

Conrad Weiser Area School District Health Services

Head Lice: Information for Parents

The Conrad Weiser Area School District policy has changed to reflect standard practice as recommended by the Center of Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses. The above organizations recommend that when lice are found on a child at school, the parents will be notified and the school nurse will provide the parent with information on appropriate treatment. In addition, research supports that it is not necessary for all the students in a class to be automatically checked for lice when an active case is found.

Research-based Facts About Lice

- Lice do not cause disease and are not dangerous to children or others.
- By the time lice is discovered the child has usually had them for 3-4 weeks.
- Lice are only spread through head to head contact. They are much harder to “catch” than the common cold.
- School is not a high risk area for getting lice. Research over the past 10 years has consistently shown that school is rarely the place of lice transmissions. The vast majority of cases of lice are spread by family members and friends. For example, lice can be spread during play dates, sleepovers, and other activities where head to head contact is likely.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.

Recommendations for Parents

1. Check your child’s hair weekly for lice
 - a. The first sign of lice is finding nits or eggs in your child’s hair. To check your child for lice, look for nits in your child’s hair behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
 - b. Nits are usually white and are the size of a pin head.
 - c. Nits cannot be easily removed from the hair shaft since they are attached with a glue-like substance.
 - d. Live lice are difficult to find especially in children with darker hair – they are the size of a sesame seed. Lice cannot fly or jump. Head to head contact is required to transmit lice.
 - e. Your child may experience persistent itching if lice are present
2. If your child has lice, treat immediately with a lice product such as Nix or Rid.
3. Check all household members for lice.
4. If your child is found to have lice, notify the parents or caregivers of your child’s friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
5. Discuss with your child the importance of NOT sharing brushes, combs, hats, and scarves in school.
6. Discuss with your child the importance of avoiding head to head contact either when working closely with another child or through hugging.
7. If your child has an active case of lice and has not been nit free for a period of time, discourage sleepovers and play dates with friends.
8. Report cases of head lice to your school nurse. The school nurse can assist you with providing up-to-date information about the care of your child’s hair and your home.