



**Building Excellence
Health Services**

Head Lice – Q&A

What are Head Lice?

Head louse is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows and eyelids. Head lice can be a nuisance; however, they have **not** been shown to spread disease. Head lice are more commonly found in children 3-12 years of age. Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene, child abuse or neglect.

How do they spread?

When transmission occurs, it is generally with head to head contact. Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks by nonmedical personnel. Parents are encouraged to carefully check their child head before and after attending a sleepover or camp where children share sleeping quarters. Head lice spread most commonly by direct contact with the hair on an infested person. Spread by contact with inanimate objects and personal belongings may occur but is very uncommon.

What do Head Lice look Like?

- Mature lice are the size of a sesame seed and are usually found close to the scalp.
- The lice/nits are yellowish-white, tear drop shaped, and are firmly attached at an angle to the hair shaft close to the scalp, behind the ears and on the back of the neck.

How do I Treat?

- If lice are found in your child hair. Your child should be treated immediately.
- Contact your healthcare provider or pharmacy for advice.
- Recommended treatment includes using a prescription or store-bought lice killing product.

- Carefully follow the direction included with the product.
- Lice avoid light and are therefore, hard to see. A fine-tooth comb may be helpful with removal.
- Grasp nits between the fingers and slide them off the hair shaft.
- You may also contact your school nurse for further instructions.

What is the School Board Policy?

It is the policy of the Baldwin County Board of Education that no child will be allowed to attend school until after he or she has been properly treated with an appropriate louse killing product, and no lice or nits are seen. A doctor or health department excuse does not pre-empt these requirements. Students who are properly treated and are free of lice and nits are permitted to return to school within 24 hours. Students are allowed a maximum of 3 consecutive days for treatment and removal of nits. All other absences due to head lice are unexcused.