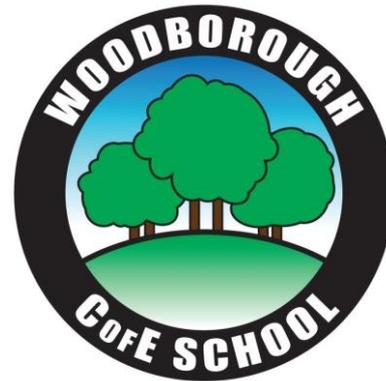


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Headteacher: Mrs S. Brewis, BA (Hons)

Friday, 10 March 2017

Dear Parents,

### **'The Facts of Lice...'**

From time to time we receive notifications from parents that they have found head lice in their children's hair. The information in this letter has been provided by the Wiltshire Health Protection Team as a means of assisting schools in the effective management of the risks presented by communicable diseases.

#### ***Head lice***

*Head lice are tiny insects, which live on the head, most commonly behind the ears and at the back of the neck and feed off blood by biting the scalp. Head lice can affect anyone but are common in children under 11 years and their families.*

*Nits are the empty eggs that remain after the lice have hatched. They are cemented to hairs close to the scalp and can be difficult to see. The eggs hatch after seven to 10 days and then turn pearly white. As the hair grows the nits become more obvious and can be seen further from the scalp surface. Nits that are a few centimetres from the scalp are empty having hatched several weeks before.*

#### ***How are head lice spread?***

*They are only spread by head to head contact, they cannot hop or jump. They do not willingly leave a head except to walk directly onto another head. If a louse falls onto a hat, hairbrush or chair back, it will be dead within 48hrs and will not usually cause problems.*

#### ***How are they treated?***

*Treatment should only be carried out if live, moving lice are seen in the hair or on the scalp. Any insecticidal lotion may be used. An aqueous solution may be preferred (Full Marks liquid) for people with asthma. Most of these can be bought from a chemist or obtained on a doctor's or health visitor's prescription. Shampoo treatments are not recommended. Treatment involves two applications of the lotion seven days apart; the second application will ensure that any remaining or newly hatched lice are killed.*

#### ***What about schools?***

*Although head lice are quite common in childhood and are often noted amongst children in school, spread occurs wherever children socialise. It is not recommended that schools send out letters to parents whenever a teacher suspects a case of head lice infection. The reason for this is that it is likely that there will always be some cases of head lice infection in school; this is normal. Sending out letters can give the impression that an outbreak is occurring rather than an expected and normal number of cases. Schools are*

not responsible for detecting, treating or excluding children who are thought to have head lice infection. This is a family duty. Therefore regular detection combing is recommended within families to ensure early detection and treatment of cases. Schools should provide parents with information periodically, for instance a reminder in newsletters or at the beginning of term.

We do understand the frustration of parents who find that their children are regularly re-visited by head lice, despite their on-going pro-active actions to prevent this. With this in mind we would like to appeal once more for all families to take action and complete the detection combing mentioned above on a very regular basis. This can be completed on wet or dry hair and the methods are described below. If head lice are found during detection combing please treat using your preferred lotion. Treatment has a good chance of clearing head lice if applied or done correctly *and* if all affected people in the household are treated at the same time.

#### **Detection combing: wet hair method**

*This will take 5-15 minutes to check each head, depending on hair length and thickness. It is also used as a treatment for head lice - see later.*

- *Wash the hair in the normal way with ordinary shampoo.*
- *Rinse out the shampoo and put on lots of ordinary conditioner.*
- *Comb the hair with a normal comb to get rid of tangles.*
- *When the hair is untangled switch to a detection comb. This is a special fine-toothed comb.*
- *Slot the teeth of the detection comb into the hair at the roots so it is touching the scalp.*
- *Draw the detection comb through to the tips of the hair.*
- *Make sure that all parts of the hair are combed by working around the head.*
- *Check the comb for lice after each stroke. A magnifying glass may help.*
- *If you see any lice, clean the comb by wiping it on a tissue or rinse it before the next stroke.*
- *After the whole head has been combed, rinse out the conditioner.*
- *Repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair to check for any lice that might have been missed the first time.*

#### **Detection combing: dry hair method**

*This will take 3-5 minutes to check each head, depending on hair length and thickness. Although useful to detect head lice, it is not useful as a treatment.*

- *Straighten and untangle the dry hair using an ordinary comb.*
- *Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to a detection comb, as described above. Starting from the base or the side of the scalp, comb the hair from the scalp down to the end of the hair. Comb each section of hair 3-4 times before moving to an adjacent section.*
- *Look for lice as the comb is drawn through the hair.*
- *If a possible louse is seen, trap it against the face of the comb using the thumb. This avoids the risk of the louse being repelled by static electricity as the comb is withdrawn from the hair.*
- *Continue combing the hair section by section until the whole head of hair is combed through.*

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter about 'The Facts of Lice...' and thank you also in anticipation that you will take the time to check your child(ren)'s hair on a regular basis. On-going checking and action as necessary by all of our families should help us to keep this irritating problem to a minimum for pupils and parents alike.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs S. Brewis  
Headteacher