Rationale

Head Lice are tiny parasites that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Anyone can catch head lice through head to head contact and the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats. They reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. While they do not carry or transmit disease and are not a sign of poor hygiene, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infections, allergic reaction and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.

Aims

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that children are provided the best opportunity to focus on the teaching/learning process.
- To ensure effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their treatment.
IMPLEMENTATION

- While it is the parents/guardians who have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information, through demonstrations, guest speakers and head lice packs. The school will offer a screening process and will alert parents to the presence of head lice when detected.
- The school principal will ensure that staff are provided with professional development regarding head lice. Staff will then be authorised by the principal to carry out visual checks of student's head for head lice (observations without touching of the students' head or hair).
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be inspected by specific staff members for the presence of head lice. The principal will authorise specific staff to conduct head lice inspections (physical examinations) of students head and hair for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be inspected, however, all children may be visually checked.
- All children inspected will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the inspections, as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulation 2001 and the School Education Act 1999, the principal will ensure that parents/guardians of any child found to have live lice are informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced.
- The principal will also provide the parents/guardians of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- On their return to school, parents/guardians of excluded children must present the signed declaration indicating that appropriate treatment has commenced. All excluded children are to undergo another inspection from our trained head lice inspectors upon recommencement of school.
- The principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy infestations.
- Identified staff will, in exceptional circumstances, treat hair with hair conditioner when permission has been obtained.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.