



HEADLICE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Gembrook Primary School.

PH: 03 5968 1313

email: gembrook.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the requirements for Gembrook Primary School to prevent and control the transmission of head lice. The aim of this policy is to minimise the spread of head lice infection and provide school families with information about headlice, outbreaks and management.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community is committed to a cooperative and collaborative approach to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

This school policy draws on information obtained from the Department of Health Victoria.

DEFINITIONS

Head lice

Pediculosis or 'head lice' are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They cannot transmit any infectious diseases. Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person, where head lice crawl from head-to-head.

SCOPE

Gembrook Primary School understands that the responsibility for the control of head lice lies with individuals, families, and public health experts. However, our school will assist with controlling and preventing head lice.

Gembrook Primary School will exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality and help reduce stigma. Our school will maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.

Gembrook Primary School must alert parents or carers of an infestation and use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community. When a student is identified with live head lice, Gembrook Primary School will inform their parent/carer that their child has head lice and exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced. Our school is not required to conduct visual head lice checks but in the event that they decide to, parental consent is required if the student is physically examined.

IMPLEMENTATION

To support parents/carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school considers it best practice to:



- Take a whole school approach to prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the Department of Health.
- Ensure the whole school community is aware of and understands this policy.
- Inform parents of lice outbreak so parents can be vigilant and prevent further spread of lice.
- Encourage parents to tie their child's hair back if it is long.
- Implement learning activities that minimise head-to-head contact during head lice outbreaks.
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school.
- Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health and Infectious Diseases Regulations 2019, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge.
- Only exclude children from school with live insects.
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- When students are observed to have headlice, the school will contact the family and ask that the student be removed from school until the hair is treated. This is accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019.

Parent or carer detection and treatment responsibilities

Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.

Responsibilities include:

- Regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members.
- Notifying the school if their child is affected and when treatment commenced.
- Not sending their children to school with untreated head lice. This is in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019.
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk.
- Children with long hair will be encouraged to attend school with hair tied back.
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

Visual head lice checks

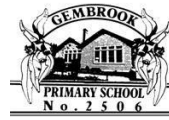
There is no requirement for our school to undertake head lice inspections. However, we may conduct visual checks only without physical contact which:

- Do not require parent or carer consent.
- Are made by people authorised by the Principal.

Exclusion from school

When a student is identified with live head lice Gembrook Primary School must:

- Contact the parent/carers via phone to inform them that their child may have head lice.
- Exclude the student from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019. The principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school.
- Alert parents of other students in the same class as the affected student/s.
- Use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation.
- The presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice).
- There is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for the child to return to school.



- The Department of Health indicates there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools at any given time, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following way:

- Available publicly on our school's website.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions as required.
- Reminders in our school newsletter.
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/head-lice/policy>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/infectious-diseases/policy>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2026