



FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Services Department

100 Everitts Road

Ringoes, New Jersey 08551

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We have just come back from a summer break, which means spending lots of time with extended family, play dates, sleepovers and lots of togetherness. Extended close contact creates a prime condition for the spread of head lice. An estimated 6 to 12 million infestations occur each year in the United States, most commonly among children ages 3 to 11. We are writing to you to help you learn how to identify lice and provide information on what you can do if you discover lice.

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that live close to the human scalp. They feed on blood. The eggs, also called nits, are tiny, tear-drop shaped eggs that attach to the hair shaft. Nits often appear yellowish or white, and can look like dandruff but cannot be removed or brushed off. The nymph, or baby louse, is smaller and grow to adult size in one to two weeks. The adult louse is the size of a sesame seed appears tan to grayish-white. An itchy and inflamed scalp is a common symptom of lice. Although not common, persistent scratching may lead to skin irritation and even infection.

Who is affected by head lice?

Head lice are not related to cleanliness. In fact, head lice often infest people with good hygiene and grooming habits. Infestations can occur at home, school or in the community. Head lice are mostly spread by direct head-to-head contact—for example, during play at home or school, slumber parties, sports activities, or camp. Less often, lice are spread via objects that have been in recent contact with a person with head lice, such as hats, scarves, hair ribbons, combs, brushes, stuffed animals or bedding.

What to do if an infestation occurs?

If you think your child has head lice, it's important to talk to a healthcare provider to discuss the best treatment approach for your family. Resistance to some over-the-counter head lice treatments has been reported, but the prevalence of resistance is not known. There are other prescription treatments available when traditional measures are not effective. Contact the school nurse who can help you with proper identification, counsel you, and monitor the effectiveness of treatment, while also maintaining your confidentiality. Children should not be treated merely on speculation.

As your school nurses, we want to provide you with the information you need to safeguard your children's health, and pave the way for a healthy school year. Parents should be routinely checking their children's heads for lice for early detection and treatment. For more complete lice information, including the District Lice Policy, visit our district website at www.frsd.k12.nj.us, select "Nurses' Offices" on the left and look for our special head lice section. We hope you find this information useful.

Sincerely,

The FRSD School Nurses

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