

Brierley Forest Primary & Nursery School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I am forwarding to you this information sheet about head lice as I have been informed that some children have been infected with them.

Head lice facts

Ten per cent of primary school children are affected by head lice every year. Head lice are usually grey or brown and about the size of a match head when fully grown. They like clean hair and move freely from head to head when children are working closely together. Many parents treat their children with head lice shampoo as soon as they hear of an outbreak at school. This is not necessary.

Prevention

Combing with a fine tooth comb each night should remove any stray lice your child may have picked up during the day and prevent them laying their eggs. Once they have been lain, the eggs stick close to the scalp until they hatch into lice after about 7 – 10 days. The lice feed by sucking blood from the tiny blood vessels in the scalp. It is not always easy to spot head lice and the first sign may well be an itchy scalp.

Treatment

You can try treating head lice without using chemical products.
Follow this procedure:-

- Wash the hair in the normal way with an ordinary shampoo
- Inspect the rinsing water for lice floating to the surface
- Using lots of hair conditioner and while the hair is very wet, comb through with a fine tooth comb. Make sure that the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with every stroke. Do this over a pale surface such as a paper towel.
- Sodden lice will not move and slippery hair is hard for lice to get a grip on so they should be easy to remove with a comb.
- If you do find any lice you should repeat this routine every three days for two weeks.

Further Advice

If the head lice prove to be a more stubborn problem, your school nurse, health visitor or local pharmacist will be able to recommend alternative shampoos or creme rinses, such as Lyclear, which you can buy over the counter. Your family doctor can advise you and prescribe the most effective treatment if the problem persists.

If you are at all worried about your child's health, contact your school nurse, health visitor or family doctor.