



Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are sending this letter from your child's school because a case of head lice has been reported and your child may have been exposed, and so that you may take steps at home to help prevent your child from becoming infested with head lice. Head lice are a common malady which can affect anyone, but are most commonly found in school-age children.

Head lice are elongated insects about (–) long and are greyish-white in color. Direct, physical, head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission. Lice do not jump or fly. They survive only for a short time away from the human head and have difficulty crawling or clinging to smooth surfaces. Check your child's head weekly for lice and/or nits (eggs). Mature lice, which are no bigger than a sesame seed, avoid light and are hard to see. Because they can be so hard to see, the diagnosis of head lice is often made by examining the scalp for NITS. A nit is the louse egg. It is tear-shaped (∕) in size, and varies in color from white to yellowish-brown. Lice feed off blood in the scalp and survive only on a human head. Adult female lice lay their eggs (nits) close to the scalp so the new louse can eat as soon as it hatches (otherwise it dies quickly). They are usually found in the hair behind the ears and back of the neck, but can appear anywhere on the child's head. They cannot easily be flicked away as dandruff can. Head lice do not transmit disease and are not a serious medical condition. They cannot survive on your pets.

If you find head lice on your child, please notify the school and treat him/her with lice shampoo following package instructions as soon as possible. A second treatment may be required in seven to ten days. Continue to examine the child and all family members for three weeks and treat only if live lice or if nits are found one quarter inch or less from the scalp. Upon return to school, we ask that *the parent check in at the school office with their student* so designated personnel can re-examine your child's hair in a private location.

Check Regularly – Treat Quickly

Help Keep Head Lice Off Your Child

- Check your child's head weekly for signs of head lice.
- Teach your child not to share or trade personal items such as hats, combs, brushes, headbands, and barrettes.
- Contain long hair in braids or ponytails, especially in younger children.
- Teach children to avoid head-to-head contact.

For more information regarding head lice or its treatment, please feel free to contact your school office, the local health department or refer to the Michigan Head Lice Manual which can be found online at: www.michigan.gov/cdinfo .

Thank you for your help and support.

Suggested Steps for Treatment of Head Lice

- Treat hair with a medicated hair product that will kill the lice (a pediculicide). Most non-prescription pediculicidal products contain permethrin 1% or pyrethrin (such as Nix or RID). Permethrin 1% is recommended as the first choice of treatment. Once you have selected a product, it is very important that you follow the label directions on the product EXACTLY to treat those who are infested. Treatment may need to be repeated 7 – 9 days after the initial treatment.
- Work in an area with good visibility. Comb your child's hair with a fine toothed lice comb to **remove all the nits** (eggs). Combing may be easier if hair is slightly wet, or hair conditioner is placed on the hair. Conditioner has been found to be a lubricant and helps with easier removal of the nits. Part the hair into sections and hold sections in place with rubber bands or hair clips. Combing needs to be repeated daily until no lice or nits are seen. You may need to monitor this for 2-3 weeks.
- Soak combs, brushes and similar items in hot soapy water.
- Wash bedding, clothing, hats, scarves, hooded jackets, etc. in hot soapy water and dry on the hot setting or dry clean these items.
- Vacuum upholstered furniture, carpet, and non-washables two days in a row. Discard the vacuum bag after use. Wash hard surfaces with a household cleaner.
- Put teddy bears and other stuffed animals in a sealed garbage bag for 30 days. All of the lice on these stuffed friends should be dead by that time.
- Examine the scalp of all household members for head lice and nits every day for two weeks after initial infestation and removal.