

12 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are all aware, head lice commonly occur amongst children and their presence does not mean that those affected are in any way dirty. However, head lice can cause distress and discomfort. They represent a community rather than a school problem but are seen at school because the age group most affected is 7 - 12 year olds. Apart from distributing information, school staff can do little to control head lice. The responsibility lies with parents and guardians.

Head lice can only be caught from head to head contact. They live close to the scalp and are quick moving insects, slightly smaller than a matchhead. They lay eggs which are small, skin coloured and well camouflaged, glued to the hair close to the scalp. After the egg hatches, the empty egg shell or 'nit' stays glued to the hair and moves away from the scalp as the hair grows. The 'nits' are white and shiny and easier to see. They are harmless and can persist for weeks after the lice have been treated successfully. Lice are difficult to see on the hair as they are grey or brown. Only about one third of children with lice will complain of itching which develops some weeks after the hair becomes affected.

Fortunately, we can get rid of head lice quickly and conveniently using a special lotion called Derbac-M lotion, which is a water based product and is available from your pharmacist.

To help us keep head lice under control I would like to advise you to take the following procedures:-

- Wet comb your child's hair twice a week, even if you do not suspect the presence of lice. Use a special detection comb available from your pharmacist
- Check all members of the household and advise anyone who has been in contact with your child to check their hair
- Regular brushing or combing is the best safeguard against lice

Even after successful treatment itching can persist for several weeks. After you have used the Derbac-M lotion twice, you should continue to wet comb the hair with conditioner at least twice a week. If you comb out lice (nits can persist for weeks and do not mean that the treatment has not worked) contact the School Nurse for advice before using another lotion.

Yours sincerely

JO GANT
HEADTEACHER