

# BERLIN VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION 2015-2016

## HEAD LICE POLICY

### I. POLICY:

Any student suspected of having head lice will be screened by the school nurse or designee.

A student with an active head lice infestation should remain in class but be discouraged from close direct contact with others.

Parents of students found with live lice must be notified. That student must be treated that evening and can return to class after proper treatment has begun.

Parents will be provided with educational material and resources in management of head lice.

Routine classroom or school-wide screening for head lice is not recommended and only students exhibiting symptoms will be screened.

Maintain confidentiality when a child is diagnosed with head lice.

School personnel involved in detection of head lice infestation should be properly trained.

### II. DEFINITION:

Head lice (*pediculus capitus*) are small parasitic insects that live on the scalp and neck hairs of their human hosts. The presence of lice is often detected through the presence of adult lice or nits (eggs) attached to the hair shaft of the host, most often at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Complications of infestations are rare and involve secondary bacteria skin infection. Pruritis (itching) is the most common symptom of a lice infestation. Other symptoms include:

- A tickling feeling or a sensation of something moving in the hair.
- Irritability and sleeplessness.
- Sores on the head caused by scratching. Sores caused by scratching can sometimes become infected with bacteria normally found on the person's skin.

Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. Research data does not support immediate exclusion upon the identification of the presence of live lice or nits as an effective means of controlling pediculosis transmission. By the time a student with an active head lice infestation has been identified, he or she may have had the infestation for one month or more and, therefore, poses little risk of transmission to others. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.