Northeastern Catholic District School Board

CONTROL OF HEAD LICE AND BED BUGS

Administrative Procedure Number: APE027

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to maintaining healthy school environments for all students and staff. Though head lice and bed bugs are not a health or education issue, every district school board has a responsibility to work in partnership with local health units to help educate families in the identification, prevention and control of head lice and bed bugs. To help minimize the risk of infestations and the spread of either head lice or bed bugs, it is understood that standard precautions and procedures must be followed by NCDSB schools.

REFERENCES

Education Act
Northeast Public Health
NCDSB Policy
E-27 Control of Head Lice and Bed Bugs

DEFINITIONS

Bed Bugs
Oval-shaped insects without wings that bite at night. Signs of bed bugs are bites or rashes on humans especially around the face, neck, upper torso, arms and hands.

Head Lice
Head lice are tiny wingless insects (about the size of a sesame seed) that vary in colour but are often grey to light brown. Lice lay eggs that are called nits.

Nits
Nits stick to the hair shaft, within a ¼ inch from the scalp, and take about one week to hatch into adult lice.

Pediculosis
Pediculosis is an infestation with head lice, usually involving less than ten live lice. Pediculosis is considered a nuisance and not a health hazard.

PROCEDURES

1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 All students and families will be treated with dignity, respect, and privacy.

1.2 Schools will work collaboratively with families and local public health officials, as required, to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

1.3 Students may not be excluded from school as a consequence of head lice or bed bugs. Instead, the school will provide educational material to the student and family or direct them to the local public health unit.

2.0 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

2.1 At the start of every school year, the Principal should provide to all staff:

i) Information related to head lice detection.
ii) Information related to bed bug detection.
iii) Protocol of school procedures for dealing with a student suspected of having either head lice or bed bugs.

2.2 Early in the school year, preferably before the end of September, the Principal should send a letter to all parents/guardians which includes:

i) Information about head lice;
ii) Information about bed bugs; and
iii) Parent/guardian's responsibility in managing these issues and the need to cooperate with the school.

2.3 Consideration should be given to sending reminders to parents/guardians regularly regarding head lice control (via newsletters or other communication strategies) or discussions at regularly scheduled family nights or meetings.

2.4 Instances of bed bugs may not be as common as head lice, but information should be available for families throughout the school year and a school response plan in place.

3.0 IDENTIFICATION AND RESPONSE

3.1 If a staff member suspects or identifies the presence of lice and/or a possible bed bug, they are to notify the principal immediately.

3.2 In the case of a possible bed bug, the insect should be safely collected (if possible) and stored in a sealed, clear plastic container or bag.

3.3 The Principal should consult with the public health unit for assessment and support.

3.4 A discreet notification will be sent to the parent/guardian of the affected student(s), including educational materials on head lice and/or bed bugs.

3.5 A general notification will be sent to the classroom community. No personal details will be provided or shared.

3.6 Custodial staff may be asked to vacuum affected areas (in the case of bed bugs).

3.7 Pest control services (in the case of bed bugs) may be contacted when required, based on public health advice.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITES

Parents, school staff, students and local health units all have a part to play in controlling the ongoing problem of head lice and/or bed bugs. The following sections state general responsibilities and roles of all members of the community as it relates to these issues.

4.1 Parent/Guardian

i) Examine the children's heads weekly for signs of infestation.
ii) Be aware of bed bug infestations.
iii) Notify the school of suspected cases.
iv) Carry out full treatment for elimination of lice and/or removal of bed bugs.
v) Inform the school that treatment has been completed successfully.

4.2 School Staff

i) Review the policy and procedure at least one time annually.
ii) Be aware of the symptoms that indicate the presence of head lice and/bed bugs.
iii) Inform the Principal if a case of head lice or bed bugs is suspected or confirmed.
iv) Actively discourage head-to-head contact among students, especially when an outbreak of head lice has been confirmed in a class.
v) Perform cleaning procedures as directed by a Principal.

4.3 Principal

i) Review the policy and procedures at least one time annually.
ii) Create and revise as necessary, a response action plan for head lice or bed bugs. Identify staff/volunteers to complete head checks and liaise with public health units for information and communication strategies.
iii) Communicate with parents/guardians regularly throughout the school year.
iv) Inform the parent/guardian when a pupil is suspected of having head lice and recommend that treatment occurs as soon as possible.
v) Follow-up with the parent/guardian to ensure that treatment has occurred.
vi) Inform all affected parents/guardians of a suspected or confirmed outbreak of head lice in a particular class.
vii) Direct families to local health units for information and support, as necessary.
viii) Direct staff to perform cleaning procedures which may include but is not limited to vacuuming, decluttering classroom materials, bagging cloth materials.
ix) Contact the appropriate supervisory officer for guidance, support, or to schedule additional response measures that may be required.

4.4 Health Unit

i) Assist in providing education material and consultation to staff, students, and parents upon request.
ii) Provide educational presentations to students, staff, and parents upon request.
iii) Provide training in head lice control to school personnel, volunteers and parents upon request.

5.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

LETTER: Sample Letter to Families – Confirmed Case
DOCUMENT: Head Lice Information Sheet

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