

## **Wauwatosa Schools follows Lice guidelines from the CDC, AAP and the Harvard School of Public Health**

-Head lice are not known to transmit disease.

-Getting head lice is not related to cleanliness of the person or his or her environment.

-Head lice are mainly spread by direct contact with the hair of a person with live lice. The most common way to get head lice is by direct head-to-head or hair to hair contact with a person who already has head lice. Such contact can be common among children during play. This includes play outside of the school day.

-The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

-Lice are spread most commonly by direct contact with the hair of a person who has live lice. Spread through contact with inanimate objects such as head phones and sports helmets may occur but is very uncommon. Head lice feet are specially adapted for holding onto human hair. Head lice would have difficulty attaching firmly to smooth or slippery surfaces like plastic, metal, polished synthetic leathers and other similar materials.

We do not send children home with nits. The **American Academy of Pediatrics** discovered, during research testing, that 10-30% nits or lice eggs do not hatch. Nits that are ¼ inch or more away from the scalp are no longer in the optimal area for warmth needed for hatching. In studies that have been performed children with nits alone do not imply that there is an ongoing presence of live lice. Excluding them from school causes many children to miss excessive amounts of school. Children with no live lice but with nits should be checked frequently, over the course of 2 weeks, after the discovery of nits, to determine if any live lice develop. The AAP does not endorse No Nit Policies at schools. Our Medical Director has asked that we do not have one in Tosa.

We send children home for treatment of live lice only. Any child who has been treated for live lice and any child with nits is checked frequently, by school staff, over a period of 2-3 weeks, following the discovery of nits or live lice. We look for a decrease in the presence of nits that are close to the scalp and for the absence of live lice. We do ask that parents remove any nits that are ¼ inch or closer to the scalp. We also ask parents to check their child daily and let us know if they discover anything. School head checks are always done as discreetly as possible to protect the privacy of the children. If you visit your child's school you may never see a head check being done. They are being done!

Checking whole classrooms or whole schools is often counterproductive, and requires a great deal of student time be spent away from the classroom. When a child has live lice we check their siblings and close contacts. One child with lice, in a classroom, cannot give lice to other children unless there is close head to head or hair to hair contact with that child. Trained school staff or a district nurse can show parents how to check their child's head and what to look for.

It is not uncommon for children to contract lice at after school day care, gymnastics, birthday parties, camps, and other events that occur outside of the school day. In Wauwatosa we have many children in our neighborhoods who attend schools other than our Wauwatosa Schools. They often all play together. In many instances it is impossible to determine where a child may have contracted lice. Lice are always around. We can never assume there is a particular season or time of year for lice.

Schools cannot eradicate lice. We perform surveillance and reporting--informing parents of our findings by phone or letter. We send children home who have live lice. Treatment is performed by parents. We rely on them to help reduce and eliminate head lice. We discourage close head to head contact between students to avoid possible exposure to lice. All students are discouraged from close contact so that no one is singled out. Sharing of any items that might go on the head are also discouraged.