

BENTON JUNIOR COLLEGE

HEAD LICE POLICY

Rationale

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. They do not carry or transmit disease. They are a common cause of head itch and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.

Anyone can catch head lice. People get head lice from direct head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. This can happen when people play or work closely together. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump.

Aims

In accordance with DET policy this aims to provide a safe and healthy environment for the college community, to minimize anxiety by acknowledging that most schools will have children with head lice at any given time, to respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively, to ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice prevention and treatment, and to reduce the spread of head lice.

Implementation

- Whilst parents have the main 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.
- The college will distribute up to date, accurate, consistent information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff in the foundation orientation pack information will appear in newsletters throughout the year and as required.
- As part of enrolment, parents will be asked to sign a consent form allowing their children to have their hair inspected by staff. The consent form will cover the duration of enrolment at Benton Junior College (BJC). The consent form outlines the responsibilities of the parent and the college in relation to head lice management. Only children whose parents have signed the consent form will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- If staff suspect that a student has head lice, the student will be sent to first aid where their hair will be checked and if live lice are found a staff member will contact the parent/carer or emergency contact.
- When a student is identified with live lice, they will be provided with a note to take home (Appendix 1)
- Students identified with head lice will be excluded from attending college until the day after the appropriate treatment has commenced, in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019
- Hair that is longer than shoulder length must be tied back at all times (as per BJC Uniform and Dress Code)
- When the college is notified of a student with head lice, a letter to parents of students in the same class and the adjoining class will be sent electronically (Appendix 2)
- The college will exercise sensitivity towards students and families with head lice and maintain student confidentiality.
- The college will encourage students to learn about head lice to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue.
- The college will continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective knowledge, understanding of and response to managing head lice.

Parent Responsibilities

- Regularly (at least once a week) inspect your child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspect all household members. If head lice are present, use safe treatment practices (refer to, Treating and Controlling Head Lice, Department of Health, Victoria)
- Ensuring your child does not attend the college with untreated head lice (in accordance with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 2019)
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place your child's health at risk.
- Notifying the college if your child is affected and that treatment has started.
- Washing your child's college hat, pillowcase, etc. to prevent re-infection.
- Being aware that one treatment is not sufficient.
- Notifying parents of your child's friends or family members so they have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
- Being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from the college rests with the Principal Team
- Being aware that immediate exclusion applies to those children who have live head lice, in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing 2019
 - Being aware that the college is not the only place where a child may catch head lice (swimming pools, sleepovers, playgrounds, relatives, children from other schools, are examples of other places)
 - Tie your child's hair back if it is long (as per BJC Uniform and Dress Code policy)

College Responsibilities

- Distributing up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff.
- College head lice policy to reinforce an accurate, consistent approach to the management of head lice infections, which is approved by the College Council.
- Upon enrolment of a child, obtaining written parental consent to conduct head lice inspections, to cover the duration of their enrolment at BJC.
- Staff will discreetly check a child's hair if the presence of head lice is suspected (this may take place in the First Aid Room or back of classroom, etc)
- Encouraging parents to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child for head lice and providing practical advice to those parents experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Encouraging children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue.
- Being aware that there is no requirement in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 for a child treated for head lice to obtain a clearance certificate to be issued by a health practitioner or a municipal council, on return to school.
- Where appropriate, and at the Principal Team's discretion, provide an alert notice to the college community, when an outbreak of head lice has been detected in the college.
- Implement activities that minimise head-to-head contact during headlice outbreak.

Related Policies

- School Uniform and Dress Code Policy.

References

- Head Lice Management Tool Kit, Department of Education and Training, Victoria;
- Head Lice, Department of Health, Victoria;
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019

Date created	May 2023 in accordance with DET policy
Date to review policy	May 2025

Appendix 1

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Head lice or eggs are suspected to have been detected on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au and search for “head lice (nits)” for advice on finding, treating and preventing head lice.

It is very important for you to notify Benton Junior College and to advise when appropriate treatment has commenced.

It is important to note, that health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note that this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs. More information about exclusion requirements can be found by searching for “school exclusion table” at www.health.vic.gov.au.

Please complete the below form and provide this to the front office on the return of your child to school.



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**Action Taken – Student Head Lice
Parent/Guardian/Carer Response Form**

CONFIDENTIAL

Student’s Full Name: _____ Year Level: _____

I understand that my child should not attend school with untreated head lice.

I used the following recommended treatment for head lice or eggs for my child (insert name of treatment)
_____.

Treatment commenced on (insert date) ___/___/___

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

Appendix 2

They're Back

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carer's,

It has come to my attention that some students in the school may have head lice and I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair this week (date).

Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice. You may be reassured to know that head lice are commonly found in places other than at Benton Junior College. Head lice are common in school-aged children and are the most adaptable of creatures. They have survived living solely on humans for 10,000 years!!!!

What can you do?

I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair and in those instances where head lice or eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

Please see the attached pamphlet *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

How do I treat my child for head lice?

The attached pamphlet (as noted above) has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

If head lice or eggs are found on your child's hair you need to inform:

The school and advise when the treatment has started.

Parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

When can my child return to school?

Health regulations requires that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note, this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

Benton Junior College is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.