

Dowagiac Union Schools Head Lice Staff Procedure

Head lice continues to be an ongoing nuisance in all school district across the State of Michigan. The Dowagiac Union School District follows the guidelines and policies of the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Department of Education.

The goals of the school district are to:

1. Decrease school absenteeism.
2. Support families in their efforts to control and eliminate lice.
3. Maintain student privacy and dignity.

General Information-

Head lice does not discriminate between a clean head or a dirty one and they do not discriminate between classes. The goal of head lice is to find a warm head on which to live. Head lice can spread among school children as they may transfer from head to head or from clothes or personal items such as combs, brushes, or hats.

In working with head lice and student surveillance, it is important to keep the following elements in mind:

1. Implementation of head lice surveillance and control procedures is based on current scientific research and best practice.
2. Information about head lice infestation is to be shared on a “need to know” basis as deemed appropriate by the building administrator or school nurse.
3. Maintaining confidentiality of student information in compliance with FERPA.
4. Consideration of the student’s ability to understand whether or not they have head lice and if having this information is developmentally appropriate.
5. The importance of the office staff and/or school nurse documenting head lice surveillance efforts.

Procedure-

1. Identification of having head lice or nits.
 - a. A parent may inform the school that lice/nits have been found on the student’s head or on the head of a sibling.
 - b. A teacher or staff member may notice the student scratching the head or the neck repeatedly.
 - c. A student may notice the intense itch that often, but not always accompanies head lice.
 - d. A student may notice movement in another students’ hair or become aware of nits.
2. If head lice is suspected, the student may be sent to the office for identification and a private message or email will be sent to the office staff to alert them as to why the student is coming down there. Due to privacy and respecting the student dignity, do not send the student with a note or any other form that another student may be able to see or read.
3. When a student is found to have live lice:
 - a. The parent is notified and information related to the detection and elimination of head lice can be provided at the time or sent home with the student in a sealed envelope. Information is also posted on the Dowagiac Union Schools website under the school nurse section. Best practice is to personally speak with the parent as well as sending information home for reference.

- b. The student is **not** sent home from school, however if the parent offers to pick up the student, that is acceptable.
 - c. The parent is instructed that the student should be treated before returning to school.
 - d. Office staff will document information into the Student Information System in office visit section.
 - e. In some cases (based on the school nurse's professional judgement and recommendation), it may be appropriate to have the student's head checked upon returning to school.
 - i. If **nits** are found, the parent is notified to continue using the nit comb or nit-picking at least daily for the next two weeks.
 - ii. If **live lice** or **no evidence of improvement in nits**, contact the school nurse or building administrator as well as the parents. This procedure begins again and continues until there is no **live lice** seen and there is an improvement in the number of nits seen.
4. When a student is found to have **nits** present (no live lice detected):
- a. The parent is notified (best practice will be to contact parent personally) and encouraged to treat the student and use the nit comb or nit-pick (at least daily for the next two weeks).
 - b. The student is **not** sent home from school.
 - c. Information related to detection and elimination of head lice is sent home in a plain envelope with the student.
 - d. If future checks reveal an increased number of nits present or it is obvious to the staff that the student's hair has not been treated, the school nurse, building administrator, and parent will be contacted for follow-up and support.
 - e. Office staff will document information into the Student Information System in office visit section.

Notification Procedure-

1. The customary notification for the presence of head lice is to done on an individual/case by case basis to the parent/guardian of the infested student. Classroom notifications are not done with typical head lice cases. Upon the discretion of the school nurse and the building administrator a letter can be sent home if deemed necessary.
2. The parent or guardian should be contacted by phone and if unavailable a message may be left for the parent to contact the school. If the parent is unreachable or does not return a phone call by the end of the day a letter can be sent home to the parent/guardian in a sealed envelope with the parents name on it.
3. The Head Lice Informational Packet will be sent home with the child in a sealed envelope. This information will be provided to parent with the initial identification of head lice and then again if requested or needed. The Head Lice Informational Packet is also available online in the School Nurse section.
4. Parents should be offered head lice treatment solution if needed. Lice nit combs can be provided upon request by the parents.

Documentation-

Documentation of any head lice information is extremely important for the assistance of the school nurse and building administrator in follow up for these students. The information that is documented is helpful and useful for head lice statistics and is necessary to demonstrate the work that is being done by the school staff assisting students and their families during a head lice infestation.

1. If a student is checked in the office for head lice the information must be documented in the Student Information System under the Office Visit section.
2. If the office staff is unable to immediately enter the documentation a log can be provided to the staff to use as temporary documentation until the office staff can enter the information into the Student Information System.

Exclusion Procedure-

Exclusion of a student with head lice is not the goal of the Dowagiac Union Schools, but is a potential option. Before exclusion will even be considered the following criteria must have been met.

1. Documented chronic head lice infestation (chronic being determined by school nurse and building administrator).
2. Documented parent notification as well as providing parents with Head Lice Information Packet.
3. Parents have been offered and provided head lice treatment solution and lice nit comb if needed.
4. Referral has been made to the school nurse.
5. Parent/guardian have met with school nurse and building administrators to receive one on one education and information.
6. Student continues to have chronic head lice infestation following all above criteria, the school nurse and building administrator will discuss possible exclusion with Superintendent and/or Deputy Superintendent.
7. If exclusion is determined to be necessary, parents will be notified by school nurse and/or building administrator. Parent/guardian will be told that the student will not be allowed back to school until treatment has been completed and been checked by office staff, school nurse or the building administrator to ensure that all live lice bugs are gone and there is improvement in the number of nits on the student's hair.
8. Upon returning to school, the student will have her head checked and the following will occur.
 - a. If the student has live lice bugs, the student will not be allowed to stay in school and parent will have to take the student home and the exclusion information will be provided to parent/guardian again.
 - b. If there are no live lice bugs, but still nits the student will be allowed to stay in school. Parent/guardian will be instructed that the student's hair still has nits and that continuing the use of the nit comb/nit picking is required.