

Iowa City Community School District Head Lice Protocol

1. When a student is suspected of having head lice, the secretary or other school staff should contact the school nurse. Any student suspected of having head lice should be checked in a private area away from other students or staff.
2. The school nurse will check the student's head for lice, sometime during the day the report was made, if possible.
3. If the student has visible lice, the following plan will be followed:
 - a. If the newly identified student has live lice and/or nits, the parents will be notified by letter (and phone, if possible), with instructions on how to treat the lice.
 - i. Parents are asked to treat the lice that same day/ evening with medicated shampoo.
 - ii. Parents are asked to complete the check-off list and return to school with the student.
 - b. The student will be allowed to stay at school for the remainder of the day at the discretion of the school nurse. Factors considered by the nurse in making this decision include the following:
 - i. How severe is the lice infestation?
 - ii. Is this a chronic condition for this student/family?
 - iii. Is the family working with the nurse in resolving the situation?
 - iv. Does the family have adequate resources/ ability to treat the lice?
 - c. The school nurse will follow-up with the student/ family the following day, if possible.
4. The school nurse will only screen classmates who are showing signs of head lice, i.e. scratching their heads/nape of the neck. If multiple students in one classroom have confirmed head lice at one time, then the whole classroom may be screened by the school nurse if appropriate. (Because of the close contact of children in the preschool classrooms, these classrooms will be screened if one or more students in the specific classroom have head lice.)
5. Informational letters will be sent home to parents of students in the specific classroom when one or more cases of head lice are confirmed by the school nurse.
 - a. These letters are intended only to inform parents and to ask them to screen their own children for head lice. CONFIDENTIALITY of the affected students is to be respected at all times.
6. The school nurse will work with families of students who have chronic head lice. This may include regular head checks of these students, education to parents on how to treat the lice and prevent recurring head lice, and assisting these families to get the appropriate resources to treat the lice and prevent further outbreaks.
7. If there is a case of head lice in a classroom, we ask staff to respect the confidentiality of the student affected. This can be very stigmatizing and embarrassing to children and families. At the same time, it is important to remind students to not share hats, combs, and pillows. Coats could be placed on the backs of chairs.
8. The school nurses will provide information to teachers and staff about head lice and current recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Health Department.
9. Any questions should be directed to the Health Services staff.