



**Manhattan Beach
Unified School District**

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Dear Parent,

Head Lice has been detected on some students in your child's school. While it is not a health problem, it is considered to be a communicable condition. Changes to current policy do not allow for us to check the heads of any other students therefore it is imperative that you routinely check your child's head for lice and their eggs (nits).

SYMPTOMS: Child usually complains of excessive itching of the scalp. **Lice crawl but are unable to jump or fly.** Lice and their eggs (nits), which are attached to the base of the hair shaft, can be seen with the naked eye.

TRANSMISSION: Occurs by direct person-to-person contact or by contact of infested articles such as clothing, combs, brushes or headwear.

TREATMENT: Over-the-counter pediculicidal shampoos are available. The active ingredient is most often permethrin or pyrethrin. **Read the directions carefully and follow them closely.** These products should destroy any lice present. **The eggs or nits, however, must be removed by hand.** The best way to do this is to separate the hair into sections and slide the nits down off each hair shaft with a fine toothed metal comb. **Any child with head lice must be treated before they can be readmitted to school. An adult must accompany any child who has had an infestation to school the first day the child returns after treatment.** The child will be examined before returning to class and allowed to remain in school if no active head lice are detected.

All sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags, combs and brushes **must be washed in hot water.** Heat-dry non-washable clothing or other fabric items in a clothes dryer on hot for 20 minutes. Stuffed animals and non-washable articles can be placed in sealed plastic bags for at least two weeks to kill lice and-or eggs. Rugs, furniture, etc., should be vacuumed thoroughly to eliminate further problems.

And lastly, it is very important to recheck your child's head after 7-10 days during which time Nits (eggs) that may have been missed during the initial treatment will have hatched.

Additional Links:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/pages/HeadLice.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

The American Academy of Pediatrics website states that "Head lice usually survive for less than 1 day away from the scalp at normal room temperature, and their eggs cannot hatch at an ambient temperature lower than that near the scalp". Because of this any life cycle of the louse would be ended over one weekend period. The AAP website states that "Lice cannot hop or fly; they crawl.

Transmission in most cases occurs by direct contact with the head of another infested individual. Indirect spread through contact with personal belongings of an infested individual (combs, brushes, hats, headphones) is much less likely but cannot be excluded. Lice found on combs are likely to be injured or dead, and a healthy louse is not likely to leave a healthy head.