

All About Lice

The District has recommended changes to the current lice policy to reflect standard practice as recommended by the Center of Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American School Health Association. None of these organizations recommend that all the students in a class where an active case is found be automatically checked for lice. 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. Treatment is required and a student who is not appropriately treated may not return to school.

Why would these organizations make these recommendations?

- 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.
- 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 friends and family members.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Lice are only spread through head to head contact. They are much harder to “catch” than the common cold.
- Lice can only crawl; they can neither jump nor fly.

Lice cause an emotional reaction. The “no ‘nit” policies of the past were based on that reaction not on scientific evidence of how lice were passed.