Dear Parents/Carers,

It is necessary to inform you that we have had head lice in our school recently. This is an ongoing problem in most schools. All children (and teachers) can fall victim to the problem.

When children are working together in the confines of a classroom, their hair often comes into contact with that of others. This is one way that lice are transmitted from one child to another.

HEAD LICE INFORMATION

Because of the nature and prevalence of head lice, it is one of the most common health concerns raised by the managers of children’s services, principals and parents. It is often an emotive issue where misinformation can lead to conflict.

NSW Health advises the following.

- Data collected through the Nitbusters research project suggests that 26% of the primary school student population will be infested with head lice at any one time.
- Cases of head lice infestation occur across all socioeconomic groups.
- Isolating a student with head lice from school will not solve the problem of an infestation because other students will also have them.
- Resistance to head lice treatments appears to be increasing.
- Some students may undergo treatment with head lice anti-llice lotions or shampoo and still have head lice.
- Wherever possible, students with head lice should be treated with an anti-llice shampoo or lotion.
- The spread of head lice can be managed by examining classroom contacts, family and friends and beginning a coordinated treatment program.

This advice also indicates that head lice:

- are transmitted usually through hair to hair or head to head contact
- cannot infest furniture, bedding or pets
- do not differentiate between clean and unclean hair
- do not voluntarily leave the scalp
- may be transferred through the sharing of hats, combs, brushes, ribbons, and ‘scrunchies’.
The school is co-operating with NSW Health in providing the following advice through student welfare consultants:

- A local community response is the most effective approach to managing head lice infestations.
- Whole school strategies such as targeted head lice 'check and treat days' where parents check their children's hair on a specific day and treat if necessary, is recommended.
- The use of white hair conditioner and combing is a recommended strategy if other treatments have proved to be ineffective.
- Parents should be informed if their child has head lice and be asked to commence treatment.
- It is important that students are not victimised or alienated as the result of the presence of head lice.

As a health measure we strongly recommend that you check your child's hair regularly and treat if necessary. Your child need not stay home from school once treatment for the problem has begun. We recommend that you speak to a pharmacist about the best way to treat your child's hair.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Androula Kavallaris
Principal