

Administrative Procedure 318 – Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Background

The Division recognizes the concern represented by the transmission of pediculosis (head lice) in schools while also acknowledging that it is neither a disease nor does Alberta Health Services consider it to be a serious health concern. Anyone can get head lice. Head lice are not related to a lack of cleanliness, and are just as commonly found in clean hair.

Pediculosis is, however, a social nuisance that needs to be managed through coordinated efforts among parents, school staff and the community in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of students. Students suspected of having pediculosis will be supported in a confidential and nonjudgmental manner, and care shall be taken to protect the individual from undue invasion of privacy.

Procedures

1. At the start of the school year, the Parent Awareness Letter ([Appendix 318-1](#)) may be sent home at the discretion of the Principal.
2. Children who scratch their heads frequently, may be signalling they have lice. If you suspect a child has head lice, contact the child's parents with your suspicions, and request treatment of the student.
3. Once a case has been confirmed, parents of the infected student will be given the Parent Notification Letter ([Appendix 318-2](#)) along with a fact sheet from Alberta Health Services ([Appendix 318-4](#))
4. If feasible, the parent will pick up the student to commence treatment.
5. The student may return to school after a treatment has been applied to kill the lice.
6. To prevent further infestation, parents are requested to inspect the child's hair to identify and remove all nits (lice eggs).
7. If it is necessary for the student to remain home during treatment, the Principal will ensure the educational program continues by providing work as appropriate.
8. Discreetly and after consultation with the parents, a follow-up check by an experienced school staff member may occur when the child returns to school.
9. A Parent Notification Letter and fact sheet from Alberta Health Services will also be sent home to other parents either in the class or school depending on the situation. ([Appendix 318-3](#)) and ([Appendix 318-4](#)).
10. Confidentiality is to be maintained, so as not to embarrass a child who has head lice. It is important that children who have head lice are not isolated or treated differently.

11. In the event of multiple confirmed cases of pediculosis in a school, staff may develop screening procedures, through consultation with Alberta Health Services, to conduct head lice inspections.
12. Principals are to review with staff the “Head Lice” course (M-192) offered through PublicSchool Works if there are cases of pediculosis in the school.
13. Principals are to promote and school staff are to teach preventative measures for the control of head lice. Emphasize to all children that they are not to share combs, brushes, barrettes, hats, scarves, earmuffs, headphones, helmets, and discourage all head to head contact.
14. If staff have any further questions or concerns, they are to contact Health Link by calling 811, or contact the public health nurse. Further information on head lice can be found at www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca

Reference: Section 11, 32, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Public Health Act

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