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## ASHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

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*Inspiring Today's Child for Tomorrow*

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13<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Re: Treatment of Nits**

We have had outbreaks of nits across the school. Unfortunately we don't seem to have been very successful in eradicating them and they keep coming back. I know that it is time-consuming but please help us by following the guidance below (*taken from the NHS website*). To help keep outbreaks to a minimum and minimise the chances of head lice spreading, Ashfield require all children (both boys and girls) who have shoulder length hair or longer to have their hair tied back close to their head.

Head lice can be difficult to detect, even when you closely inspect your child's head.

If you think your child may have head lice:

- Check your child's hair. The most common places for head lice to lurk are in the hair behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
- If you still can't spot any lice, comb the child's hair with a special 'nit comb'. These are available from most chemists. It's easier to spot head lice as they fall out if you comb the hair over a piece of white paper.

If head lice are present, you need to treat your child. Head lice are tough. They can't be killed by washing with normal shampoo or normal combing. Because they reproduce so quickly, you've got to kill them before they spread. If your child has head lice, check everyone in the family. You'll need to treat everyone affected to get rid of them.

You can treat head lice by wet-combing hair with a special comb, or by using medicated lotions or sprays available over the counter at pharmacies. However, neither will protect against re-infestation if head-to-head contact is made with someone with head lice during the treatment period.

### **Wet combing**

The wet combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb. You can buy a fine-toothed comb from your local pharmacy or you can order one online. Lotions or sprays don't need to be used for wet combing. However, to be effective, wet combing needs to be carried out regularly and thoroughly. The method you should use is described below.

- Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head is combed through.
- Rinse out conditioner and repeat the combing procedure.
- Repeat the procedure on days three, six, nine, 12 and 15, so that you clear young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity.

How long it will take to comb your child's hair will depend on the type of hair they have and its length. For example, short, straight hair can be quickly prepared and can be fine-toothed combed in a few minutes. Longer, curlier hair will take longer to comb.

### **Lotion or sprays**

Using a lotion or spray is an alternative method of treating head lice. However, to be effective they need to be used correctly. Your pharmacist will be able to recommend an over-the-counter lotion or spray and advise you about how to use it correctly. A lotion or spray should only be used if a living (moving) head louse is found. Crème rinses and shampoos aren't thought to be effective and therefore aren't recommended.

Ensure you have enough lotion or spray to treat everyone in your family who's affected. Use enough to coat the scalp and the length of the hair during each application. Follow the instructions that come with the lotion or spray when applying it. Depending on the product you're using, the length of time it will need to be left on the head may vary from 10 minutes to eight hours.

The normal advice is to treat the hair and repeat the treatment after seven days. Some products also supply a comb for removing dead lice and eggs. Some products may be capable of killing eggs as well as lice, although there's no certainty of this. Check for baby lice hatching from eggs three to five days after using a product and again 10-12 days afterwards.

At least two applications of lotion are needed to kill lice over the hatching period because the lotions don't always kill louse eggs.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best wishes

Carolyn Dalziel