HEAD LICE

Head lice are wingless, grayish insects approximately 1/8 inch in length and are exclusively parasites of humans.  They lay tiny eggs which are glued to the hair shaft.  The eggs hatch in about a week and in another week a fertilized female will lay approximately forty (40) eggs before she dies in about 20-30 days.  Head lice are completely dependent on human blood which they suck from bite wounds in the scalp.  The bites produce intense itching.

Lice and Nits (eggs) are most commonly found above and behind the ears and along the back of the head and neck, but nits are found throughout the hair.  Nits tightly adhere themselves to the hair shaft and are difficult to remove.  A fine tooth comb may help remove the nits, but usually nits need to be pulled or clipped from the hair.  Nits have somewhat the appearance of dandruff, but dandruff will easily fall off or move when the hair is flicked.  NITS DO NOT!

Head lice problems arise among school age children due to close contact with each other.    According to White County Health Department Policy, **once lice or nits have been detected, a student may not remain at school.**  The parent will be notified to take the child home.  We provide the parent with written instructions to assist with proper treatment.  Before returning to school, the child must be deemed clear of all nits by the school nurse or White County Health Department.

General plan of action is as follows:  Routine head checks will occur each semester or as deemed necessary by the school nurse.

1. When a student has been identified with head lice, a parent/guardian must be present to sign their student out from school so the school nurse or trained staff can educate. Siblings, or other children who live in the same household will also be checked.

2. If a student is identified with head lice while off of school premises, a physician, health department or school nurse must verify the head lice, for the student to be excluded with medical excuse.

3. Treatment must be started the same day per parent/guardian.  All nits must be removed per parent/guardian by hand or with lice comb.

4. A head check must be performed that next morning by the school nurse or health department.  Parents or guardians must attend these checks to know where to focus attention.  If the student remains with active, live bugs, a physician must be consulted for prescription treatment that same day.

5. If nits remain, the student will continue to be excluded until nits are gone.  It is the parent/guardian responsibility to remove them.

6. Mandatory rechecks will occur each morning by the school nurse or White County Health Nurse until lice/nits are gone.

7. Any days that a student does not show up for recheck will be unexcused absences.

8. By day 5 of this process, if there is a lack of improvement, or if any deviation from this policy is noted, administration will have grounds to involve the White County Health Department or Family Services for further assistance.