



BLACKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



HEADLICE MANAGEMENT POLICY

This school policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of Blackwood Primary School community members in community efforts to control headlice. This school policy draws on information obtained from the Department of Health publication *Healthy Heads - Without Headlice* and the Department of Education and Children's Services publication *Headlice – the role of preschools and schools in community headlice control*.

All members of this school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage headlice effectively.

Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate headlice but we can reduce the number of cases if all school community members work together in a coordinated manner. In this school community there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:

- All families (i.e. the families of students, staff and others working in the school community) will check at home the hair of all household members, on a weekly basis, for live lice. They will aim to use a headlice comb, for greater accuracy, and they will use an effective treatment if necessary
- Where an active case is detected, the school encourages immediate treatment and return to school the day after appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The principal or their nominee will contact the family to ask that a student be checked and receive treatment if necessary
- Parents/caregivers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced
- The school will notify parents/caregivers of children in a classroom when a case of headlice is detected in the classroom, to alert these families of the need to check frequently
- If headlice are detected at school, the child will be removed from close contact with other children. Parents will be contacted and asked, if possible, to take their child home for treatment. In cases where this isn't possible, the child will work in the office for the remainder of the day.
- Families will notify the parents/caregivers of their child's friends where appropriate, so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary
- A sympathetic attitude will be maintained by the entire school community to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures

To support parents/caregivers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to headlice management the school will undertake to:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of headlice to students, staff and their families at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required
- Maintain (anonymous) records of headlice cases detected through the school, for monitoring purposes
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers)
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced
- Encourage children to learn about headlice so as to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers) if required
- Review the *School Headlice Policy* annually and seek endorsement from the School Community/Governing Council

Headlice Checks

Blanket head inspections or headlice screening by school staff are strongly discouraged by DECS and The Department of Health. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that such programs:

- Take away from student curriculum time
- Are potentially intrusive of student privacy
- Take over family rights and responsibilities
- Convey the message that headlice management is a school issue rather than a household and wider community responsibility

At Blackwood Primary we will undertake headlice screening when a class of children have had consistent and repeated outbreaks of headlice.

The following procedures will be followed in undertaking headlice screening:

- Written, active, informed consent of the parents must be provided
- Respect for privacy and confidentiality is maintained, including respecting the wishes of families who elect not to participate in school headlice screening
- Understanding by all parties of the limited potential success and impact of the program (i.e. not all cases are guaranteed to be identified successfully and school-based screening alone cannot be considered an adequate community response)
- While SSOs will undertake the screening, the overall duty of care for students remains with the teaching staff.
- A letter will be given to all children involved in a headlice screening to help maintain confidentiality
- Teachers and other school staff will be included in screening

Information about headlice checks will contain the following information:

'I understand and accept that any children found to be infested may be withdrawn from close contact with other children until collected from school for treatment by parents or caregivers. I understand that I will need to collect my child promptly if headlice are evident as a result of this check'.