

17<sup>th</sup> August 2015

Dear Parents / Caregivers

Despite recent letters homes, it appears we have a real head lice issue at Mangawhai Beach School throughout all the year levels. These insects are a nuisance and need to be controlled or eradicated by families. Head lice crawl from head to head and may be passed on through shared objects such as hairbrushes and hats with family members.

There are a number of actions a school can take to help ensure that any outbreaks are detected and treated early, the main one being sending a letter home via the classrooms.

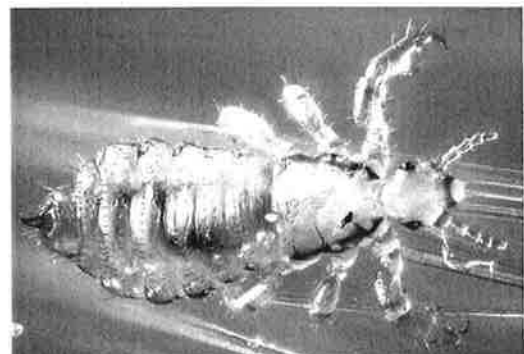
National Administration Guideline 1(iii) requires schools to report to parents on matters likely to prevent students from achieving. National Administration Guideline 5 requires schools to maintain a safe physical and emotional environment for students. Both of these guidelines mean a school must take some action in the event that it becomes apparent that children are attending school with head lice.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1989 enables the principal of a school to preclude a student who is not clean enough to keep attending school or may have a communicable disease. A child who is precluded under this section of the Education Act 1989 is neither stood-down nor suspended. Mangawhai Beach School could enforce this Act if letters home about head lice are ignored.

It is recommended that you check all members of your household carefully. Anyone can host head lice. Cleanliness is not a factor in whether head lice are present or not.

### What to look for

- Small light or dark brown insects without wings.
- Tiny whitish eggs (nits) like grains of salt attached to hair shafts.
- There may be unusual itching on the head or neck.
- Small red marks on the neck or behind the ears (headlice bites).



### What to do

- Check all members of the household daily at the same time for at least three weeks.
- Treat anyone who is hosting head lice. Effective treatment need not be chemical or expensive.
- Please advise the school if you find head lice and confirm that treatment has begun.
- Be prepared to continue treatment for about three weeks depending on the method chosen. Three weeks is the length of the head louse breeding cycle; you need to break the cycle or infestation will continue.
- After each treatment, comb the hair with a fine toothed comb.
- Soak hairbrushes and combs in hot water for at least ten minutes.
- Vacuuming carpets and rugs may be helpful.
- Repeat treatment 7 to 10 days after initial treatment.

Treating the hair is no guarantee that the problem has been eradicated. Success is more likely if treatment is thorough, checking is daily for at least three weeks and children are reminded to avoid head to head contact with others.

Head lice are a common problem throughout the world. Schools do not give people head lice; people bring head lice to schools and also churches, supermarkets and sports fields. Controlling head lice requires people in a community as a whole to act. *If one family fails to check and treat a child's head the work done by others to control the problem is likely to be wasted.* It is a parent's responsibility to check and treat their children.

Please, check your child for head lice and treat appropriately if head lice are found. Tie up long hair (boys included). Our Public Nurse can visit the home for support if it is deemed necessary.

Your cooperation on this issue would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Martin Hett  
Acting Principal