

# MSD Decatur Township Guidelines for Head Lice Control

(rev 1/13)

Purpose: To define the research-based actions that MSD Decatur Township Schools will observe in the event of a suspected case of head lice.

Rationale: Millions of school children miss millions of days of learning each year in the United States due to outdated “nit free” policies of school corporations. Current research from the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control indicates that head lice do not contribute to any disease process, are not commonly contracted at school, and are primarily spread via direct head-to-head contact among young children. Few children with nits alone will develop live head lice. Students should not be excluded from school due to the presence of head lice or nits and the educational process should not be disrupted. Research does not support a “nit free” school policy. In observance of the evidence-based research, and to promote the health, well-being, and academic success of the student, these steps shall be followed for a suspected case of head lice:

1. Students who exhibit scratching or evidence of live bugs in the hair may go to the school clinic for evaluation by the School Nurse.
2. The School Nurse will examine the student’s hair and scalp in a confidential manner.
3. If **live** lice (crawling bugs) are visualized, the parent/guardian shall be contacted by phone. Factors such as the severity of infestation, child’s age, or other health concerns influence professional judgment regarding parent pick-up and recommended treatment options. Close household contacts should be inspected. Students remaining at school until the end of the day will be discouraged from direct head- to-head contact with other students in the classroom.
4. If **nits only** are visualized, the student may remain in school and the parent will be notified at the end of the school day. Nits located closer than ½” on the scalp require parental action at home. Nits farther than ½ inch are not considered to be viable.
5. The School Nurse shall provide current research-based education to parent/guardian, to include: identification, characteristics, and communicability of the parasite; methods of effective treatment and elimination of lice/eggs; and strategies for future prevention when current infestation has cleared.
6. The student, accompanied by an adult, will return to school the next day. The School Nurse will examine student upon return to school. If no live bugs are visualized, and no nits closer than ½ inch from

the scalp are present, the student may return to class. Students with live bugs or nits closer than ½ inch from the scalp shall return home for further removal. School Nurse may re-inspect child's scalp in 7-10 days to assist with control measures.

7. School- or classroom-wide screening is not merited. School Nurse shall exercise professional judgment when requests for classroom checks arise.

8. The School Nurse will partner with families on case-by-case basis to: assist the home with continued monitoring and control of nits/lice; improve knowledge deficits of best practices; uphold confidentiality in the school environment; and promote the educational goals of students.

## References:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.pdf> Am Academy of Pediatrics 08/2010

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html> Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/23291.htm> IN State Department of Health

<http://www.guideline.gov/content.aspx?id=12784> National Guideline Clearinghouse

<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/40/Pediculosis-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2011> National Association of School Nurses

[http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/scratch\\_fact\\_parent\\_2010.pdf](http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/scratch_fact_parent_2010.pdf) NASN

<http://nas.sagepub.com/content/25/6/407.abstract> *Journal of School Nursing*

Pontius, D. (2011). Hats Off to Success: Changing Head Lice Policy. *NASN School Nurse*, 25(6), 407-416.

[www.HamiltonCounty.in.gov](http://www.HamiltonCounty.in.gov) Hamilton County Health Department powerpoint

<http://children.webmd.com/ss/slideshow-lice-overview> Web MD slideshow

Pollack RJ, Kiszewski A, and Spielman A. 2000. Overdiagnosis and consequent mismanagement of head louse infestations in North America. *Ped Inf Dis J*. 19:689-93.

<http://www1.ccs.k12.in.us/district/uploads/File/Head%20lice%20Brochure.pdf>

<http://www.hse.k12.in.us/resources/pdf/ADM/services/health/clinicserviceshandbook.pdf>

<http://www.fwcs.k12.in.us/HealthServices/care.php>

Carmel Clay, Hamilton Southeastern, and Fort Wayne school districts' head lice procedures and information

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/UCM173526.pdf> FDA

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2006397,00.html>