

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

Schools can play an important role in providing educational programs, which will help students, staff and the public to better understand and control pediculosis. It is hoped that by increasing individual and community awareness about identification, transmission and treatment of head lice, much of the stigma and emotion attached to the problem will be alleviated.

It is recognized that while pediculosis (head lice) is an unpleasant nuisance, it is not a health problem. Head lice do not carry or spread disease. While the primary responsibility for the control and prevention of pediculosis lies with the home and family, school staff will assist with the prevention and control of pediculosis through the following procedures.

- PRINCIPAL
1. Implements programs on the elimination and control of head lice emphasizing social implications, medical facts, prevention and treatment, and dispelling the social stigma associated with contracting the pest.
 2. Ensures teachers have appropriate resource materials and assistance in order to assist in the delivery of educational programs. The Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services may be contacted for assistance in planning in-service for staff and parents or providing current literature.
 3. Reviews annually, with the school council, school procedures for pediculosis prevention and control.
 4. Sends notification to parents / guardians at the beginning of each school year and again in the Spring regarding the prevention and control of pediculosis (see Appendix 1).
 5. Contacts the parents or guardians when it is suspected that a child has pediculosis and re-admits the student upon notification that the student has received appropriate treatment. Re-entry to schools will be 24 hours after treatment upon written confirmation from parents that treatment has taken place, which includes removal of nits (see Appendix 2).
 6. Handles all cases of head lice in a confidential and sensitive manner.

- PARENTS Parents play a major role in assisting with the control of pediculosis in the following ways:
7. Check children's heads regularly for pediculosis.
 8. Report cases of head lice immediately to the school.
 9. Administer appropriate treatment (contact local pharmacy for information).
 10. Remove all nits from children's hair prior to their return to school.
 11. Verify in writing that the child has been adequately treated and free of live lice and that all nits have been removed (see Appendix 2).
 12. Ensure that children are back to school as soon as possible so that there is as little disruption as possible to their educational program.
 13. Find out the dates when head checks will take place at the school to avoid braiding hair, etc. so that head checks are easily completed.
- SCHOOL STAFF School staff can play a major role in the prevention of head lice in the following ways:
14. Encourage students to put their hats and scarves inside their coats while coats are hanging or inside backpacks.
 15. Eliminate the use of dress-up clothes in classrooms where head lice have been found until the problem is solved.
 16. Discourage sharing combs, brushes, hats and scarves amongst students.
 17. Provide educational sessions for students and parents to assist the community in understanding the problem. The Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services can be contacted to assist with the implementation of educational programs.
- The following action will be taken when staff suspects cases of head lice:
18. All students suspected of having head lice should be sent home, as soon as possible after school administration have been in contact with the parent / guardian. A letter outlining the situation should be sent home with the student (see Appendix 2). If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted the individual should be isolated in a sensitive manner.
 19. A notification letter to parents/guardians should be sent home with each child in the affected classroom (see Appendix 3).
 20. When outbreaks occur, the principal should contact neighbouring schools to pass on relevant information.

HEALTH
SERVICES

Health Services personnel can be of great assistance when planning educational programs and in assisting families when the infestation persists (see Appendix 4 - Role of the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services).

21. If a case persists after chronic infestations, the school will excuse the student from classes and the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services may be notified for advice or further assistance.
22. If a parent/guardian refuses advice from the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services the school will invoke Section 307 (1) and 265 (j) of The Education Act (see Appendix 5).

Implementation Date: December 14, 1998
Revised: February 12, 2003

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION - PEDICULOIS

A notice similar to the one below should be included in the school newsletter or sent home as a separate letter early in September and again in the spring. Attaching the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services Fact Sheet (see Appendix 6 & 7) would be helpful information for parents.

NOTE: The following examples are only suggestions. Principals should tailor their procedures and community notification in consultation with their school councils in order to meet the needs of their community.

Sample Newsletter Item:

Spring and Fall are the seasons when head lice (pediculosis) are most prevalent in school children. Your assistance in early detection is greatly appreciated. Please check your child for head lice weekly. If you find evidence of head lice, please contact the school immediately. This will allow us to notify other parents in the classrooms affected so that they may check their child. Children who are suspected of having head lice will be excused until appropriate treatment has been administered.

Infestation by head lice is an unpleasant nuisance, but not a health problem. Head lice do not carry or spread disease. By working together we can control the spread of head lice in our community. Attached to this newsletter is a Fact Sheet with helpful information for parents.

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION - PEDICULOSIS

Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians:

Date:

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Head lice infestations are situations, which occur in the community and the schools. Infestation by head lice is an unpleasant nuisance, but not a health problem. Head lice do not carry or spread disease. The primary responsibility for the control of head lice rests with the parent / guardian. Weekly head lice checks should be done in the home.

The Lambton Kent District School Board has developed a procedure to deal with this issue.

The procedure will be implemented at _____ School as follows:

1. Information is offered to students about head lice through the health program.
2. Current literature and information will be available to staff and parents through the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services.
3. If the principal / vice-principal suspects that a child has head lice or nits the parent will be notified and the student excused from school until the school receives written notification that treatment has occurred. Treatment consists of administering appropriate shampoo and the removal of nits. You can assist by contacting the school if head lice are discovered at home. The student will be re-admitted to school 24 hours after treatment, and once a school representative has confirmed the student to be clear of head lice.
4. In cases where chronic infestations occur, the school will excuse the student from attendance and the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services will be consulted for further assistance.
5. In cases where a parent / guardian refuses assistance from the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services, the school will excuse / suspend the student from school under the authority of the Education Act.

The school will work co-operatively with parents / guardians to assist in the prevention and control of head lice. By working together we can control the problem of head lice. Attached to this letter is a Fact Sheet with helpful information for parents.

Sincerely,

Attach.

Principal.

APPENDIX 3

NOTICE TO PARENTS REGARDING HEAD LICE IN CLASSROOM

Date:

Dear Parents or Guardians:

We suspect that a student in your child's class has head lice. Since this condition spreads easily, it is recommended that you check your child's hair regularly for signs of live lice, or their eggs. (nits)

If you suspect that your child may have head lice it is important that treatment be given immediately to prevent further spread. Please inform the school so other parents can be notified to check their children more closely. All matters regarding head lice will be handled confidentially.

If you have questions, please contact the school office. You can get more information about head lice by contacting your local pharmacist or the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services.

Lambton Community Health Services Dept.
(519)383-8331 or www.lambtonhealth.on.ca

Chatham-Kent Public Health Division
(519)352-7270 or ckhu@chatham-kent.ca

Sincerely,

Principal.

APPENDIX 4

**ROLE OF THE LAMBTON COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT OR
CHATHAM-KENT PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.**

The Medical Officer of Health has no legal mandate to exclude a child with head lice from school, to compel a student to return to school after a reasonable length of time following exclusion for head lice, or to isolate a child with a suspected or confirmed infestation. The responsibility and authority to exclude a child from school rests with the school principal as described in the Education Act. [Section 307 (1) and Section 265 (j)]

The primary role of the Lambton Community Health Services Department or Chatham-Kent Public Health Services in the management and control of head lice is education. In fulfilling this role Health Services staff will:

- provide current information regarding the control and management of head lice.
- provide educational resources for schools, parents, and the community.
- provide advice to principals or assistance to families with chronic pediculosis to educate about eradication.

The Lambton Community Health Services Department and Chatham-Kent Public Health Services are unable to:

- screen for head lice.
- provide head checks so that students may return to school.
- provide shampoo for families.

APPENDIX 5

EDUCATION ACT

Section 307 (1) - Discretionary Suspension of a Pupil:

“A pupil may be suspended if he or she engages in an activity that, under a policy of the board, is an activity for which suspension is discretionary.” – Lambton Kent District School Board Policy / Regulation AD – 113 - 01

Section 265 (j) - Duties of Principal:

- (j) “Care of pupils and property - to give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of the pupils, to the cleanliness, temperature and ventilation of the school, to the care of all teaching materials and other school property, and to the condition and appearance of the school buildings and grounds.”

APPENDIX 6

LAMBTON COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
160 Exmouth Street,
Point Edward, Ontario. N7T 7Z6
phone: 1-519-383-8331
toll free: 1-800-667-1839
internet: www.lambtonhealth.on.ca

CHATHAM-KENT PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
435 Grand Avenue West,
Chatham, Ontario. N7M 5L8
phone: 1-519-352-7270
internet: www.chatham-kent.ca

APPENDIX 6 (PAGE 2)

APPENDIX 7

MEDIA LIBRARY RESOURCES

The following resources are available through the Media Library:

1. **Video - “Head to Head with Lice”, #105492**
This is a story of a twelve year old boy combating a head lice infestation. The program shows clearly and simply the methods for detection, diagnosis and treatment, as well as dispelling myths surrounding head lice infestation.

2. **Video - “Head Lice to Dead Lice”, #102567**
This video combines live action and animation to educate children and adults about preventing and getting rid of head lice. Outlines a five step battle plan to eliminate head lice.