PURPOSE
Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

GUIDELINES:
Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

This school policy draws on information obtained from the information pamphlet and Management Guidelines ‘Scratching for Answers’ and aims;

• To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
• To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
• To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION:
It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this school that:

• Children’s hair should be checked for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method.
• That your child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001).
• Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary.
• Parents/carers will notify the school if their child is found to have live head lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2001).
• Children with long hair will attend school with hair tied back.
• Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice.
• Notify the parents or carers of your child’s friends so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
• Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
• Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.
• Sign an agreement accepting the terms of the School Head Lice Policy.

To support parents/carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:

• Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
• Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school.
• Include information and updates in school newsletters.
• Include annual head lice updates for staff in-service programs.
• Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
• Access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government.
• Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the Principal or person in charge.
• Only exclude children from school with live insects.
• Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
• Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or ‘bullying’ associated with the issue.
• Request that all families attending this school sign a ‘Consent Form to Conduct Head Lice Inspections’ annually.
• Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required.
• Review the head lice policy triennially and seek endorsement from the School Council/community.
• Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.
• Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.
• When head lice is reported, issue a generic letter to all parents to inform them and to request they check their children for head lice.
• For the office staff to maintain data of head lice notifications.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle or earlier as required.