

Care of Children with Lice

It appears that there are still some misunderstandings about the process of caring for children with lice or those suspected to have lice. So, we are sending out this reminder to ensure consistent care of our students and consistent responses to parents and community members.

Teachers may request that a student be checked for lice if they have a concern (i.e. they see lice, the child is constantly scratching, etc.). The student will be sent to the health office for a check without the other students being informed of the reason for the visit to the health office.

If a student is absent for lice or sent home to be treated, the student will come to the health office to be checked prior to going to class. If there are still crawling lice, the student likely was not treated and will be sent home for treatment. The health office will re-educate parents regarding treatment.

The health office will establish a procedure for ensuring that a student is rechecked upon return to school (i.e. ask the parent to bring the student in the morning; ask the teacher to ask the student if they stopped in the health office on their way in etc.). Please be sure that lice related absences are reported to the health office so that health office staff can check the student upon return to school.

The health office will educate parents/guardians/caregivers regarding proper lice treatment; ensure that parents are using the product properly; and encourage them to contact their physician if the treatment does not work.

We will send students with live lice home at the end of the day with instructions for treating the student. The nurse may use her/his discretion if an infestation warrants the student be sent home for treatment before the end of the day. If the health office is unable to reach a parent, then the student goes home at the end of the day.

Classroom checks are no longer recommended as best practices proposed by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses etc. Articles and information to support this are available to share with parents and community members. Classroom checks also breach confidentiality and promote isolation and bullying.

We do not exclude students with nits, as per evidence based practice.

We do not send home letters informing parents that there is a case of lice in the classroom.

Please refer to the below information and talking points when parents or community members express concern regarding head lice.

LICE INFORMATION

When you get a call from a parent or other concerned individual, here are some basic reminders.

- We do not share information regarding if children in a particular class or at your school are being treated for lice to protect confidentiality.

- The goal of the conversation is to provide information, clarify misinformation, and keep from making the caller more upset. Hopefully, by maintaining a calm, non-defensive, non-confrontational manner you will be able to deescalate the situation or at least not further inflame it. Remember to listen as well as talk. Acknowledge the callers concern and summarize what they are saying to show that you have heard them.
- We only recommend evidenced based advice regarding treatment. We do not endorse home remedies.
- While TV news loves to talk about SUPER LICE and resistance, there is no current agreement about how common they are or if they really exist. The term “super lice” refers to lice that may have become resistant to over the counter medications. The lice are **NOT** larger or more aggressive.

TALKING POINTS TO USE

- The district policy has not changed. What HAS changed is the district regulation guiding how that policy is implemented.
- Any changes made to district practices regarding lice follow the most up to date national standards from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Disease Control and the National Association of School Nurses. The changes were made after extensive research and bring TUSD in line with national standards for lice guidelines in schools.
- Do NOT say that we don’t do anything about lice anymore. We check any student who is showing symptoms of a lice infestation, usually as a result of a teacher notifying us or a student complaining of itching or discomfort.
- Classrooms are not routinely screened once a student has been found to have lice. Research has shown that this is an ineffective way of identifying students with lice, frequently leads to breaches in student confidentiality and is associated with bullying. The bottom line is it does nothing to decrease the incidence of lice.
- It is unusual for lice transmission to occur at school as it requires head to head contact. Lice do not fly or jump. They rarely leave the scalp as they can’t live long off of it. If it can be easily moved or “flicked off” of the hair, it isn’t lice.
- If it is the parent of a student with lice:
 - Did they see live lice?
 - No live lice or nits ¼” or closer to the scalp: likely no active infestation and no need to treat.
 - Have they started treatment?
 - If lice did not die after first application, contact your doctor for a different kind of medication. The lice might be resistant. The doctor will be able to check the student and may determine that it isn’t lice.
 - Emphasize the importance of following the directions, most importantly the second application. Application should be done on DRY hair and hair should not be washed for at least one day after application. Hair should be carefully combed with the enclosed lice comb to remove all nits.
 - Any student treated for lice should be seen in the Health Office upon arrival back to school after treatment to be checked.