



## Important Reminder for Parents Regarding Head Lice Prevention

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are sending this letter to the parents of all students in grades pre-K through 8 to remind you of the importance of monitoring your child for head lice. Cases of head lice often increase following school breaks when children have spent time in close contact with each other at sleepovers or other social groupings such as day care and play groups. We are providing this information so that you may take steps at home to monitor and prevent your child from contracting head lice. **The parent or guardian has the ultimate responsibility to ensure children are free of lice and nits.**

### **What are head lice and nits?**

Head lice are wingless parasites that survive on the head and scalp. Generally found around the ears and at the back of the neck, the adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed. The adult female lice lay eggs (nits) and may live up to 30 days. Nits are smaller and silver in color and are usually found within  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of the scalp. They may be hard to see and “stick” to the hair shaft. They may be mistaken for dandruff.

### **How is head lice spread?**

Lice are most commonly found in young children due to the close contact with each other. Direct, physical, head to head contact is the usual method of transmission. Lice do not fly, jump or swim. They are however, good crawlers. Lice can also spread if personal items such as hats, brushes or combs are shared. Lice are not a sign of poor hygiene and they do not transmit disease. If someone in your child’s class develops head lice, there is no reason to panic and automatically assume that your child will “catch” head lice.

### **How do I know if my child has head lice or nits?**

The signs that a child may have head lice include: itching of the scalp; the feeling that something is moving in the hair; visible lice crawling on the scalp or hair. If your child has any of these signs or symptoms, he or she should be examined by a health care provider or the school nurse.

### **How to prevent head lice**

- Check your child’s head weekly for lice and/or nits. If you find head lice or nits, please notify the school and keep your child home until he or she is properly treated. A parent must accompany the child upon return to school where staff members will check to be sure there are no live lice.
- Once a child has been treated for lice, he/she may return to school where frequent re-checks will help to ensure that treatment was effective.
- Teach your child not to share combs, brushes, barrettes, hats, towels and other personal items.
- Teach your child to avoid head-to-head contact during play and other activities.

For more information regarding head lice or its treatment, please contact your school nurse. To view the district procedure and parent information regarding the management of head lice, please visit our website at [www.collierschools.com](http://www.collierschools.com) . Thank you for your help and support.

Sincerely,

Principal

6/2010