TBS - Head Lice Policy & Procedure at TBS
(including sample letter)

Information:
Children are often affected by head lice because they have much head-to-head contact while at school or during play. Head lice are most common in children of primary school age at home and in school. Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with head lice. The British School head lice policy sets out the responsibilities of parents and the School Nurse. Head lice infection is not primarily a problem of school, but of the wider community. School cannot solve it, but can help and provide some practical advice in tackling head lice. Regular checking of children’s heads for lice is important and it is a parental responsibility.

Parents or carers are responsible for preventing, detecting and treating head lice infections by:
● Combing/brushing children’s hair routinely to prevent the survival of lice.
● Check hair regularly i.e. undertake detection combing once weekly for signs of infection and also to check amongst close contacts when informed of an infection.
● Promptly treat any members of the family who have a head lice infection.
● Inform the school promptly if a school child is infected
● Use proprietary lotions only as a treatment when an infection is present and not as a preventative measure.
● Seek help and advice from the school nurse if needed.

School Nurse Responsibilities
If the child at school has a head lice infestation, the child should be kept in school till the end of the day but parents should be notified and the treatment should start as soon as possible. All parents of children in the class will be sent a letter informing them a case of head lice.
1. Parents should inform the school nurse of any head lice cases. The nurse will assess the case and may contact parents or send a head lice letter. In the absence of the Nurse, a teacher or CLS will be responsible for the task.
2. Head lice cases will be confidential. Parents are welcome to seek advice from the School nurse.

Exclusion of Children from School
Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be excluded from school. But, in line with the School Education Act, the Principal in consultation with the Nurse and/or the Health and Safety committee may exclude a child with massive head lice infestation until treatment has commenced. A few remaining eggs (Nits) are not a reason for continued exclusion. However, the parent must continue treatment over the following 10 days to ensure that all eggs and hatchlings have been removed.

Notes for Parents on Head Lice
What are head lice?
Head lice are tiny insects that live in hair and feed by biting the scalp and sucking blood. The female head louse lays her eggs close to the scalp where it is warm enough to incubate them. The eggs, or nits, hatch out, start feeding and soon begin to lay more eggs. Empty eggshells are left attached to the hair when the louse hatches. They are not dangerous, don’t carry diseases and are not a sign of poor hygiene.
How are they spread?
Head lice are caught by head to head contact with someone who already has them. Although anyone can catch them, they prefer the heads of 4-11 year olds. Clean hair is no protection against them. Head lice can crawl from one head to another in seconds but they cannot fly, jump or swim. Spread by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an affected person is uncommon.

What are the signs of head lice infestation?
There may not have any symptoms but itching can start if you become sensitive to louse saliva or faeces. Itchiness can take weeks to develop. The child might get a tickling feeling, or the feeling of something moving in their hair. Skin sores may develop from frequent scratching. A child may become irritable, lack sleep and find concentration difficult in severe infestation. You might see nits stuck to hair shafts.

Having these symptoms doesn’t always mean you have head lice. For example, an itchy scalp can be caused by other conditions, such as eczema or dandruff. We all start to itch as soon as head lice are mentioned. It is important that you don’t start any treatment until you have been diagnosed with head lice, or you find a living, moving louse on your scalp.

How are head lice detected?
Lice are most easily detected by combing really well conditioned soaking wet hair with a fine tooth comb; dry head checks are unreliable. Really wet lice stay still and cannot escape. Check behind the ears and at the nape of the neck as well.

If crawling lice are not seen, finding nits (eggs) firmly attached within a cm of the hair shafts near scalp strongly suggests, but does not confirm, that a person is infested and should be treated. Nits that have grown further out with the hair shaft are almost dead or hatched.

How is head lice infestation treated?
Head lice can be uncomfortable and embarrassing, but are not a serious health problem. There are a number of effective treatments available. You can either use an insecticide treatment or do wet combing (‘bug-busting’). Both methods require continued combing to remove unhatched eggs.

Insecticide lotions
The groups of insecticide have been shown effective and safe when used as directed. The doctor may prescribe locally available Ivermectin or Permethrin 1% lotions to get rid of infested head lice. Do not use lotions unless you find living, moving louse. Although the lotions will kill the lice, it will not kill the eggs. You will need to repeat the treatment after 7 days to kill newly hatched baby lice (nymph).

‘Bug busting’
An alternative option for dealing with head lice is wet combing, sometimes called ‘bug busting’. This is a non-chemical approach that involves mechanical removal of all lice from the hair after the hair has been washed and conditioned. With the conditioner still in, the hair is combed gradually using a fine tooth comb, section by section, in order to remove the lice. Wet lice find it difficult to escape from combing and hard to keep a grip on slippery conditioned hair.

To be effective, bug busting needs to be repeated every 3-4 days for two weeks to ensure that all head lice are removed before they can spread
Re-infection can occur if a child has direct head to head contact with someone else who has head lice. There is no good way of preventing head lice. The best way to prevent them from spreading is to check your whole family’s heads for lice regularly.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk
September 2019
Dear <INSERT PARENT NAME>

Outcome of a Head Lice Check

I would like to inform you that your child has had a hair check for head lice and a moving louse and recently laid nits were detected on your child’s head.

Head lice are spread mostly by direct head-to-head contact. The sharing of hats, combs and other hair accessories may also spread head lice, but this is rare. Head lice have nothing to do with cleanliness or parenting skills.

It is important to treat your child before he/she returns to school. Please start the treatment as soon as possible so that the spreading of head lice can be avoided.

I enclose a leaflet with information about how to treat head lice. I hope you find it useful.

Thank you in advance for your support and understanding in this matter. It is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Pabitra Deula
School Nurse
Dear Parents,

Reporting a Case of Head Lice in your child’s class

This is to inform you that there has been a case of head lice in your child’s class and your child may be at risk of contracting head lice. Head lice are not considered a health hazard as they do not spread disease or illness and they are not a sign of poor personal hygiene. Head lice multiply quickly and can easily spread from person to person (especially in young children as they have more head to head contact).

We recommend that you check your child’s hair for head lice regularly because head lice can be irritating and regular checks can help to detect early lice infestation and allow prompt treatment.

Information for Parents about Head Lice

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How are they spread?
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**For more information visit** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

I hope you find this information useful. Please contact me at the school or email pdeula@tbs.edu.np if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Mrs.Pabitra Deula
School Nurse