

## PEDICULOSIS EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION

### PURPOSE

To promote a healthy environment for learning by preventing the transmission of pediculosis among school age children.

### A. POLICY AND PROCEDURAL DETERMINANTS

KPBSD Health Services determines pediculosis policy and procedures from the following sources:

- KPBSD Policy BP 5141
- Current literature
- Past practice
- Local professional consult

### B. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally, “No Nits” has been the practice at all KPBSD schools. In the past, heads have been checked upon request (classroom or individual). Anyone found with nits was sent home immediately – with no distinction made between live nits, empty casings, etc. The nurse then recommended lice shampoos and provided parent education as to what to look for, how to pick out nits, etc. Students who were sent home with nits were required to be re-checked by the nurse or nurse designee prior to re-entry into the classroom. All nits were required to be removed prior to re-entry.

In 2006 and 2007, KPBSD school nurses met to discuss the recommendations of the National Association of School Nurses, and consider changing the existing pediculosis policy to support ASNA’s well researched position. NASN’s Position Statement does not support a ‘no nit’ policy due to lack of evidence for its effectiveness. NASN does not offer an alternate policy.

Following those meetings, a new “No Live Nit” policy for KPBSD relating to lice was put into effect.

In October 2010, KPBSD school nurses met again to discuss the recommendations of NASN regarding pediculosis. Following this meeting, KPBSD school nurses agreed to implement a “No Live Lice” policy.

### C. POLICY

1. No live lice will be allowed at school: no distinction is made between live nits, empty casings, etc. Use of a simple microscope will aid in the visualization/verification of live lice/bugs. **Only children with live head lice will be sent home.**
2. Classroom, parent, and community education on treatment and eradication of lice will be provided by the school nurse as requested– all treatment options are to be included.
3. Treated students may return to school provided no live lice are found and daily progress in removal of any remaining nits is occurring. Upon re-entry, the school nurse, building administrator or designee will be required to assess the child’s lice-free status. Nurse and/or administrator discretion may be used regarding the progress of treatment and exclusion of the student. The school nurse/administrator or designee will re-check status

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daily until nit free, and then recheck in one week. A minimum of nits should be present by the end of **one** week.

4. The NIT RATING SCALE will be used to determine progress toward the goal of nit free status. Again, a nit rating scale score of 1 or less should be present by the end of one week.

**NIT RATING SCALE**

0. No nits found.
1. Few nits found with thorough search of the whole head.
2. Scattered nits found with parting hair in three or more places.
3. Clumps of nits found with parting the hair in 1-2 places.
4. Multiple nits seen without having to part hair at all.
5. ¼ of all hair or more covered with nits.

If any live lice are found in the student's hair, the student will be sent home for treatment. The student may return after treatment providing **no live bugs** are found. Continued nit removal may occur for up to one week.

**D. HEALTH SERVICES PROCEDURE**

1. Upon notification of suspected head lice, the nurse or designee will:
  - a. Examine student's hair for presence or absence of lice or nits. Lice and nits (dirty-white to gray colored eggs attached to the hair shaft) are visible to the naked eye.
  - b. Interview student to determine "source" or exposure history. Case finding is the most important method of identifying "source" cases.

***NOTE: Head lice require one or more blood meals each day and cannot survive off their host for more than a day or so. Eggs of lice, under optimum conditions, hatch in 7 to 10 days and reach adult maturity in approximately 2-3 weeks (4/98 Harvard School of Public Health).***

2. If live lice/nits are found the nurse or designee will:
  - a. Inform parent or identified adult.
  - b. Instruct parent regarding exclusion policy for live lice and treatment options/requirements.
  - c. Provide parent with completed forms NP 302 and NP 303.
  - d. Examine each available sibling and identified school contact of the infected student for the presence of lice or nits. Notify other school nurses of siblings in their building(s).
  - e. If several students are excluded in a classroom: send home Form NP 304 or 305 with each student in the classroom.
  - f. Provide education and support for the student, family, and school community throughout the process.
  - g. Notify the classroom teacher, administrator and secretary regarding students excluded for head lice. Instruct regarding re-examination protocols as needed.

3. Return to School

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- a. Interview student to determine type of treatment used. Examine student's hair for presence of lice or nits. If no live lice, the student may return to class. Using the **NIT RATING SCALE**, score the affected person's hair. Score should improve daily in order to remain in school and have few to no nits (score 0 to 1) by the end of one week.
- b. Return to class if no live lice. Re-exclude if live lice/bugs present. Persistent failure at nit-removal may indicate the parent/guardian has not understood the steps necessary to eradicate pediculosis and a home visit may be indicated.

#### 4. Cleaning Recommendations

- a. Lice are transmitted directly from person to person and indirectly by contact with items such as caps, combs, pillows, upholstery and linens. Lice do not jump from person to person or object to object. Lice require a host to continue to live and reproduce.
- b. Lice may be killed by exposure to high temperature, dry cleaning or isolation from human hosts for 2 weeks. The Center for Disease Control recommends the following:
  - Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens used during the past two days using the hot water cycle (130 degrees F.) Machine dry on the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes.
  - Clothing, stuffed toys and other items not able to be washed as above should be ironed, dry cleaned or stored in a sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks.
  - Combs, brushes and hair accessories should be soaked in rubbing alcohol, Lysol<sup>TM</sup> or hot water (130 degrees F.) for 1 hour and then washed in warm, soapy water.
  - Carpets, upholstered furniture and car seats should be thoroughly vacuumed.
  - Pediculicidal sprays are not recommended for use.

#### 5. Additional Information

- a. Head lice are a nuisance but **NOT** an emergency (NASN). In North America head lice are primarily a problematic annoyance. Infested children and adults may experience itching, lose sleep, and have a shortened attention span (Harvard School of Public Health).
- b. No single treatment for head lice is likely to succeed. Success most often comes from an integrated approach between several methods combined with perseverance (Harvard School of Public Health). Mechanical removal is the common denominator for success (National Pediculosis Assoc).
- c. Several effective OTC remedies are available at grocery stores and local pharmacies. These include but are not limited to RID, A-200, Triple X and NIX. Parents must be advised to read and follow the instructions printed on the package insert for effective treatment using these products. Be careful before trying 'alternative' treatments, like mayonnaise, vaseline, olive oil or Tea tree oil. Although they are 'natural' treatments, they are untested and have not been shown to be effective in research done by many respected universities and organizations.

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- d. A "fine tooth comb" can be effective in the removal of nits. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective in removing nits (Center for Disease Control).
- e. Viable nits are most generally found within 1/4" - 1" of the root of the hair shaft. There are many great pictures online.
- f. In the event all viable nits are not removed, new lice will hatch in 7 to 10 days and re-exclusion and treatment will be necessary.