



Swallowcliffe P-6

Be Safe, Be Kind, Work Hard

HEADLICE POLICY

This school policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of Swallowcliffe School community members in community efforts to control headlice. This school policy draws on information obtained from the Department of Health publication *Healthy Heads - Without Headlice* and the Department of Education and Children's Services' publication *Headlice – the role of preschools and schools in community headlice control*.

All members of this school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage headlice effectively.

• **Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate headlice but we can reduce the number of cases if all school community members work together in a coordinated manner. In this school community there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:**

- All families will check at home the hair of all household members, on a weekly basis, for live lice.
- Where an active case is detected, the school encourages immediate treatment and return to school the day after appropriate treatment was commenced. Families will be encouraged to wash all bedding etc to enable the treatment to work effectively.
- Parents/caregivers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The teacher will notify the student's parent/caregiver in a discreet manner eg phone call, personal conversation that their child has headlice. The teacher will notify parents/caregivers of all students in their classroom via note home when a case of headlice is detected, to alert these families of the need to check hair more frequently.
- A sympathetic attitude will be maintained by the entire school community to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

• **To support parents/caregivers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to headlice management the school will undertake to:**

- Include information and updates in school newsletters.
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers).
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced.

Our Mission: To empower students to recognise and optimise their full learning potential.



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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- Encourage children to learn about headlice so as to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers) if required.
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing headlice.

Blanket head inspections or headlice screening by school staff are strongly discouraged. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that such programs:

- Take away from student curriculum time
- Are potentially intrusive of student privacy
- Take over family rights and responsibilities
- Convey the message that headlice management is a school issue rather than a household and wider community responsibility

If school staff check children's hair, they would need to ensure:

- Written, active, informed consent of the parents
- Respect for privacy and confidentiality

In addition, a school would be advised to:

- Develop a generic/blanket consent form for headlice screening which parents/caregivers and students sign at commencement of school year
- Respect the wishes of parents/families and children who elect not to participate in school headlice screening
- Offer headlice treatment to families on school card
- Give a letter to all children involved in a headlice screening to help maintain confidentiality

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PROMOTION

The policy will be promoted by:

- Families being informed via the newsletter and other correspondence.
- New families to the centre being informed via the Enrolment Information package.
- Staff being informed and provided with training opportunities.
- Students being informed via teachers

This policy has been endorsed by the Governing Council.

This policy will be reviewed and updated as required ie due to new information.

2017

Changes made and updated 2023

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