



# The Gattons Infant School

## *Information Leaflet*



**Head Lice**

Remember, the best way to stop infection is for families to check their heads regularly (once or twice a week) using detection combing.



If your child catches head lice, don't worry. Thousands of children do and it is nothing to be embarrassed about.

***They are also easy to treat, especially if you follow the information included below.***

Following advice from the school health service, the school no longer informs parents if there is an outbreak of head lice in their child's class. Instead we send out a termly reminder to parents to encourage them to maintain regular detection combing. This is a much more effective way of reducing the number of infections.

### **How to detect head lice**

Three symptoms that may indicate your child has head lice:

- ◇ Itchy scalp - if your child keeps scratching their head or complains of itchiness;
- ◇ Red patches on the scalp - these are caused by scratching and may become infected;
- ◇ White spots attached to the hair which could be nits, the eggshells from hatched lice.

In order to confirm the presence of head lice you will need a fine tooth detector comb and it is a good idea to use conditioner on the hair to make combing it easier. If you do use conditioner remember to wipe the comb with tissue paper after every stroke to check for lice and to rinse the conditioner off the hair when you have finished combing.

1. Wash the hair well and leave the hair wet but not dripping.
2. Comb the hair with an ordinary comb to straighten it and then use a detector comb. Start at the top of the head and, making sure the comb is touching the scalp, slowly draw the comb towards the end of the hair.
3. Check the teeth of the comb carefully for head lice (eggs or nits).
4. Repeat steps 3 and 4, working your way round the head.
5. If you find head lice sticking to the comb, or something you are unsure about, stick it to a piece of paper with clear sticky tape and take it to the school nurse, your local pharmacist or GP.

### **How to treat head lice**

- ◇ Do not start treatment unless an infection is confirmed and never use insecticides to prevent infection.
- ◇ Get confirmation of an infection from the school nurse, your local pharmacist or your GP. Ask them which treatment to use and follow the instructions provided.

### **Contact tracing**

To stop you from being re-infected, it is important to find out where you caught the lice from and also to find out who may have given them to you.

Check family members and close friends and also inform the school. If the school is aware of a child with head lice and it appears that they have not been treated we will contact the parents to discuss the problem.

### **School Health Service**

Parents may contact the school nurse if you would like to discuss persistent head lice infestations or any other problems associated with head lice. Her contact number is 01444 248901.

### **Further Information**

There are all sorts of sources of information about head lice although many are related to products so you have to be aware of this. The school has some additional leaflets which parents may collect from the office. You may find the following useful:

[www.chc.org](http://www.chc.org)

Bug Busting helpline: 01908 561928



### **Facts about head lice**

- ◇ Head lice are small, greyish brown insects that live on the human head;
- ◇ They grow up to the size of a sesame seed and have special hooked feet that allow them to cling to individual hairs.
- ◇ A female louse can lay up to 8 eggs a day and they take about 10 days to hatch.
- ◇ Nits are the empty egg shells that lice have hatched from.
- ◇ A head louse lives for up to one month.
- ◇ Head lice cannot jump, swim or fly. They can only walk.
- ◇ Two heads need to be touching for a head louse to walk from one to the other.
- ◇ You cannot catch head lice from pets as they do not live on animals.
- ◇ You don't need to disinfect clothes or furnishings as head lice die when away from a human head.