

4th March 2016

Dear Parents

We seem to be having a large out break of headlice in school at the moment. **Please can I ask that all children who have hair that is long enough to be tied back, is tied back.**

Below is the guidance from the NHS:

Having headlice doesn't mean you're dirty, or that you don't wash properly. Most people get them at some point, so you're not alone.

Headlice are tiny insects that live in human hair. They're very small – about the size of a sesame seed – and are brownish-grey in colour. They have six legs, each with a claw on the end. They use these to cling on to your hair and they survive by biting the scalp and feeding on your blood. This often causes itching, but not always. The female headlice lay eggs in sacs which are glued to your individual hairs. A baby headlouse then hatches seven to 10 days later. You might be able to spot the remains of the tiny white egg in your hair. It's called a 'nit'. Some people also use the word 'nit' to mean 'headlouse.'

Ten to 14 days later, the baby headlouse is ready to have babies of its own. Headlice crawl from head to head when you're close to someone who's got them. However, headlice can't fly or jump, and it's very rare to get headlice from a pillow or a towel as they can't survive away from a human head for very long.

How to spot headlice

- Check your child's hair. The most common places for headlice to lurk are in the hair behind your ears and at the nape of your neck.
- If you still can't spot any lice, comb the child's hair with a special 'nit comb'. These are available from most chemists. It's easier to spot the dark brown headlice as they fall out if you comb the hair over a piece of white paper.

- Now you need to treat your child. Headlice are tough – they can't be killed by washing with normal shampoo or normal combing. Because they reproduce so quickly, you've got to kill them before they spread. If your child has headlice, check everyone in the family. You'll need to treat everyone affected to get rid of them.

The wet combing method

This is a method that avoids using chemicals.

- Wash your child's hair using a normal shampoo.
- Use plenty of ordinary conditioner to make the hair slippery so the lice will lose their grip.
- Comb your child's hair with a normal comb, then with a nit comb. Start at the root of the hair and go all the way along to the ends. Check the comb for lice after each stroke and clean it if any are there. Keep combing over the whole head for at least 30 minutes.
- Rinse their hair, and comb it through again.
- Do the whole thing again four times over the next two weeks. The rule is carry on until you haven't seen any full-grown lice for three sessions.

Chemical lotions or rinses

- Only use these if you find a live headlouse. There are two main types, insecticide-based treatments or dimeticone treatments. Your pharmacist will help you pick the right one.
- The instructions will be slightly different depending on which one you use, but normally you'll need to repeat the treatment seven days later.
- Ask your chemist for advice if your child is under six months, if you're pregnant or breastfeeding, or if your child has asthma or other allergies.
- Check for eggs three to five days after you use the lotion or rinse, and again after 10 to 15 days, in case any lice eggs have escaped. Don't assume the chemicals will kill all the lice, as some may be resistant. If you think this is happening, go back to your pharmacist, health visitor, GP for advice.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Susannah Connell
Lead Executive Headteacher
on behalf of Middlefield Primary Academy (part of TDLPT)