

FRANKLIN CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION AND ITS MEMBER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

COMMON PROCEDURE FOR HEAD LICE F17

(Revised February, 2005, in accord with Vermont Department of Health Recommendations.)

General Information:

The psychological, social and economical impact of head lice infestations can create a problem in the community. Recognizing that a sizeable number of cases exist from time to time, the Franklin Central Supervisory Union and its member School Districts will take the necessary measures to reduce the loss of instructional time for students. These procedures are based on current recommendations by the Vermont Department of Health and other public health organizations.

Prevention strategies are an important part of controlling the spread of head lice. The Superintendent/Designee, using public health resources when necessary, will develop a plan detailing a system-wide approach to preventing and controlling the spread of a head lice infestation. The plan will include the following:

Identify partners who will need to collaborate such as parents and children, school nurses and other school personnel, child care providers, local physicians, town health officers, public health staff, community health clinic staff, community volunteers, and other community and business members (e.g. dry cleaners, laundromats, pharmacies).

Annually provide in-service education for all staff with emphasis on diagnosis, mode of transmission, treatment, and control plans.

Prepare educational materials which will be made available via the website or distributed at least annually at the beginning of each school year to parents and students. School nurses at the elementary/middle schools may send home notification immediately following any incident at school, at their discretion.

Institute school and classroom practices that include:

Assigning individual hooks for student belongings.

Having students keep their hats inside their coat sleeves.

Permanently assigning resting mats, towels, or pillows and keep separate while in use or in storage.

Discouraging sharing of combs, brushes, or hair ornaments.

Limiting the transporting of personal toys such as stuffed animals from home to school.

Definitions:

Nuisance condition: Nuisance-type conditions include Pediculosis (lice), scabies, and ringworm.

Reportable disease: list of communicative disease defined by VDH that are required to be reported.

Managing Head Lice Cases:

Any staff member who suspects head lice will report this immediately to the school nurse or Principal.

Any student identified by the school nurse (or qualified designee) as having lice and untreated nits shall be discouraged from close contact with others and be sent home at the end of the school day.

Verbal and written instructions for treatment will be given to the family of each identified student. The instructions shall include a suggestion that the parent or guardian of the student contact the child's physician or other pediatric health care provider. Instructions shall also include recommendations for treatment that are consistent with Vermont Departments of Health and Education guidelines and that the student may return to school after proper treatment. At all schools, the School Nurse is available to examine individuals upon request.

Students will be readmitted to school after the first treatment with a written or verbal confirmation from the parent or guardian that the initial treatment has been completed. In accord with Department of Health recommendations, students will not be excluded from school on the sole grounds that nits may be present despite appropriate treatment.

Each student returning to school will be examined by the school nurse or trained personnel to look for evidence that the treatment was performed. Re-treatment recommendations will be consistent with Vermont Department of Health and Department of Education guidelines. Parents will be notified of any re-infestation, and referred to the child's physician or pediatric health care provider for consideration of prescription medication.

If the number of cases is considered to constitute an incident the Principal will institute the outbreak procedures that accompany this policy. An outbreak is considered to have occurred when head lice infestation occurs in 2-3 students in the same classroom or when 10% of the individuals in a classroom, school, or child care facility have evidence of infestation.

The school nurse will provide additional in-service education, as needed, for staff with emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, and control plans.

The school nurse will initiate educational programs for students as necessary.

Managing a Head Lice Outbreak:

Send home for treatment at the end of the school day any individuals with evidence of live lice.

Vacuum carpeted classrooms daily during outbreak.

Discontinue temporarily "dress-up" activities and other activities that involve close person-to-person contact.

Do not spray with pesticides.

Encourage families to contact health care providers if they suspect treatment has failed.

Siblings and close personal contacts should be examined, and if infected, should be instructed on treatment.

Send general fact sheet and a notice of the outbreak home to all parents. Encourage the help of all parents to check for head lice daily. At the nurse's discretion, the student may be checked everyday.

Encourage parents to notify the school, childcare provider, and other close personal contacts when head lice have been identified.

The Vermont Department of Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and the National Association of School Nurses discourage the implementation of a "no nit" policy, and recommend that children continue school after proper treatment despite the possible presence of nits.

School Nurse/Associate Nurse Role:

Be knowledgeable about current communicable disease regulations and control, current reportable diseases, and nuisance conditions. Maintain contact with Vermont Department of Health.

Be knowledgeable about school policies and procedures related to communicable disease/nuisance condition prevention.

Act as a resource in the writing of school policies and procedures.

Refer to medical home of diagnosis. Exclude and readmit students suspected or demonstrated to have a communicable disease/nuisance conditions according to local school policies and procedures.

Collaborate with health care providers on limitations for the child upon return to school.

Promote prevention and control through in-service and serve as a resource person to staff.

Provide health counseling to parents and guardians regarding appropriate treatment and follow-up.

Notify school administrators in the event of a communicable disease/nuisance conditions outbreak and follow guidelines established by the Vt Department of Health regarding information and protocols.

Document appropriate information in the student's record.

Resources:

Vermont Department of Health, Division of Community Public Health

<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/lice/lice.pdf>

<http://healthvermont.gov/index.aspx>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.aap.org/>

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;110/3/638.pdf>

National Association of School Nurses

<http://www.nasn.org/>

<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=237>

US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/treatment.html>

Other:

<http://kidshealth.org/PageManager.jsp?dn=KidsHealth&lic=1&ps=...>

http://www.schoolnurse.com/med_info/lice_scientific.html

Legal References:

VT State Board of Education Manual of Rules & Practices, §2120.8.1.3.3

VT School Health Services Manual: Standards of Practice,

Appendix 29-A-1 through 29-A-8

Cross Reference: Code F-17 and Code F-17 P

Sample Letter to Parent (at discretion of School Nurse/Principal)

Date:

Dear Parent,

A case of head lice has been detected in your child's class. Anyone can get head lice, mainly through direct head-to-head contact but also from sharing hats, brushes, and other personal items. Head lice are a problem in many communities and do not reflect poor hygiene or social status. Please do your part to prevent the spread of this communicable condition by checking your child(ren) daily for the next few weeks, and on a regular basis thereafter. Lice infestation is much easier to treat if caught early.

If you should discover a case of head lice or have any questions, please notify your school nurse and/or your child's healthcare provider.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

School Nurse