

August 23, 2023

Dear SMOS Parents,

There have been several reported cases of head lice in the school this week. We ask that you check and monitor your child's head tonight and with regularity for the next two weeks. If you find that your child does have head lice, all evidence of nits and lice must be removed from your child's hair before they can return to school. This policy can be found on page 53 of the St. Margaret of Scotland family handbook under Children with Communicable Disease. Open communication is the best way to help our school stop the spread of head lice.

Thanks,
Mr. Patrick Holley

For your convenience, we are including head lice information below:

Head Lice Facts

- Head lice can infest anyone and prefer clean hair
- Head lice are small and wingless, varying in size from 1/16" to 1/8" (about the size of a sesame seed).
- Eggs look like very small grains of rice and hatch in 7-10 days.
- Eggs are firmly attached to the hair shaft.
- Lice feed on blood every 3-6 hours. The primary symptom of infestation is itching.
- If dislodged from the hair shaft and hosts, eggs die within 2 weeks.
- Off the scalp, adult head lice rarely survive beyond 36 hours.
- Lice move quickly and shy away from light, especially during a head check.
- Head lice do not fly or jump. They are passed through direct contact.
- You cannot give head lice to your pets or get it from your pets.
- The National Pediculosis Association estimates that as many as 12 million cases of lice occur each year.
- Head lice are more of a nuisance than a health hazard.

Treatment for Head Lice (Pediculosis Captis)

1. Remove the child's clothing and wash in hot water and detergent.
2. Consult your physician or pharmacist about medicated shampoo options.
3. Comb the hair with a fine-tooth comb to remove the lice and eggs (may use vinegar to help remove nits). Remove remaining nits manually until no nits remain. Repeat daily combing. Apply second treatment 7-10 days later, using the same therapy. The center for disease control states that the medicated shampoos will kill all the lice on contact, but only 30-50% of the eggs. Therefore, the need for a second shampoo is essential.
4. Or, many of our families choose to go to a lice removal business such as Lice-Busters.

The Following Control Measures Are Also Essential

1. Check **ALL** family members and treat any who have head lice at the same time. Continue to recheck family member routinely.
2. Machine wash **ALL** washable clothing, coats, towels, pillows, bed linens, etc. with hot water (150 degrees) and detergent. Allow to dry in hot clothes dryer for 20 minutes. You may also dry pillow on high heat each morning for at least two weeks.
3. Dry clean all coats, hats, stuffed animals, and other items that cannot be washed or place in a sealed plastic bag for at least two weeks.
4. Disinfect combs, brushes, and other hair care items by soaking in hot water for 10 minutes.
5. Vacuum all carpets, mattresses, furniture, and car seats thoroughly. Dispose of vacuum bag when finished.

Instruct children not to share combs, hats, scarves, coats, etc. with other students

This link provides a video on how to check for head lice:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMqj88S8IMg>

Here are some pictures that may be of help as well:

