Appendix D – Head Lice Policy

What do they look like?
› Lice are about 2mm in length, and are generally a light colour.
› The eggs are very small, and off-white in colour.
› They stick firmly to the hair and cannot be removed by ordinary combing.
› They resemble dandruff – but dandruff moves when combed or rubbed. The eggs “stick”.
› The eggs are often called “nits”.

What do they do?
They bite! This makes the head itch, and results in scratches, which can become infected. Heads can, of course, itch without being infested with lice, but where lice are suspected it is wise to take immediate action.

The eggs themselves are harmless, except for one thing – they HATCH! Then they become lice, and once again, they cause itching.

How can you tell if a family member has head lice?
› Lice may be seen on the scalp if the hair is rapidly parted.
› Eggs (nits) are detected on the hair shaft close to the scalp, behind the ears and at the back of the neck. (Nits further than 10-15 mm from the scalp are hatched or dead).
› Discarded skins and black sandy excrement are seen on pillows and collars.
› Itching of the scalp causing the person to scratch may prompt examination.

Treatment of Head Lice
› Treat as recommended by your local Pharmacy.

Please make sure that your child/children do not return to school until they have been treated and are completely free of infestation.

How to Control Spread
Parents will be called to take children who have confirmed or suspected cases from school or child care facility. Students may be readmitted the day after appropriate treatment has commenced. The presence of a few remaining nits does not preclude readmission.
› Treat with an appropriate lotion that kills louse and nits.
› Use a fine metal comb or fingernails to remove nits.
› Treat all household contacts simultaneously.
› Wash clothes, bed linen and towels on a hot water cycle.
› Wash combs and brushes in hot water and detergent.
› Never share combs, brushes or hats.
› Inspect close contacts regularly for signs of infestation.
Prevention

- Ordinary hair care is the best way to discourage head lice.
- Daily brushing is likely to damage the lice.
- To obtain effective control of head lice, the whole community should be involved.
- Parents should be encouraged to screen themselves and their children regularly in the home, and to treat themselves only when necessary.