

## Head Lice Policy & Whole School Management Program

Head Lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

This school policy draws on information obtained from the Information Pamphlet and Management Guidelines 'Scratching for Answers?'

### **We at Melton Primary School, will:**

- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue;
- Request that all families attending this school sign an 'agreement' to accept the conditions of the school's head lice policy;
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required;
- Participate in a Head Lice Local Area Network to work with other schools, childcare centres, health services and pharmacists in our Local Government Area to achieve consistent management and policy across sectors;
- Review the head lice policy annually and seek endorsement from the School Council/Community;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of Head Lice;
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

### **It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this school that:**

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice on a regular basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method;
- Your child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2009);
- Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary;
- Parents/Carers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2009);
- Children with long hair will attend school with hair tied back;
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

### **To support parents/carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management, the School will undertake to:**

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required;
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school;
- Include annual head lice updates for staff in-service programs;
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government; Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2009 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge, and
- Only exclude children from school with live insects
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced

## Head Lice inspections

There is no requirement for any school to undertake 'head-lice inspection' programs however, to try and limit the spread of head-lice throughout the school, Melton Primary School will conduct head-lice inspections of classes when there is a known occurrence of head-lice within that class.

### In conducting Head Lice inspections Melton Primary School will:

- Ensure that any person undertaking 'head lice inspections' will adhere to the school policy and latest Department of Human Services information and Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2009;
- Only inspect the heads of children whose parents have given prior consent;
- Develop a generic/blanket consent form which parents sign at commencement of school year;
- Respect the wishes of parents/families who elect not to participate in a school head lice check;
- Include teachers and school staff in inspection.

### The Department of Education have guidelines that are published to schools.

Schools and all school staff under Principal authorisation are encouraged to visually check each student's hair for the presence of head lice, when it is suspected that head lice may be present. A Visual Check occurs when Staff observes a student without physically touching a student's head.

For many families and staff of school-aged children, head lice continue to create concerns. While it is known that head lice do not carry any infectious diseases, the Principal, Staff and School Council of Melton Primary School have trained staff to help manage Head lice issues across the school. All trained staff do sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure information privacy for all children and their families as part of the training course.

### Head Lice Management Program goals include:

- Reduce the frustration and misinformation associated with head lice.
- Decrease the concerns regarding head lice within the school community.
- Help to inform families in regard to potentially harmful insecticide treatments.
- Promote regular home based screening using conditioner and comb method.

### We ask you to include your child in our screening program by signing this Consent Form.

The program entails school staff inspecting your child's hair from time to time, especially when a known incident has occurred in the classroom. If your child has eggs, an information form will be sent home instructing you to remove the eggs. If live lice are found, the school will ring for you to collect your child from school and treat their hair. Child may return to school once treatment has commenced.

### Our aim is for 100% participation in our Head Lice Management Program at Melton Primary School.

If you would like to include your child, please complete this consent form which is valid for the child's enrolment at Melton Primary School up until the end of Grade 6 or if they exit earlier to another school. Your consent may be withdrawn at anytime by completing another Consent Form which is available at the office.

If you would also like to screen your child at home and would like additional information, please contact the school office or refer to <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice>

Thank you

Alan McColl, Principal

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Name of child attending Melton Primary School: .....

I/We hereby give consent for the above named child to participate in the school's head lice inspection program for the duration of their enrolment at Melton Primary School.

Parent's/guardian's/carer's full name: .....

**Signature of parent/guardian/carer:** ..... **Date**.....

*Please inform the school if guardianship/custody changes for your child, as this form will need to be re-signed to reflect these changes.  
Please also inform the school in writing if you no longer wish to provide consent for the school to undertake head lice inspections for your child.*