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Dear Parent/Guardian:

You are receiving this letter because head lice or recently laid nits (eggs) have been found on your child's head. Don't panic! Head lice are not considered a health risk because they do not spread disease or illness. Head lice among school children are a common frustration; however, the spread of head lice can be controlled and prevented.

Head lice are elongated insects about (–) long and are greyish-white in color. They do not have wings nor can they jump. They do move very quickly which can make it difficult to find in a child's hair. 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). Lice do not survive much longer than one to two days off a human head. Nits are attached with a glue-like substance, making them very difficult to remove. They do not wash out or brush out of the hair like dandruff and other such particles that sometimes look like nits. Lice and nits are most often found at the nape of the neck and above and behind the ears, however, clusters of nits may be found in any section of the hair, so a careful examination should be made of the entire scalp.

To help prevent the spread of head lice, it is important to treat your child today after school. Use a lice shampoo or other method to kill live lice, such as manual removal with a lice comb. Always follow the package directions when using a lice product. To remove nits after a treatment is done, use a lice comb, combing small sections of wet hair at a time. Once a treatment has been done, your child may return to school. Please begin treatment as soon as possible and then send your child back to school so that they do not miss learning opportunities in the classroom. *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.*

Remember to check everyone in the household and treat anyone that has live head lice. If you think you see nits within one quarter inch of the scalp, but no live lice, continue to check daily. Check for live lice for two to three weeks following any treatment. A second treatment may need to be done in seven to ten days to kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment.

Remind your children not to have close head-to-head contact with others. Girls with long hair can wear it braided or in a ponytail to help avoid hair-to-hair contact. Please see attached instructions on treating head lice.

On the back of this letter are suggested steps to follow. If you have any questions, contact your school's office, your primary care provider, or the public health department. If you would like further detailed information and treatment guidelines, please refer to the Michigan Head Lice Manual which can be found online at: [www.michigan.gov/cdinfo](http://www.michigan.gov/cdinfo) .

## 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.