



Mawson Lakes Preschool

Head lice Policy



This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of Mawson Lakes Preschool community members in our efforts to control head lice. This policy draws on information obtained from the National Health and Medical Research Council document *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care*.

Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate head lice but we can reduce the number of cases if all preschool community members work together in a coordinated and cooperative way.

At Mawson Lakes Preschool there is a commitment to work together in the following ways:

- Checking and treating children's hair is a parent/caregiver's responsibility and should be done regularly.
- On enrolment all families will be given a copy of this policy (included in the parent information handbook) and asked to give permission for staff to check their child's head in a discreet manner if head lice are suspected.
- Each child will be required to bring their own hat to preschool – the preschool will not provide hats or allow children to share hats.
- If head lice is suspected a staff member will contact the family to ask that a child be checked and receive treatment if necessary.
- Parents/caregivers will notify the preschool if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The preschool will notify the preschool community when head lice are detected at preschool via a note on the blackboard or your child's information pocket.
- The preschool will also notify Mawson Lakes School and Mawson Lakes Child Care Centre of an outbreak, so appropriate measures can be put in place by each service.

To support parents/caregivers and the broader preschool community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the preschool will:

- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff.
- Include information and updates in preschool newsletters.
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Be aware of real difficulties, including treatment failure that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centres, their doctor or pharmacist.

A few facts about Head lice

- Head lice can only be spread from one person to another by direct head to head contact or by items their head has come into contact with – including hats. They do not jump, swim or fly.
- Head lice eggs take 7-10 days to hatch and adult lice can lay eggs after another 6-10 days.
- As long as eggs or lice are alive they can spread to other people by direct head to head contact.

Checking a child's hair

If you have given written permission:

- A staff member will check your child's hair sensitively and discreetly.
- If there are live lice we will phone you to advise picking up your child
- It will be your responsibility to treat your child with an appropriate head lice treatment.
- Your child can return to preschool following successful treatment.

If you have not given written permission:

- We will phone you to come and collect your child.
- It will be your responsibility to treat your child with an appropriate head lice treatment.
- You will be required to provide a medical certificate from your doctor stating that your child has been treated for head lice.

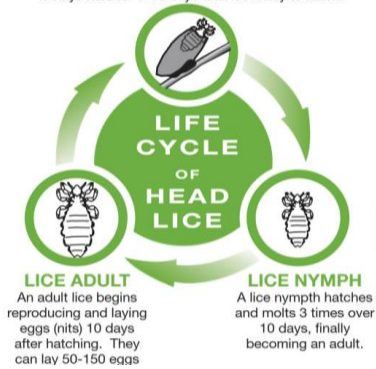
Note: Effective treatment for head lice is a legal requirement under the South Australian Public and Environmental Health Act 1987. The child's parents or guardian are responsible for checking and effectively treating children for head lice.

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What to look for

A lice egg or "nit", is glued to a hair shaft.
It stays here for 8-10 days until it's ready to hatch.



Tiny white nits (eggs) on the hair shafts.



Light or dark brown insects.

What to do

- Get advice about which treatments to use from your chemist or family doctor.
- Check all hair, eyebrows and eyelashes on everyone who has been close to the person with headlice including adults at the same time and treat everyone who has head lice.
- Please advise us at preschool if you find head lice.

The Department of Health in South Australia recommends a combination of using a comb to remove lice and nits and combined with a chemical treatment. There are several different types of chemicals, and they need to be used in different ways. They should be used exactly as described on the labels.

Always treat again 7-10 days after the first treatment to kill any lice that hatched after the first treatment. Not all unhatched eggs will be killed by the treatment. Repeating the treatment kills the newly hatched lice before they start laying eggs.

For more information about head lice see;

SA Health: Head lice, including symptoms, treatment and prevention

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/bites+stings+and+pests/head+lice+-+including+symptoms+treatment+and+prevention>

Women's and Children's Health Network, South Australian Government

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/Public+Content/SA+Health+Internet/search?q=head+lice>

References

National Quality Standard 2.1 (2011)

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Childrens-health-and-safety>

National Quality Standard 5.1 (2011)

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Relationships-with-children>

Exclusion Periods for Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Services

<https://aussiechildcarenetwork.com.au/articles/childcare-articles/exclusion-periods-for-infectious-diseases-in-early-childhood-services>

SA Health: Head lice, management guidelines for schools

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/pest+management/head+lice%2c+management+guidelines+for+schools>

Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th ed)

Commonwealth of Australia 2012 (updated June 2013)

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55>

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Developed and accepted by the Governing Council and staff of Mawson Lakes Preschool – 26th May 2008

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