POLICY:	HEAD LICE - Pediculosis	#	1014
SECTION:	1000 : Safety	Page 1 of	3
DATE:	December 8, 2025	EFFECTIVE DATE: December 8, 2025	REVIEW DATE: December 9, 2030
CROSS REFERENCE:	Appendix A - Parent Information Appendix B - Identification and Treatment Letter Appendix C - Outbreak Letter Head Lice Fact Sheet		

A: POLICY

1.1 This policy was developed through collaboration with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, which takes its direction on head lice and pediculosis from the Canadian Pediatric Society.

1.2 The procedures identified in this policy emphasize that pediculosis is not a health problem but it is a social nuisance. Head lice do not carry or spread disease but their management remains a problem for school staff, parents and children. Outbreaks disrupt the educational program, may result in school days lost, and arouse strong emotions.

1.3 By increasing staff, student and parent awareness about the identification, transmission and treatment of head lice, it is hoped that the stigma and emotion related to the problem will be reduced.

1.4 The management of head lice is the responsibility of the school, the parent and the child.

1.5 The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent school response.

1.6 All staff members are expected to demonstrate the attributes that define our Board as a caring Catholic community. Issues and procedures related to pediculosis are to be dealt with in a sensitive and respectful manner. At all times, our students are to be treated with respect, dignity and where necessary, privacy in matters related to health.

B: DEFINITIONS

Head Lice: insects that infest the scalp and hair of the human head. Having head lice is common, especially among school children; it is experienced by as many as 12 million people worldwide each year.

Pediculosis: an infestation with head lice; usually involves less than ten live lice.

Parent: refers to parent(s), guardian(s), a student who is 18 years or older, or student who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control.

C: GUIDELINES

2.1 Students who attend Thunder Bay Catholic schools are not sent home or excluded from school because of the detection of active head lice or nits in their hair, as long as effective treatment steps are being taken at home to remove the pediculosis. Parents are advised and are expected to follow recommended treatment steps to eliminate pediculosis.

2.2 Board practices are based on recommendations from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and the Canadian Pediatric Society. In its most recent clinical update, the Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee of the Canadian Pediatric Society states: "Exclusion from school due to the detection of the presence of 'nits' does not have sound medical rationale. Even the detection of active head lice should not lead to the exclusion of the affected child. Treatment should be recommended and close head-to-head contact should be discouraged pending treatment." *(October 2008)*

If in the opinion of the principal, in consultation with the school Superintendent, a parent has not taken effective treatment steps to remove the pediculosis, a student may be excluded from attendance at school as stated in the *Education Act*, S. 265 (1)(m): *It is the duty of a principal, subject to an appeal to the board, to refuse to admit to the school or classroom a person whose presence in the school or classroom would in the principal's judgment be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupil.* Only in the face of unusual circumstances, such as refusal on the part of the parent to treat, will exclusion be considered.

2.3 Class-wide screenings for head lice are not required in our schools.

2.4 Pediculosis (Head Lice) information is provided on the websites of the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (www.tbdhu.com) and the Canadian Pediatric Society (www.cps.ca).

D: PROCEDURES FOR ELEMENTARY (K – 6) SCHOOLS

School staff have a responsibility to help prevent and/or stop the spread of pediculosis.

1. School Principal

The principal will:

- ❑ Review this policy with staff at the annual September staff meeting.
- ❑ Communicate with the parent regarding head lice at least three times each year. Information shall be sent home in early September, early January and following March Break, times that correspond with the seasonal peaks for head lice. Use Appendix A - Parent Information and Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- ❑ Ensure that copies of this policy are available to parents.
- ❑ Inform the parent when their child is suspected of having head lice, and recommend that treatment occur as soon as possible, using Appendix B - Identification and Treatment Letter and Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- ❑ Follow up with the parent to ensure that treatment has occurred.
- ❑ Inform all affected parents of a suspected or confirmed outbreak of head lice in a particular class, using Appendix C - Outbreak Letter and Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- ❑ Direct parents to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit for information and support as necessary.

- ❑ Ensure that each year; every classroom teacher includes at least one age-appropriate lesson on the identification, transmission and treatment of head lice.

2. All Staff

Staff will:

- ❑ Review this policy each year.
- ❑ Be aware of the symptoms that indicate the presence of head lice.
- ❑ Inform the principal if a case of head lice is suspected or confirmed.
- ❑ Actively discourage head-to-head contact among students when an outbreak of pediculosis has been confirmed in his/her class.

3. Parent

The parent will be encouraged to:

- ❑ Be aware of the symptoms that indicate the presence of head lice.
- ❑ Check their child's hair for head lice on a regular basis.
- ❑ Notify the school when the presence of head lice is detected.
- ❑ Provide full and proper treatment for the elimination of head lice.
- ❑ Inform the school principal that full and proper treatment has occurred

E: PROCEDURES FOR SENIOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The reported incidence of pediculosis is not as prevalent in the senior elementary and secondary school population as it is in the K-6 school population.

It is assumed and expected that senior elementary and secondary school students accept responsibility for their own personal hygiene management.

When a grade 7-12 student is identified as having an infestation of head lice, the principal will apply his/her professional judgment and do one or both of the following:

1. Speak directly to the student about the infestation and recommended treatment
2. Inform the parent and recommend that treatment occur as soon as possible. See Appendix B and Head Lice Fact Sheet.