Head Lice Information for Parents

A case of head lice has been reported in school. We have prepared some advice for you which may be of help.

First of all, we would like to pass on the following advice from local health professionals:

1. **Do NOT** use any head lice treatment if there are no head lice on your child's hair.
2. It is good practice to use only treatments currently used by your local chemist.
   Do not use any old or half bottles left over from previous treatments.

Information – Have You Got Head Lice?

If you have had a close look and still aren't sure, here's how you can carry out detection combing:

- Wash the hair well, then dry it with a towel. The hair should be damp, not dripping.
- Make sure there is good light. Daylight is best.
- Comb the hair with an ordinary comb.
- Start with the teeth of the detection comb touching the skin of the scalp at the top of the head. Draw the comb carefully towards the edge of the hair.
- Look carefully at the teeth of the comb in good light.
- Do this over and over again from the top of the head to the edge of the hair in all directions, working round the head.
- Continue for several minutes. It takes **10–15 minutes** to do it properly for each head.
- If there are head lice, you will find one or more lice on the teeth of the comb.
- Head lice are small insects with moving legs. They are often not much bigger than a pin head but may be as big as a sesame seed.
- Clean the comb under the tap. A nail brush can help with this.
- If you find something and aren't sure what it is, stick it onto a piece of paper with clear sticky tape and show it to your school nurse or family doctor. There can be other things in the hair which are not lice.

If You Do Find a Living Louse…

- Check the heads of **all** the people in your home.
- Only treat those who have living, moving lice.
- Treat everyone at the same time using a **head louse lotion** from your chemist (not shampoo).
- Ask your local chemist, school nurse, health visitor, or family doctor which lotion to use.
- Apply the lotion to **dry hair** in a well-ventilated room or in the open air.
- Part the hair near the top of the head, put a few drops onto the scalp and rub it in.
- Part the hair further down the scalp and repeat. Continue until the whole scalp is wet.
- There is no need to apply lotion down long hair any further than where a pony-tail band would sit.
- Use enough lotion – **at least one small bottle per head**, more if the hair is thick. Use all the lotion provided.
- Keep the lotion out of the eyes and off the face. Holding a cloth over the face can help.
- Leave the lotion to dry naturally. Some lotions can catch fire, so keep well away from flames, cigarettes, stoves, and other sources of heat. **Do not use a hair dryer.**
- Repeat the treatment **seven days later** in exactly the same way, using the same lotion.
- Check all heads again a day or two after the second treatment.
- If you still find living, moving lice, ask your local chemist, health visitor, school nurse, or family doctor for further advice.