Dear School Families,

There has been an outbreak of head lice at the school.

Head lice are very common so there is no need to be alarmed. Anyone with a head can catch them – regardless of age, sex, background or how clean our hair is. As children get their heads together, just one infested head can infest a whole class. We all need to act together if we don’t want uninvited guests coming home for a sleepover.

Make the rest of this month “Nitbusters Month”.

- Repeat the wet combing method each weekend for the rest of the month.
- Treat, if lice are present, and repeat in seven days.

Use the comb and conditioner method to detect the lice.

- This method, outlined in detail on the back, is a good technique for detecting lice and eggs and even treating light infestations.
- Some parents use this technique on a weekly basis to detect and get rid of lice before they become rampant.
- This method can reduce the need to resort to chemical treatments.

Treat the head lice with a head lice treatment.

- Choose a head lice treatment, read the label and use strictly as directed.

When examining your child’s hair, look for the following signs:

- Tiny silver white eggs at the base of the hair shaft, particularly behind the ears and nape of the neck, accompanied by a red rash.
- Small pale brown lice. You may need to use a magnifying glass and a fine tooth comb under strong light to help identify lice.
- Persistent scratching.

Help Prevent Re-infestations.

- Reduce transmissions by tying hair back or braiding it.
- Regularly check your children’s hair.
- Teach older children how to check their own hair for lice and eggs when they wash it.
- Have a good quality head lice comb in the shower so every time anyone washes their hair they can use the comb.
- Use a cooperative, rather than embarrassed, approach so we can all work together. If your child has them, then others in their social group will too. Alert the school and/or your child’s social group so we can synchronise treatment.

For the benefit of all, we encourage our families to assist us in managing head lice.

Craig Nielsen
PRINCIPAL
Crown Street Public School

TREATING HEAD LICE

Using the Comb and Conditioner Method (Wet Combing)

Using a head lice comb on a dry head will miss many lice as they move very quickly across the scalp and are very good at avoiding being caught. By coating the hair with something thick and slimy you will slow them down so you can catch them. Head lice breathe through small openings along their abdomens called spiracles. When coated with something slimy, like hair conditioner, these openings close over, shutting down the louse’s breathing for about twenty minutes. Try this:

- Sit your child between your legs on a low stool with a video on for an hour while you work.
- Wrap a towel/paper towel around your child’s shoulders to catch any conditioner spill.
- Remove any scrunchies, clasps etc from the hair and comb our plaits and braids.
- Add generous amounts of conditioner to the scalp and massage through all the hair shafts. You will use lots of conditioner because every hair has to be coated to ensure it reaches each louse.
- Lice live close to the scalp so make sure you cover the louse close to the scalp. Then comb it through to the ends of the hair.
- After you’ve applied the conditioner, use a large comb to part small sections of the hair starting from the nape and working towards the crown. Eggs are often found, behind the ears and toward the back of the head. By using this method, you are more likely to find the head lice on top of and toward the front of the head.
- When the hair is detangled and manageable, use a fine lice comb to comb out each section several times.
- After each comb out, wipe the comb on the paper towel. If your child has head lice you will see them on the towel.
- Keep combing each section until no further lice, nymphs or eggs appear on the paper towel.
- Often you will see a whole lot of egg castings that will take a while to remove.
- Once you have combed and recombed each section of hair, either replait it or tie it back. If it is short, try some interesting styling, like a Mohawk.
- For long hair, you may find it easier to section the hair before applying conditioner. Always coat the partings with conditioner to prevent lice crossing to another section.

Using a Head Lice Product

- Use only on heads that have head lice and do not use unless they do. Over treatment increases the risk of treatment failure and contributes to insect resistance.
- Purchase a specialist head lice treatment and follow the instructions on the pack.
- Examine all family members’ hair, and treat everyone with head lice at the same time.
- After 20 minutes, wash out the treatment and use a fine tooth comb to remove dead lice and eggs.
- If there are moving lice after 20 minutes, they are probably resistant to the treatment’s active ingredient. Try using a treatment with a different active ingredient.
- No treatment can guarantee to kill 100% of the eggs in one go, so viable eggs can hatch later.
- Repeat treatment in 7 days to catch nymphs that have emerged from unhatched eggs.
- You may want to wash bed linen, towels and combs in hot soapy water at the same time but there is no need to blitz the house as lice cannot live away from their host.

REMEMBER: There is no quick fix, only persistence. Even the registered products, despite their claims, are unlikely to work with just one application.