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Dear Parents and Carers,

### **HEAD LICE – *Once a week, Take a Peek!***

As a school we fully appreciate parents' frustration regarding head lice and hope the additional information provided below will prove helpful. Head lice can cause a number of families a continual "headache" and it can be easily avoided if every family in the school once a week carries out detection comb checks on the hair of everyone in the household. You do not need to use chemical preparations if you persevere with detection combing regularly and make it a weekly routine.

#### **Detection combing**

Detection combing can be carried out on dry or wet hair. Less preparation is needed to comb dry hair, but wet combing is more accurate because lice remain motionless when wet. You will need a special fine-toothed detection head lice comb; it has a tooth spacing of less than 0.3mm to trap the smallest lice. Nit combs are not suitable for louse detection as the teeth are too close together. Lice can get trapped between the teeth and remain unseen.

#### **Wet detection combing**

Follow the steps below for wet detection combing.

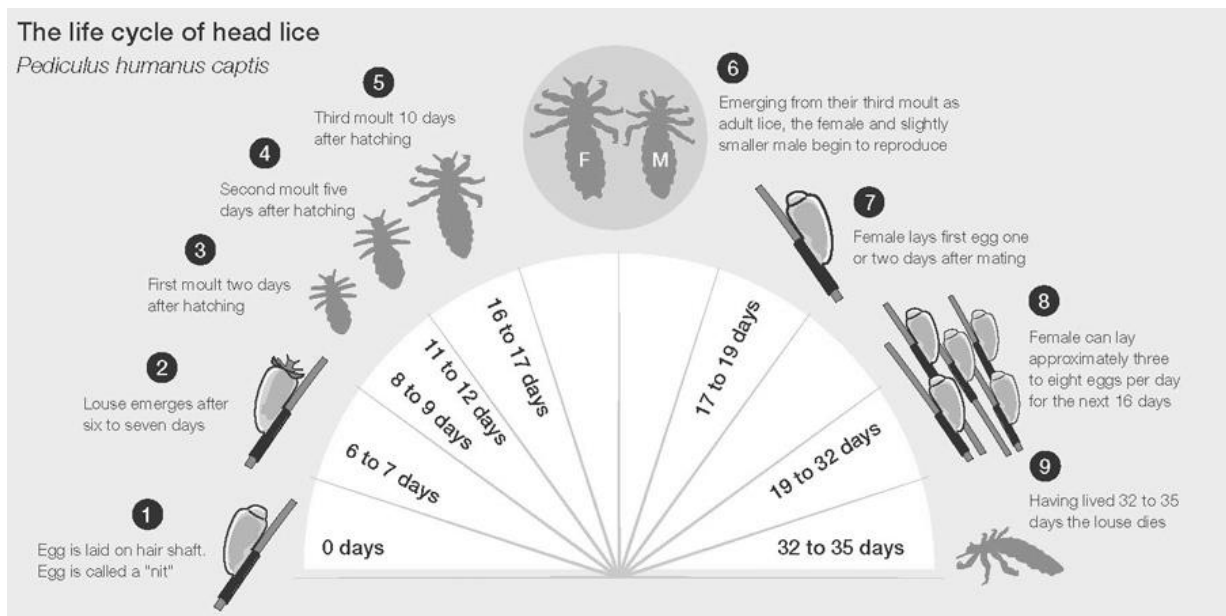
- Wash hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner. Use a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.

#### **Dry detection combing**

Follow the steps below for dry detection combing.

- Use an ordinary comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Comb the hair from the scalp to the end of the hair, combing each section of hair 3-4 times before moving on to the next section.
- Look for lice as the comb is drawn through the hair. If you see a louse, trap it against the face of the comb with your thumb. This helps to avoid the louse being repelled by static electricity as the comb is removed from the hair.
- Continue combing the hair, section by section, until the whole head has been combed through.

The diagram below shows the life cycle of a head lice and demonstrates the need to *Take a Peek Once a Week* as the life cycle of a head lice can be long if not removed from a child's head.



Other ways to reduce the spread of head lice is to tie long hair back, not share hats or combs. If head lice have been found ensure that all bedding is washed thoroughly.

#### Head lice facts:

- Head lice are small wingless insects, and are about the size of a sesame seed.
- They feed on human blood.
- Head lice do not live on your pets.
- They can only live 24 hours off of the human host.
- They leave an itchy feeling like a mosquito bite.
- Each head louse can lay up to 10 nits (eggs) a day.
- Daily shampooing will not prevent you from getting head lice.
- Head lice and nits (eggs) can be found anywhere on the head.

Please take a look at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx> for more information about how to treat head lice.

Thank you for supporting **Once a Week Take a Peek!** If you have any further questions or queries about head lice please speak to a member of the Office Crew or myself.

Yours sincerely

**Emma Hardy-Smith**

Acting Principal