



Pamlico County Schools

Head Lice and Nits Procedures for School Personnel

Guidelines

Purpose: To educate school personnel on current recommendations and Pamlico County Schools guidelines related to nits and head lice.

Objectives: Participant(s) will be able to demonstrate and/or verbalize the following competencies:

1. Follow Pamlico County Schools head lice and/or nits guidelines for performing checks on students.
2. To know characteristics of and identify lice and/or nits.

Requirements: The principal is responsible for choosing all appropriate personnel such as teachers, nurses, assistants, office staff, and other school support staff within the school who would be responsible for following head lice procedures. Guidelines should be reviewed at the beginning of each school year.

Information on Head Lice Life Cycle and Transmission (Staff)

General Introduction

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that are parasites living outside the body of the host. They are small in size, about 1 - 5 mm or 1/32 to 3/16 of an inch in length, and either light gray or dark colored in appearance, the latter due to ingested blood. They are flattened top to bottom and have six jointed legs with specially adapted claws for holding onto hair. They can move about readily from hair to hair, but are most adept at clinging to prevent dislodgement. They survive by piercing the skin to feed on blood and are almost exclusively associated with hair on the neck and scalp. Lice found on humans will **not** survive on other animal hosts.

Feeding

The head lice feed by using teeth to penetrate scalp skin at the base of a hair or behind the ears. This feeding activity can be a source of irritation and leads to the itching/scratching characteristic of the infestation. Lice can only live on human blood and can eat several blood meals per day, interrupted by resting/digestion periods between feedings. Although head lice feed on blood—they **are not known to transmit any diseases**. Skin irritation at the feeding site, secondary bacterial infections from scratching, and the psychological “trauma” of the infestations are the chief human health concerns associated with head lice.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of head lice occurs in three stages. The first stage involves head lice eggs. Eggs are attached to hairs individually by the female and are commonly known as “nits.” A nit adheres to hairs stubbornly by adhesive substances secreted by the female. This nit “glue” is very resistant to mechanical and chemical removal. Eggs that are likely to hatch are usually located within 1/4 inch of the scalp and will hatch in about one week (range 6-9 days).

Transmission

It is important to note that head lice are not long-distance travelers, and they are poorly adapted to life away from the host. Although adept at moving from hair to hair, they **cannot** jump nor can they crawl great distances (from the floor to someone’s head, for example). Head lice move from person to person primarily by direct hair-to-hair contact, and less frequently through shared combs, brushes, hats, etc. Head lice may also be transmitted through shared bedding (e.g., pillow cases). Lice cannot survive for more than a couple days away from the host. This is because the lice are very susceptible to dehydration and will rapidly starve if removed from a blood source. Eggs can survive longer off-host periods (a week or more), but the hatched nymph must come in contact with human head hair almost immediately or it will perish. Lice are very host-specific, and will not survive on pets – **you cannot get lice from your dog or cat**.

Screening Process for Head Lice and Nits

Screening Technique

When a member of school staff suspects a student has head lice, the following steps should be followed:

1. The student is sent to designated staff for a head lice check. **Remember confidentiality, discretion, and tact is of importance to maintain the student's self-esteem and head checks should be done in a private area.**
2. Carefully part the hair using the applicator stick or tongue depressor and examine the hair and scalp for nits or crawling lice. Begin by inspecting the nape of the neck and the area behind the ears. If nothing is seen in these areas, continue to inspect the rest of the head to ensure the absence of lice and nits.
3. After a head check, if nits were identified, the student can remain in class until the end of the day and return home on their routine transportation. The parents must be contacted (verbal communication is preferred) and informed of the findings.
4. If lice were identified, the parent/guardian is contacted to pick up the child from school so treatment can begin immediately. Treatment must occur before the student can return to school.

Steps to Eliminate Head Lice/Nits in the Classroom

1. Vacuum all carpeted areas, pillows, rugs, carpet squares, and upholstered furniture (such as couches, chairs, and bean bags) daily. Continue that care for 10 days beyond the last identified case of head lice. Discard the vacuum bag after vacuuming each affected area.
2. Do not use aerosols or fumigation sprays because lice do not hide in wall crevices and floor cracks like cockroaches or other household pests. Vacuuming is adequate.
3. Hang all outerwear (coats, hats, scarves, and mittens) and backpacks separately.
4. Suspend all activities, games and learning stations that involve the sharing of personal items or clothing.
5. Place cloth items that cannot be laundered, vacuumed, or dry-cleaned in a tightly sealed container with a lid or a plastic bag for fourteen (14) days. This includes play clothing, linens, smocks, and cloth toys if present in the classroom.
6. Wipe all cots and mats daily using an approved germicidal product obtained from the custodial staff.

Intervention Process for Nits Only

A student found to have nits only is **NOT** to be excluded from school. Students with nits only will have their head rechecked daily after the initial nits were discovered. If they still have nits (3) days from the initial discovery, designated staff are to initiate the **Head Lice/Nits Referral Intervention Form**. This form is to be completed by designated staff and/or the School Nurse. Documentation of all head checks must be made on the **Head Lice and/or Nits Record**.

Intervention Process for Nits Only

If a student is found to have **nits only** after being screened at school for **the first time or as a recheck after live lice**, the school staff should:

1. Let the **student return to class** immediately.
2. **Notify** the student's parent/guardian that **nits only** were found during a head lice screening today.
3. Provide parent/guardian with **School Notice of Nits Only** letter and the Head Lice Advice Packet, which will be mailed and/or put in the homework folder to accompany the student home.
4. Check the entire class and siblings for nits.
5. Send **Exposure to Head Lice and/or Nits Notice** to the student's **entire** class.
6. **Document** the activity on the student's **Head Lice and/or Nits Record**.
7. Follow Steps to Eliminate Nits and Lice in the Classroom.

If at anytime, the student who initially **had nits only** is found to have live lice, school personnel should begin following the live lice procedures.

Pamlico County Schools
School Notice of Nits Only

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

During a screening today, evidence of nits, which are head lice eggs, were found in your child's hair. The nits may hatch into live lice within seven (7) days. This is why it is important to begin removing these nits today. This will require use of a fine-toothed comb (nit comb) and good light. During this process, you should do one small section of your child's hair at a time.

If your child has **nits only and no live lice**, he/she is **not** excluded from school. The attached Head Lice Advice packet will be helpful for you as you thoroughly examine your child's hair. If nits are not completely removed, they may hatch into live lice so this packet contains information about handling nits as well as live lice.

Your child will be rechecked by designated school personnel after five (5) days of this notice and appropriate follow-up notification will follow.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please feel free to call our school if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Principal

Intervention Process for Live Head Lice

A student found to have live head lice is to be excluded from school. Students must be lice free in order to return to school. (See note below.)

If a student is found to have live head lice, the **school staff will:**

1. **Contact the school nurse or office personnel** so they can contact the parent/guardian.
2. **Contact** the parent/guardian to pick up the student from school.
 - a. During this conversation, the school nurse will **discuss** the identification of the head lice and explore barriers to head lice treatment.
 - b. **Provide** parent/guardian with ***Exclusion from School for Head Lice*** letter.
 - c. **Provide** the parent/guardian with ***Head Lice Advice Packet***.
3. Check the entire class and siblings for head lice.
4. Ensure that a copy of the ***Exposure to Head Lice and/or Nits Notice*** is **sent** to the student's **entire** class.
5. Document the activity on the student's Head Lice and/or Nits Record.
6. Follow ***Steps to Eliminate Nits and Lice in the Classroom***.
7. At the second ongoing occurrence, the school nurse and social worker does the following:
 - a. Conferences with parent/guardian while still at school.
 - b. Sends student home with parent/guardian.
 - c. Completes a follow-up conference by telephone.
8. At the third occurrence, school nurse and or social worker does the following:
 - a. Completes the **Head Lice Intervention Form**.
 - b. Schedules a **Head Lice Intervention Conference** with the parent/guardian.

Note: Upon return to school, the student must have a completed ***Pamlico County Schools Healthcare Provider's Statement of Examination and Release to Return to School Head Lice Free form***.

Pamlico County Schools

Healthcare Provider's Statement of Examination and Release to Return to School Head Lice Free

I have examined _____ on _____ and find that
(Name of child) (Date)

he/she is:

- lice free
- nit free
- lice and nit free
- has nits only

If the "has nits only box" is checked, both the parent/guardian and I understand that this child will be rechecked at school five (5) school days from the date he/she returns to school.

Signature of Health Care Provider

Printed Name of Health Care Provider

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Address of Examiner

Phone Number of Examiner

Pamlico County Schools Exposure to Head Lice and/or Nits Notice

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A classmate of your child has head lice and/or nits. Please check your child's hair daily for two (2) weeks.

In addition to checking your child's hair for the next week, please follow the following prevention tips:

- Teach your child not to share combs, brushes, hair ornaments, hats, caps, scarves
- Teach your child to hang coats separately
- Cleanse and disinfect headgear (i.e., headsets, helmets, etc.) prior to using
- Do regular head lice checks on your child and remove all nits, if found

In the event head lice are found on your child, treatments are available without a prescription at drug and grocery stores. Please read and follow the package directions carefully, consult your child's healthcare provider if you have any questions about the treatment to use. If you have any difficulties treating head lice, nit removal on your child, or wish to have further information or handouts, please contact the school, local health department, or your child's healthcare provider.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Principal

Pamlico County Schools Exclusion from School for Head Lice

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

During a screening today, evidence of head lice was found in your child's hair. Head lice have nothing to do with the cleanliness of a house or parenting skills. Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact, although sharing hats, combs, and other hair accessories may also spread head lice. Head lice cannot jump or fly. Head lice crawl and are not a risk to pets.

Please begin treatment as soon as possible so your child does not miss learning opportunities in the classroom. **Pamlico County Schools requires students to be lice free upon returning to school.** The attached information will be helpful for you to examine your child's hair thoroughly for signs of lice infestation (live lice and/or nits). Head lice may be treated with shampoos specifically labeled for head lice. Read and follow directions carefully or consult with your child's healthcare provider. If your child has allergies or asthma, please consult with your child's healthcare provider prior to treatment. **If the package directions indicate**, apply a second treatment 10 days later to kill lice that hatch after the initial treatment.

In order for your child to return to school you must bring in the completed form from your health care provider or the local health department, stating that your child is **lice free**.

Sincerely,

Principal

Pamlico County Schools

HEAD LICE AND/OR NITS REFERRAL INTERVENTION FORM

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Number: _____

Teacher: _____

Number of Days Absent: _____

Dates Missed Due to Head Lice: _____

Referring Staff Member Name: _____

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED HEAD LICE AND/OR NITS RECORD
INFORMATION BELOW IS TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL STAFF

Date of Intervention	Intervention(phone call, Home visit, conference	Outcome or referrals made

Other notes:

Staff Member Signature: _____

Please attach completed form to the Head Lice/Nit Record of the student.

Conferences

Head Lice Intervention Conference

A head lice intervention conference is a further attempt to reduce absences and to help assemble resources needed to support the family in developing strategies to eliminate head lice. This referral is to help student's stay in the classroom and learn in a positive environment. If the problem is not resolved at this level, a referral will be made to the school social worker and/or nurse.

Description of Process for Head Lice Intervention Conference

A student should be referred for a **Head Lice Intervention Conference** if they have had 3 rechecks and live lice are still present. Documentation of all school based interventions should be made available prior to conference. The **Head Lice Conference Referral form** and all documentation should be completed by the School Nurse and Social worker or designated office personnel. All documentation will be shared with the school social worker and/or nurse who will then schedule a conference with the parent/guardian.

Procedure for Head Lice Intervention Conference

The Pamlico County School Social Worker receives appropriate referral concerning students who have chronic head lice. The Pamlico County School Child and Family Support Team will coordinate the scheduling and notification for the head lice intervention conference.

Meeting Agenda

- School staff will present information concerning the absences and any measures taken for the child.
- The parent/guardian will be asked to discuss all measures that have been taken by the family to eliminate the head lice, including treatment for the student, the family and the environment.
- School staff will discuss any changes that should be made in treatment and methods to overcome any barriers that were identified.
- School staff will request help for the family from other agencies as needed.
- School staff will complete the **Head Lice Intervention Conference form** and will obtain parent/guardian and team signatures.

**Pamlico County Schools
HEAD LICE CONFERENCE REFERRAL FORM**

Date of Referral: _____

School: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Student Name: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Contact Numbers: _____

Teacher: _____

Number of Days Absent: _____

Dates Missed Due to Head Lice: _____

Referring Staff Member: _____

Staff Member Contact Number: _____

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED HEAD LICE AND/OR NITS RECORD(S) & HEAD LICE AND/OR NITS REFERRAL INTERVENTION FORM(S).

**Pamlico County Schools
HEAD LICE INTERVENTION CONFERENCE**

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Student(s): _____

School: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The above named student(s) has been referred to this office for chronic head lice. In spite of the school's efforts and your efforts at home, the problem has continued.

A Head Lice Intervention Conference has been scheduled to develop a plan of action to resolve this problem. The purpose of this conference is to help identify solutions in eliminating head lice. The scheduled appointment is as follows:

Date: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

If you are unable to attend on this scheduled date and time, you must call immediately to reschedule. If you have any questions, you may call your child's school.

Sincerely,

Principal or Designee

HEAD LICE INTERVENTION CONFERENCE

CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

PARENT(S)/ GUARDIAN(S) _____ SCHOOL _____

Problem Statement

Environmental Factors _____

Sleeping Arrangement _____

Laundry Practices _____

Other _____

Lack of Equipment Vacuum Washer/Dryer Nit Combs Treatment

Financial (Specify) _____

Other Remarks _____

Intervention Strategies

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash all items | <input type="checkbox"/> Treat child's hair (medication, comb and pick nits) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treat household members, if needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a treatment calendar |

Other _____

Additional strategies _____

I agree to complete the plan discussed above.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Conference Participants

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
1.	Parent	5.	
2.		6.	
3.		7.	
4.		8.	

Household Members

Name	Age	Relationship	Check if treated for head lice in the last 6 months

Please record any information considered relevant in this case:

Attachment(s)

- Student's Calendar Form Head Lice Record
 Head Lice and/or Nits Referral Intervention Form

Checklist

- Discussed medication use
 Discussed treatment of environment
 Discussed removal of nits
 Gave lice advice
 Resources discussed
 Discussed potential for DSS/Court Involvement

Head Lice Advice Packet

Information on Head Lice Life Cycle and Transmission (Parent)

General Introduction

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that are parasites living outside the body of the host. They are small in size, about 1 - 5 mm or 1/32 to 3/16 of an inch in length, and either light gray or dark colored in appearance, the latter due to ingested blood. They are flattened top to bottom and have six jointed legs with specially adapted claws for holding onto hair. They can move about readily from hair to hair, but are most adept at clinging to prevent dislodgement. They survive by piercing the skin to feed on blood and are almost exclusively associated with hair on the neck and scalp. Lice found on humans will **not** survive on other animal hosts.

Feeding

The head lice feed by using teeth to penetrate scalp skin at the base of a hair or behind the ears. This feeding activity can be a source of irritation and leads to the itching/scratching characteristic of the infestation. Lice can only live on human blood and can eat several blood meals per day, interrupted by resting/digestion periods between feedings. Although head lice feed on blood-they **are not known to transmit any diseases**. Skin irritation at the feeding site, secondary bacterial infections from scratching, and the psychological “trauma” of the infestations are the chief human health concerns associated with head lice.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of head lice occurs in three stages. The first stage involves head lice eggs. Eggs are attached to hairs individually by the female and are commonly known as “nits.” A nit adheres to hairs stubbornly by adhesive substances secreted by the female. This nit “glue” is very resistant to mechanical and chemical removal. Eggs that are likely to hatch are usually located within 1/4 inch of the scalp and will hatch in about one week (range 6-9 days).

Transmission

It is important to note that head lice are not long-distance travelers, and they are poorly adapted to life away from the host. Although adept at moving from hair to hair, they **cannot** jump nor can they crawl great distances (from the floor to someone’s head, for example). Head lice move from person to person primarily by direct hair-to-hair contact, and less frequently through shared combs, brushes, hats, etc. Head lice may also be transmitted through shared bedding (e.g., pillow cases). Lice cannot survive for more than a couple days away from the host. This is because the lice are very susceptible to dehydration and will rapidly starve if removed from a blood source. Eggs can survive longer off-host periods (a week or more), but the hatched nymph must come in contact with human head hair almost immediately or it will perish. Lice are very host-specific, and will not survive on pets – **you cannot get lice from your dog or cat**.

Information for Parents Regarding Treatment of the Home Environment

1. Notify other members in the household to check for lice. Everyone in the household should be checked at the same time. Notify your healthcare provider or Health Department to outline a course of treatment.
2. Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels in HOT water (130-140° F) after family members have been treated so they do not become re-infected by any lice still living on those items. Do not leave clothes on floors or furniture. Wash bed clothes, bed linens and towels daily for ten (10) days beyond the last case of identified head lice.
3. Dry clothes on the hot cycle for at least twenty minutes.
4. Remove items that are not machine washable (such as stuffed animals, headphones, and hats) from the environment until they are dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic container with a lid or a plastic bag for fourteen (14) days. If plastic bags are used, keep bags secured in area where children will not have access.
5. Vacuum ALL carpets, pillows, rugs, cars, car seats, and upholstered furniture (such as couches, chairs, and bean bags) DAILY for 10 days beyond the last identified case of head lice. You may vacuum your bed and pillow daily if unable to wash linens daily.
6. Disinfect combs, brushes, hair ties, barrettes, sports helmets, headphones, and other objects that come in contact with the head by soaking them for thirty (30) minutes in a disinfectant solution. Putting items into an automatic dishwasher and running the complete cycle is also an option.
7. Do not use aerosols or fumigation sprays because lice do not hide in wall crevices and floor cracks like cockroaches or other household pests. Vacuuming is adequate.

LICE CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

- ___ 1. Get the medication for lice from your doctor, clinic, or drugstore.
- ___ 2. Carefully check all members of your family, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. Look for red streaks from scratching. Treat only members who have lice/nits as directed by your health care provider.
- ___ 3. Treat head and scalp ONLY AS DIRECTED by manufacturer of the treatment you choose. Over-treatment may poison the person. The hair should be completely wet with medication.
- ___ 4. Set the time for the length of time that the medication is to remain on the hair.
- ___ 5. Rinse medication out of hair. Rinse with water and towel dry.
- ___ 6. Do not use vinegar after using medication. Vinegar weakens the effect of the treatment.
- ___ 7. Divide hair into sections. Then, with a very fine-tooth comb, comb through hair, making sure to remove all nits.
- ___ 8. The best way to see the lice eggs or nits is in a very bright light. Sunlight is the best light. If you miss even one nit, it may hatch 90 to 150 eggs/nits.
- ___ 9. Every morning (for ten days), before leaving for school, each child should be checked for redness of scalp, additional nits/eggs, or lice.
- ___ 10. Teach your child not to share others' hats, scarves, coats, combs, brushes, etc.
- ___ 11. Collect all bedding-sheets, pillows, pillowcases, and blankets-and machine wash items at hottest temperature (150 degrees).
- ___ 12. After washing, put bedding into dryer at hottest-temperature setting for at least 20 minutes, or until dry.
- ___ 13. Pillows and stuffed animals that cannot be washed must be put into a plastic bag, tied off, and left completely closed for at least 14 days.
- ___ 14. Vacuum all rugs very thoroughly. Vacuum all couches, chairs, car headrests, car seats-anywhere that the back of someone's head might touch.
- ___ 15. Throw away all plastic bags and vacuum bags after use.
- ___ 16. All combs and brushes must be soaked in a disinfectant for 30 minutes or boil for 10 minutes.