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Dear Parents,

Recently there have been several cases of head louse infection at the school. It is important that all families connected with the school are made aware of the outbreak and the simple steps to combat the problem.

As with many other social situations where children play closely together, it is possible in the school environment for head lice to transfer from head to head. Remember, head lice actually prefer clean hair, so the possibility of infection is absolutely no reflection on a family's standard of hygiene, anyone has as much chance of becoming infected as any other.

Fortunately head lice are easy to treat and, these days, easy to protect against.

Step 1: The first thing to do is to check whether lice are present. Don't rely on signs like itching and scratching - infection has to be well advanced for this to occur. The best way to detect lice is with a special comb you can get from the chemists. Run the comb through wet hair and if lice are present one will eventually appear. Lice are greyish-brown, six-legged insects about the length of a match head.

Step 2: If you find that your child is infected ask your doctor or local pharmacist to advise you about the many treatments available which can get rid of head lice. Don't forget you must treat the whole family even if not everyone is actually infected. Normally treatments can be obtained on prescription.

Step 3: Once you have cleared any infection, or if no lice were present in the first place, you should still continue to check regularly throughout the outbreak. There are now some preparations which can be used to guard against head lice during outbreaks or to avoid further re-infection following insecticide treatment. They are simple to use, have a pleasant smell and can be bought at any chemist.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs T Hickie
Headteacher