



## **PEDICULOSIS**

### **1.0 Rationale**

District School Board Ontario North East believes in supporting parents/guardians in understanding pediculosis (head lice) and its impact on students, their families and school life.

Pediculosis (head lice) is not a disease or a health issue, but is defined as a social nuisance which needs to be managed in the best interest of students through the partnership of parent(s)/guardian(s), students, staff and the school community.

The treatment and eradication of pediculosis (head lice) is ultimately the parent(s)/guardian(s)' responsibility.

Communication and education about pediculosis (head lice) with students and parent(s)/guardian(s) is essential for fostering a relationship of trust and respect in dealing with the problem of pediculosis (head lice) which may become a school issue when nits and lice are detected on students attending the schools. The dignity and well-being of our students is given the highest priority. Every attempt will be made to respect the student's privacy and self-esteem.

Staff will use their best judgement in the determination of head lice based on the established procedures contained within this policy.

### **2.0 Definitions**

**Head Lice (Pediculosis):** Head lice are tiny, flat, grayish-brown bugs that live only on the scalp of human beings. They are difficult to see. They are the size of a pinhead. They do not have wings so they cannot fly or jump and they are not found on cats, dogs, or any household pets. They are transmitted by close contact with someone who has head lice. The bites from head lice cause itching and scratching. Scratching may cause sores which can get infected. They lay and cement their eggs (nits) on strands of hair close to the scalp, usually around the nape of the neck, behind the ears and the "halo" at the top of the head. Nits take up to 2 weeks to hatch.

**Nits:** Lice lay eggs on the hair. These eggs are also called nits. Live eggs are dark. They can also be the color of the hair they are on. Nits are half the size of a pinhead. They stick to the hair and do not fall off if you touch them. After the eggs have hatched, the shells are white. These empty shells cannot spread lice to the same child or others. Nits found more than one centimeter from the scalp are unlikely to be viable.

### **3.0 Policy**

District School Board Ontario North East is committed to a program of head lice (pediculosis) management which is directed at controlling the spread of head lice and includes educating parents and guardians.