

# Procedure

## Head lice

Please note, this policy must be read in conjunction with other relevant policy and procedural information provided on the approved provider's website including: [Supporting children and students with head lice \(education.sa.gov.au\)](http://education.sa.gov.au)

### NQS

QA2	2.1	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

### NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
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### EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure and supported
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### Who is affected by this procedure?

- Children
- Families
- Educators/Employees
- Governing Council

### Aims

The aim of Loxton Preschool Centre's Head Lice Procedure is to encourage all members of the preschool community to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage headlice effectively.

### Purpose

The purpose of our procedure is to reduce the number of cases of head lice. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of Loxton Preschool Centre employees in supporting community efforts to control head lice.

## Implementation

Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate head lice, but we can reduce the number of cases if all preschool community members work together in a coordinated manner. In our preschool community we will endeavour to do this in the following ways:

- Encourage all families (i.e. the families of students, staff and others working in the school community) to check at home the hair of all household members, on a regular basis, for live lice.
- Where an active case is detected, the preschool encourages immediate treatment and return to preschool the day after appropriate treatment was commenced. As per the Department for Education guidelines, "Where head lice is found in a child during attendance at the education or care service the child does not need to be isolated or collected by the parent immediately. The education and care service should:
  - remove the child from direct head-to-head contact with others
  - class activities involving head-to-head contact are avoidedThe parent should be contacted and advised to arrange for their child to be checked and treated as soon as possible and before the child returns to the education or care service.
- The director or their nominee will contact the family to ask that a student be checked and receive treatment if necessary. Parents will be advised to check their child's hair daily for at least 3 weeks.
- Parents/caregivers will notify the preschool if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- The preschool will notify parents/caregivers of children in the group when more than one case of head lice is detected in the preschool in a week, to alert these families of the need to check more frequently.
- Families will notify the parents/caregivers of their child's friends where appropriate, so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
- A sympathetic attitude will be maintained by the entire preschool community to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

To support parents/caregivers and the broader preschool community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the preschool may undertake to:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to students, staff and their families at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required
- Include information and updates in preschool newsletters
- Maintain (anonymous) records of head lice cases detected through the preschool, for monitoring purposes
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers)
- Accept the advice of parents/caregivers that appropriate treatment has commenced

- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or other negative experiences associated with the issue
- Be aware of real difficulties, such as treatment failure, that some parents/caregivers may encounter and seek extra support from community health centres and local government (Environmental Health Officers) if required
- Review the *Preschool Head lice Procedure* bi-annually and seek endorsement from the Preschool Community/Governing Council
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice

Blanket head inspections or head lice screening by preschool staff are strongly discouraged. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that such programs:

- Take away from student curriculum time
- Are potentially intrusive of student privacy
- Take over family rights and responsibilities
- Convey the message that head lice management is a preschool issue rather than a household and wider community responsibility

There is no requirement for any preschool to undertake head lice screening. However if preschool staff were to undertake such a program, they would need to ensure:

- Written, active, informed consent of the parents
- Active, informed verbal consent, at the time, of each student
- Respect for privacy and confidentiality
- Understanding by all parties of the limited potential success and impact of the program (i.e. not all cases are guaranteed to be identified successfully and preschool-based screening alone cannot be considered an adequate community response)

To allow for times when the preschool felt it necessary to screen for head lice:

- a consent form giving educators permission to screen for head lice is issued to parents/caregivers to sign at the time of enrolment
- the wishes of parents/families and children who elect not to participate in school head lice screening will be respected
- a letter will be given to all children involved in a head lice screening to help maintain confidentiality
- teachers and other preschool staff will be included in the screening

### Sources

- Department for Education – *Head lice*
- National Quality Standard
- SA Health – “Healthy Heads Without Headlice Management Guidelines for the Control of Headlice in South Australia
- SA Health – “Headlice, management guidelines for schools”

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Roberts, R. J. (2002). Head Lice. *New England Journal of Medicine*, **346(21)**: 1645-1650

### Review

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Review will be conducted by:

- Governing Council
- Educators/Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Document History	Version	Approved Date	Description of Change	Next Review Date
	1.0	01/12/2016	Policy Developed	01/12/2018
Reviewed	2.0	15/08/2019	Updated in line with NQS changes	15/08/2021
Reviewed	3.0	29/06/2021	No Changes	29/06/2023
Reviewed	4.0	04/12/2023	All links have been verified Updated to include reference to DfE 'Supporting Children and Students with Head Lice'	04/12/2025

Approved by Governing Council \_\_\_\_\_ Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_