

NETHERFIELD PRIMARY & PRE-SCHOOL



Head Lice

What are head lice?

Head lice are small insects found on the human head. They grow to about the size of a pin head, sesame seed or grain of sand.

Head lice live on the hair and feed by sucking blood from the scalp. They are pale grey (before feeding) and reddish brown (after feeding). Head lice do not carry or pass on disease.

Who can get head lice?

Anyone can get head lice. They are a common problem and cause concern and frustration for parents and children.

Catching head lice has nothing to do with poor hygiene.

How do people get head lice?

People get head lice from head to head (hair to hair) contact with someone who already has head lice. This can easily happen when children play or sleep together and their heads touch.

Head lice can only crawl from hair to hair. They can't fly or jump from head to head. Head lice only survive on humans. They die quickly when they are not on the head, usually within 24 hours.

Key points to remember:

- Head lice are small, flat insects that live and lay eggs on the human scalp - the scalp provides food and warmth for the eggs to hatch.
- Head lice are sometimes called nits.
- They are a common problem and cause concern and frustration for parents and children.
- Anyone can catch head lice - catching them has nothing to do with poor hygiene.
- Head lice spread by crawling from the hair of one person to another.
- If you find live head lice or eggs on your child's scalp, treat your child and check everyone in the house.
- Treatment of head lice is usually by physical methods (wet combing) or chemical/herbal treatments.
- If you choose to use a chemical or herbal treatment, speak to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse for advice about what treatment to use and how to use it.

How do I check for and treat head lice?

Check for head lice whenever you are brushing your child's hair, or any time they are scratching their head.

Head lice can live all over the head but particularly like warm places behind the ears, around the bottom of the hair line, and on top of the head. They can look like grains of sand or dandruff.

Wet combing with cheap conditioner and a fine-tooth head lice (nit) comb is an effective way to find and remove head lice, if done properly. You don't need to buy expensive products to get rid of head lice. You can buy a fine-tooth head lice comb from your pharmacy. It can take up to an hour to do a wet combing session. It depends how long and how thick your child's hair is.

Step by step

If you think your child might have head lice, then use the wet combing technique.

Step 1

Make your child comfortable and let them watch their favourite programme, movie or other entertainment.



Comb or brush any knots out of your child's hair with an ordinary comb.

Put plenty of conditioner all through wet or dry hair, starting at the scalp and going all the way down to the hair ends.

Step 2

Comb hair conditioner through hair, still using an ordinary comb – this stuns the head lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.



Step 3

Change to a fine tooth, head lice comb and comb sections of your child's hair.



Comb from the roots to the ends of the hair.



Step 4

After each comb, wipe the conditioner on to a paper towel or tissue. Check the tissue or paper towel for lice and eggs (a magnifying glass may help you to see them more easily).



Step 5

Repeat the combing for every part of the head, section by section. Comb each section at least 4 or 5 times before moving on to the next section.



Step 6

After you have combed the whole head, rinse out the conditioner.

Step 7

If you find lice or eggs, repeat all the above steps every day until you find no lice or eggs for 3 days in a row.

Step 8

Check the hair of everyone in the house twice a week for the next 2 weeks to make sure everyone stays clear.

Once you think your child is free of head lice and eggs, make sure to check them once a week.

Can you prevent head lice?

It's very difficult to prevent - there is no product available that prevents head lice. Tying long hair back and checking weekly for lice, using the conditioner and comb method, can help prevent the spread.

You don't need to wash clothing and bedding on a hot wash - it's unlikely to help prevent the spread of head lice.

Please let school know if Lice are seen so that we can inform other parents to check their children.

Remember Early detection saves mass infection.

Thanks for your support with this.



Peter Hardern
Headteacher