

# STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## Important Student Health Information

January 27, 2014

Dear Elementary School Parents:

Recently, our school health clinics and administration have received questions from parents regarding our protocol for students who have contracted lice. We would like to take this opportunity to clarify Stonington Public Schools parental notification protocol.

*If a case where live lice is found in your child's elementary school classroom, the school nurse may inspect the entire classroom. Parents will only be notified if there is an issue involving their student. The nurse will provide written instructions regarding treatment. After treatment and upon return to school, the student will be rescreened by the school nurse before being permitted to return to the classroom. Additionally, if there are three or more students in a classroom that have lice, the parents of the students in that classroom will receive written notification.*

The Centers for Disease Control states that head lice infestation is most common among preschool aged children attending childcare, elementary school children, and the household members of infested children. Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Lice transmission from one individual to another occurs primarily through direct head to head contact. Lice may also be spread through the sharing of personal items such as hats, scarves, helmets, brushes, combs and pillows, therefore children should be discouraged from sharing such items. Lice are also often spread among children during sustained contact at sleepovers, playgroups and other such community activities. Additional information regarding lice prevention has been provided on the reverse side of this letter.

Dr. Michael Blefeld, the SPS Medical Advisor, encourages parents to contact their pediatrician or primary care physician for treatment and prevention of lice. If you have questions regarding school protocol, please contact your school nurse.

Sincerely,

Gloria Murray-DeBiasi  
Nursing Supervisor

Allison Van Etten  
Director of Special Services

Van Riley, Ph.D  
Superintendent of Schools

# Prevention & Control

Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice have crawled or nits attached to shed hairs may have fallen. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1–2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfest combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

To help control a head lice outbreak in a community, school, or camp, children can be taught to avoid activities that may spread head lice.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)*