



Pelham City Schools

Pediculosis Guidelines

Guidelines

It is the position of Pelham City Schools that the management of pediculosis (head lice) should not disrupt the educational process. The presence of nits (eggs) does not always indicate an active infestation and no evidence is found that the presence of nits correlates with any disease process. The “No Nit” policy, which was suggested in 1997 as a guideline by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), is now being discouraged. The ADPH does not require that a student with nits be denied attendance in school, and this is supported by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses.

At this time, Pelham City Schools recommends guidelines that focuses on the exclusions of active lice infestations only. Active infestations can be defined as the presence of live lice and the location of nits within ¼ inch of the scalp. Nits that are beyond ¼ inch have more than likely hatched and may no longer be viable.

The school nurse is the most knowledgeable professional in the school setting and ideally suited to provide education and guidance regarding “best practices” for head lice/nit management. The following protocol is suggested as “best practice” for managing head lice in the school setting.

- If a student is suspected of having head lice, the school nurse will be notified and will verify by visual examination with a positive or negative finding. The student will be checked in a private setting that respects the student’s confidentiality.
- The parent will be contacted with positive findings and instructed to pick the student up from school.
- The school nurse will provide the parent with verbal and written instructions regarding treatment and home cleanup.
- The school nurse will send a letter to parents of students believed to have been exposed to head lice.
- The school nurse will complete the Pediculosis Screening Form.
- The parent must bring the student to be rechecked by the school nurse before the student can be readmitted to school.

- If it is apparent that proper treatment has not been followed, the student can be sent back home for continued treatment. The school nurse will repeat treatment instructions to the parent.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to follow procedure and return their child to school promptly.
- No more than 2 consecutive absences should be considered excused due to pediculosis.

This approach to head lice management in the school setting will significantly reduce unnecessary school absences, limit embarrassment of students and decrease unnecessary exposure to potentially toxic chemicals.