

Head Lice

Prevention and management of head lice infestation among students

New Milford Public Schools relies on current standards in public health and scientific research to guide its practices related to communicable disease and infestation. Current public health standards and research-based recommendations indicate that, to effectively control head lice, routine screening and management at home are the key factors. Head lice do not cause disease and, when first identified on a head, have usually been resident there for a few weeks. They are very annoying and can sometimes be difficult to get rid of, but they are not dangerous. Head lice are usually well-controlled when managed through mechanical or chemical means, or a combination of both, and appropriate housekeeping techniques.

In keeping with current standards and research, mass screenings for head lice are no longer conducted in our schools. Rather, our emphasis is on prevention through parental education, and home-school communication and collaboration. Not only are mass screenings relatively ineffective, they also cause students to lose a significant amount of educational time in the classroom, often result in misdiagnosed cases, and lead to considerable stigma for children who are sent home in the middle of the school day.

Please remember that rapid communication is the most critical element to prevent the spread of head lice at school, at sleepovers and at other community activities. Therefore, should your child become infested with head lice, please inform the school nurse. The information you provide is confidential. A recommendation for you to also inform parents of children your child may have had close contact with will alert those parents to screen their own children. If all families communicate with the school nurse and each other in this way, we can prevent unnecessary spread of this difficult pest.

If you have any questions about our head lice procedures, please call the school nurse in your child's school or School Nurse Coordinator at 860-350-6647 Ext 1164.

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