**Stoneyburn Primary School**

**Guidelines on the Treatment of Headlice**

**2017/2018**

Head louse infestation is not primarily a problem of schools but of the wider community. It cannot be solved by the school, but the school can help the local community to deal with it.

* **Fact** – Head lice can only be transmitted by direct and prolonged head-to-head contact.
* **Fact** – Transmission of lice within the classroom is relatively rare. When it does occur, it is usually from a “best friend”.
* **Fact** – Head lice will not be eradicated in the foreseeable future, but a sensible, informed approach based on fact, not mythology, will help to limit the problem.
* **Fact** – At any one time, most schools will have a few children who have headlice.
* **Fact** – The perception by parents/guardians and staff, however, is often that there is a serious “outbreak” with many children infested. This is hardly ever the case.
* **Fact** – After treatment has been initiated, there is no reason for excluding children from school.

**Detection Combing**

Most infestations occur in the home or close community contacts. You need a detection comb (available from pharmacists or supermarkets etc), an ordinary comb and good lighting.

* Detection combing is recommended at least once per week as routine and as soon as possible after any close contact has been found with headlice infestation.
* Wash hair well, (conditioner may be applied to make combing easier) then dry it with a towel. The hair should be damp, not dripping.
* Make sure there is good light. Daylight is best.
* Comb the hair with an ordinary comb.
* Comb with a detection comb. Start with the teeth of the detection comb touching the skin of the scalp at the top of the head. Draw the comb carefully towards the edge of the hair.
* Look carefully at the teeth of the comb in a good light to see if any lice are present.
* Repeat this from the top of the head to the edge of the hair in all directions working around the head. It can take 15 minutes or more to do it properly for each head.
* If there are head lice, you will find one or more lice on the teeth of the comb.
* If you find what you think is a moving living louse, then stick it to a piece of paper and cover with clear adhesive tape. Show this to the nurse, pharmicist or GP for confirmation and advice regarding treatment.
* Clean the comb under the tap. A nailbrush may help.

**Treatment**

* Check the heads of all people in the household and others who may have prolonged head to head contact, eg child minder, relatives, other children in the nursery. Only treat those who have living, moving lice.
* Treat only when living lice have been found. Do not use ‘just in case’.

**Treatment for confirmed infestation**

* Treat all those infected at the same time with one of the approved products recommended by the pharmacist, nurse or doctor.
* Please read the instructions that come with the treatment and, if in doubt, check with the doctor, pharmacist, school nurse, and community nurse or health visitor.
* Remember that you will require enough lotion for 2 treatments, 7 days apart for each person (usually – 50mls of lotion per treatment).
* Apply the product to clean, dry hair. If a shampoo with built-in conditioner or conditioner was used in the previous wash, then re-wash the hair with a simple shampoo. Allow the washed hair to dry befre applying the treatment. **Do not use conditioner or a shampoo with built-in conditioner at any time between day 1 and day 8 of the treatment period** (conditioner may coat the hair and prevent the insecticide working fully).
* Use in a well ventilated room.
* Part the hair near the top of the head, put a small quantity on to the scalp and rub it in. Part the hair a bit further down the scalp and do the same again. Do this over and over again until the whole scalp is wet.
* Apply the product down long hair to where you would put a pony tail band.
* Keep the solution out of the eyes and off the face – use a towel to cover the face during application.
* Let the solution dry on the hair and keep the hair away from flames, cigarettes, stoves and other sources of heat. **Do not use a hair dryer.** Rinse the hair for the recommended time identified in the instructions.
* Follow the same treatment procedure as above **exactly 7 days later.**
* Check all treated heads a day or two after the second treatments. If you still find living, moving lice, ask your pharmicist, school/practice nurse, community nurse, health visitor or GP for advice. Nits are **empty** eggshells and should not be confused with ineffective treatment.

**Approved Treatments**

The recommended treatments in NHS Lothian are:

**First Choice – Dimeticone 4% (brand name Hedrin)**

**Second Choice – Malathion 0.5% liquid (brand name Derbac-M)**

These preparations are available on the Minor Ailment Service. Children under 16 years of age are eligible to register for the Minor Ailent Service with a community pharmacy and these preparations many be prescribed free of charge following a consultation with a Pharmacist.

The preparation can also be purchased from a pharmacy or can be prescribed by your doctor and certain nurses.