



# St Benedict's Primary School

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Dear Parent/Guardian

## **HEAD LICE IN YOUR CHILD'S CLASS**

You are receiving this circular because a member of your child's class has been found to be carrying head lice. Would you please examine your child's hair and, if you find any nits or lice, we would appreciate you advising the school office. Confidentiality is assured and no embarrassment should be felt, as it is very often impossible to know where or how a child contracted the lice or nits.

### **WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?**

The head lice is a small insect 1-3mm in length, which obtains its food by puncturing its host's skin with its proboscis (an elongated mouth part); this causes itching. It deposits its eggs in the hairs, and each egg is contained in a minute grey nit which is attached to a hair by a substance like cement. These eggs usually hatch in about a week and become mature lice in a further 1-2 weeks. There is no evidence that they carry disease.

### **SIGNS OF HEADLICE**

Itchiness and persistent scratching of the scalp. Careful inspection may then reveal lice and/or minute nits attached firmly to the hairs. The nits cannot be brushed or pulled off the hair – as can dandruff.

### **TREATMENT**

- Check every member of the family.**  
Look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. head lice are small greyish-tan insects without wings. Any family member with lice or nits must be treated.
- Use an effective head lice treatment.**  
as soon as possible. It is not possible for us to recommend products to be used in treatment but I suggest that you contact your doctor or chemist for advice in this matter. Whatever treatment you choose, follow the instructions carefully.
- Remove all nits.**  
Gently comb the child's hair with a special nit removal comb. A free nit comb is often included with treatments. It is important to complete this removal very carefully and thoroughly.
- Wash clothes, bed linens and towels.**  
Use hot water, then dry on the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items such as stuffed animals, headphones and hats and helmets that are not machine washable must be dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag for at least two weeks.
- Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water.**  
The hotter the better, but the temperature should be at least 130 degrees F. Items should soak for at least 10 minutes.
- Vacuum everywhere.**  
To make sure the rest of your house is louse free, you should vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, even the car seats.

Ensure that a very close and regular inspection of the hair of any other close contacts is maintained for about two weeks after last contact.

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

This is not permitted until treatment has been successful, and all nits and lice have been removed.

Thank you for your prompt attention. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Matthew Garton  
Principal