on current recommendations by the Vermont Department of Health and other public health organizations.

Prevention strategies are an important part of controlling the spread of head lice. The Superintendent (Principal), using public health resources when necessary, will develop procedures detailing a system-wide approach to preventing and controlling the spread of a head lice infestation.

Procedures:

1. Identify partners who will need to collaborate such as parents and children, school nurses and other school personnel, child care providers, local physicians, town health officers, public health staff, community health clinic staff, community volunteers and other community and business members (e.g. dry cleaners, laundromats, pharmacies).

2. Institute school and classroom practices that may include
 - Assign individual hooks for student belongings.
 - Have students keep their hats inside their coat sleeves.
 - Permanently assign resting mats, towels or pillows and keep separate while in use or in storage.
 - Discourage sharing of combs, brushes or hair ornaments.
 - Limit the transporting of personal toys such as stuffed animals from home to school.

Managing Head Lice Cases

1. Any staff member who suspects head lice will report this immediately to the school nurse or principal.
2. Any student identified by the school nurse (or qualified designee) as having lice and untreated nits shall be discouraged from head to head contact with others and be sent home at the end of the school day.

3. Verbal and written instructions for treatment will be given to the family of each identified student. Instructions shall include recommendations for treatment that are consistent with Vermont Department of Health and Education guidelines and the student may return to school after proper treatment. The school nurse or other trained personnel will examine all children in the same classroom with an identified active case (untreated nits or actual lice) and handle appropriately.
4. Students will be readmitted to school at the discretion of the school nurse or designee, after the first treatment with confirmation from the parent or guardian that the initial treatment has been completed. In accordance with Department of Health recommendations, students will not be excluded from school on the sole grounds that nits may be present despite appropriate treatment.
5. Each re-entering student will be examined by trained personnel to look for evidence that the treatment was performed and new nits are not present. Re-treatment recommendations will be consistent with Vermont Department of Health and Department of Education guidelines. Parents will be notified of any re-infestation, and referred to the child's physician or pediatric health care provider for consideration of prescription medication.
6. If the number of cases is considered to constitute an outbreak, administrative personnel will institute the outbreak procedures that accompany this policy. An outbreak is considered to have occurred when head lice infestation occurs in 2-3 students in the same classroom or when 10% of the individuals in a classroom, school, or child care facility have evidence of infestation.
7. The school nurse will provide additional in-service education as needed for staff with emphasis on diagnosis, treatment and control plans.

Date Warned: 12/12/06

Date Adopted: 1/9/07

Legal References:

VT State Board of Education Manual of Rules & Practices, §2120.8.1.3.3

VT School Health Services Manual: Standards of Practice,

Appendix 29-A-1 through 29-A-8

Cross Reference:

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING A HEAD LICE OUTBREAK

1. Send home for treatment at the end of the school day any individuals with evidence of live lice.
2. Check all heads in affected classrooms daily until all evidence is eliminated.
3. Vacuum carpeted classrooms daily during outbreak.
4. Discontinue temporarily "dress-up" activities and other activities that involve close person-to-person contact.
5. Do not spray with pesticides.
6. Encourage families to contact health care providers if they suspect treatment has failed.
7. Siblings and close personal contacts should be examined, and if infected, should be instructed on treatment.
8. Send general fact sheet and a notice of the outbreak home to all parents. Elicit help of all parents to check for head lice daily.
9. Encourage parents to notify the school, childcare provider, and other close personal contacts when head lice have been identified.
10. The school nurse or designee will recognize that elimination of all nits may take several days and will work with parents to eliminate all nits.
11. If lice treatment is ineffective (live lice or new nits remain present), the nurse or designee may determine that the child return home with further instructions.

Note: The Vermont Department of Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses discourage the implementation of a "no nit" policy, and recommend that children be readmitted to school after proper treatment despite the possible presence of nits.