

## **HEAD LICE: PROCEDURES (Pediculosis)**

### **Background:**

Current procedures regarding head lice in students attending Missoula County Public Schools follows recommended guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatricians, the Centers for Disease Control and the National Association of School Nurses. The nursing staff will update their procedures as needed to reflect evidence based findings and literature.

- Although a nuisance, head lice are not a health hazard.
- They do not spread disease and/or illness.
- Head lice have been around for thousands of years and prefer living on clean healthy hair.
- Although these insects cannot hop, jump or fly, they are easily transmitted by direct head-to-head contact, or sharing brushes and combs.
- Transmissions most commonly occurs between people who are in very close proximity, such as family members.
- Children can have head lice for several weeks without symptoms.
- The best “prevention” is early detection at home with routine inspections for live lice and nits.
- Lost class time and parent work should be minimal, if at all.
- Students and families need accurate information and support.

### **Procedures:**

- Parents, students or staff may consult the school nurse for suspected cases of head lice.
- School nurses will communicate with the parents if head lice are confirmed. Emphasis is placed on giving parents accurate information. The student may return to class that day until the parent is able to pick the student up from school to start treatment.
- Students with live head lice are expected to have been treated and lice removed prior to returning to school the next day. There is no requirement to be nit free.
- Nurses will monitor students with known recent history of lice infestation.
- Class screenings may be done on a case by case based upon the nurse’s assessment.
- Four PK-5 classrooms in which a student was recently found to have an active case of head lice, an informational letter will be sent to parents.
- Students, who miss school due to reported head lice, do not need a specific absent code to reflect this. Nurses will keep statistical data for procedure evaluation purposes.
- While staff often know that a student has had head lice and may in fact refer a student to the nurse, it is generally not essential that staff know what students have head lice in order to employ standard preventative measures in the classroom. Lice are not spread by casual contact (do not hop, jump, or fly) and measures to prevent transmission should be standard. (Such as not sharing combs.)