

Procedure for Managing Head Lice in Schools

Student Health Services

Pulaski County Public Schools and its school health program are committed to maximizing student's academic performance and physical wellbeing in a healthy and safe environment. Managing cases of head lice in the schools should be based on scientific and medical best practices to help reduce unnecessary school absences, limit embarrassment of students and decrease unnecessary exposure to potentially toxic chemicals to treat head lice. Pulaski County Public Schools recognizes that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Misinformation about head lice causes anxiety for parents and school staff.

PCS defines a healthy and safe environment as one in which adults work together to provide the following environmental factors established by current research as necessary for the health and wellbeing of students with head lice:

- Educating staff, students, and parents/guardians about head lice
- Establishing evidence based management for students with head lice

The goals of providing a healthy and safe environment for students with head lice are to:

- Maximize academic performance
- Minimize absence due to unnecessary exclusion of students with head lice and/or nits

Procedure for Management of Head lice infestations in schools:

- School employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the school nurse. The school nurse shall check the student's for head lice. An infestation shall be determined by looking closely through the hair and scalp for **viable nits** or live lice.
- If nits are found but there are no live (crawling) lice on the hair, the school nurse shall reinspect within 7-10 school days.
- If live (crawling) lice are found on the hair, the parent/guardian will be notified by the end of the day via phone or a note sent home with the student. The parent/guardian shall be provided information on the biology of head lice, methods to eliminate infestation, and directions to examine household contacts for lice and nits. Recommend that the parent/guardian call their health care provider for recommendations of medical products that may be used to treat head lice. The school nurse will provide information on non medical treatment and how to best comb hair to remove lice and nits.
- Remember all **staff shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of students identified as having head lice**.
- The child will be allowed to return to school after being treated. Parent/Guardian shall be required to send the school nurse a note about the treatment method they used. The school nurse will check the child's head before they return to class.

- Information about head lice shall be sent home to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. The same information including parent letters/forms will be used in all schools.
- Students shall be discouraged from direct head to head contact with other students. The nurse shall provide in-service education to staff regarding how to handle nits and/or head lice in the classroom.
- To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all students our school nurses do not send letters home to all parents when we have a student with head lice.
- School and class wide screening will only be done if the school nurse in her professional judgment feels it is necessary.