

## CHAPTER: STUDENTS

### TITLE: Pediculosis (Head Lice)

#### Purpose:

It is the policy of the Calhoun County Board of Education that any student attending school with pediculosis shall be excluded from school until the student has been treated with an effective pediculicide and all live lice have been removed.

#### Definitions:

Head Lice (*Pediculus capitus*) are small parasitic insects that live on the scalp and neck hairs of their human hosts. Physically they have remained unchanged for 2000 years. Lice are not a serious health threat because they do not cause illness. Complications related to infestation are rare: pruritis (itching) is the most common problem. Head lice can be a nuisance but they have never been shown to spread disease. Personal Hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Head lice eggs are called nits. Nits are the egg casing that contain a developing embryo or can be the empty shell. Nits are laid by the adult female louse and are attached to the base of the hair shaft by strong cement. They are located close to the scalp because they require body heat for incubation. Many nits are more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and are very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice.

#### Rationale:

The American Association of Pediatrics, The National Association of School Nurses and The West Virginia Council of School Nurses does not support the exclusion of children for nits. The presence of nits alone does not indicate an active infestation; exclusion of the children for nits alone could result in missing school unnecessarily and could result in poor academic performance.

#### Process:

- The school nurse or designee will assess the student in a private location for the presence of live head lice
- If live head lice is found the parent/guardian will be notified and the student shall be excluded until treatment is completed and there is not live lice found. (Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice)
- Students with nits greater than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the scalp will not be excluded, but the parent will be notified and made aware of the situation.
- In all situations the parent/guardian will be educated with the appropriate health information for the treatment and prevention of pediculosis.

- After treatment of live lice the student will be checked on their return to school. If they are found to have no live lice they will be permitted to return to class, if live lice are still found they will be sent home again.
- The student will be excused for one full day following the day the live lice were detected. Any additional days will be considered un-excused unless written documentation is provided from a licensed health care provider.
- Students that have continual issues with live head lice will be assessed, reeducated and will have a parent meeting scheduled with the school nurse for reeducation.

Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

WV Council of School Nurses-Recommendations for Public School Lice Policy/Procedure

**ADOPTION DATE:** 07/07/14