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Dear Parent(s),

Incidents of head lice have occurred in our school. In an effort to assist parents in understanding the issue, we are sending this information on control and prevention.

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**What are they?** Head lice are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed that live on the skin of the scalp and on the hair. They feed on blood and lay eggs that they attach to the hair shaft. Eggs hatch in about a week, and the young lice feed and molt three times before molting again to an adult. Adult lice will live about a month. Lice are common among children in all socioeconomic groups and are not a health hazard or a sign of uncleanness. Head lice do not transmit disease and the presence of lice is not reportable to the health department.

**Where are they found?** Head lice are found on the scalp and first show up in the hair above the ears or the hairline of the neck. The nits or eggs can be seen along the hairs like tiny beads on a thread. The nits are shiny, oval in shape, and gray or white in color.

**What are the signs/symptoms?**

- Presence of lice or attached eggs on the scalp or on the hair.
- Itching behind the ears and at the back of the neck.

**How is it spread?** Head lice are spread by direct contact with the head of an infested person lasting > 30 seconds. Lice walk, they cannot hop or fly.

**What is the treatment?**

- Over-the-counter and prescription treatments are available. Parents should consult with their pediatrician if they have any questions about which treatment to use.
- Follow treatment instructions closely. Nits can survive treatment, so a second treatment is needed in 7-10 days after the first treatment to kill lice that have hatched from those eggs.
- Flammable or toxic substances such as gasoline or kerosene should never be used.
- Use a nit comb to remove nits from the hair.
- Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water (130 degrees F)
- Launder clothing and bedding in hot water (130 degrees F) and dry them on the high heat setting for at least 40 minutes. Carpet and furniture can be vacuumed (not sprayed with insecticide).

**How can I help prevent further infestations?**

- Teach children not to share personal items like hats, combs, brushes, scarves or coats.
- Wear long hair in a pony-tail or braid.
- Follow directions on the lice shampoo package. Check all household members for signs of head lice.