

## Parent Information on Head Lice Procedure

The Wentzville School District Health Services Department takes head lice seriously and has developed a procedure that follows the recommendations made by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN).

Head lice are parasitic insects that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people (CDC, 2019). They are small, light to dark insects no larger than the size of a sesame seed. The female head louse lays eggs (called “nits”) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. Nits are tiny whitish ovals, are firmly glued to the hair shaft, and will hatch within two weeks. Adult lice can live for 28 days, but females can lay up to 10 eggs a day, starting a new generation of lice.

Children can contract head lice from close head to head contact. Head lice crawl but cannot fly or hop from head to head; contact must be made for the lice to spread. Although less likely than head to head contact, head lice can also spread through the sharing of items such as combs, brushes and hats.

When a child is identified with an active case of head lice at school, the child’s parents are notified that their child has an active case of head lice. Information is provided to the parent on identification and treatment of nits and/or live lice. Students who have been found to have an active case will be allowed to return to class until the end of the school day. The student may return to school once the child has been treated and proof of treatment (shampoo box or bottle) is given to the school nurse. The school nurse will also examine the student for any live lice upon the student returning. School nurses will work with families to ensure eradication of active cases of live lice by conducting periodic head checks of the student until completely resolved. Continued education on removing nits and live lice can always be provided to families as needed.

Please know that the Health Services Department shares your concerns about head lice. If you detect head lice in your child, please let the school nurse know. In rare cases where there is an unusual clustering of head lice cases, Wentzville School District nurses will alert parents and guardians while still seeking to protect the privacy of individual students. By working together, we can successfully eliminate head lice. Please feel free to contact your school nurse if you have any questions.