

Insert school logo here

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____,

Head lice or recently laid nits (eggs) have been found on your child's head. Head lice have nothing to do with the cleanliness of a house or parenting skills. Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact, although sharing hats, combs, and other hair accessories may also spread head lice. Head lice cannot jump or fly. Head lice crawl and are not a risk to pets.

It is important to treat your child before he/she returns to school. Please begin treatment as soon as possible and then send your child back to school so that they do not miss learning opportunities in the classroom. Also, remember to check everyone in the household and treat anyone that has live head lice and/or nits within ¼ inch of the scalp. Continuous checking may be required for 3 weeks to avoid reinfestation. The following treatments are recommended:

Over-The-Counter Treatments:

Head lice may be treated with shampoos specifically labeled for head lice. *Read and follow the directions carefully.* Many of these shampoos are insecticides and should be used with caution, especially on children and by pregnant or nursing women. If your child has allergies or asthma, please consult with his/her physician. If the package directions indicate, apply a second treatment 10 days later to kill lice that hatch after the initial treatment. **Do not over apply.**

Removal of Head Lice and Nits:

Lice shampoos do not remove the eggs from the hair. The eggs must be combed out and/or manually removed. Sit behind your child in a room with good lighting to comb through the hair, one section at a time. Use a fine-toothed nit comb. These combs are sold at most stores or may be included in packages of the chemical treatments. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together work best. Your child's hair should be clean, wet, well combed or brushed to remove tangles before using the louse comb. A conditioner may be used to lubricate the hair. Divide hair into small sections. Comb through each section until no more lice or nits are observed. Clean the comb frequently with a paper towel to remove any lice or eggs.

Continue to comb daily until no live lice are discovered for 3 weeks. Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of the hair shaft near the scalp. Combs, brushes, hats, and other hair accessories in contact with an infected person should be washed in hot water (130°F) to dislodge any lice or nits, and should not be shared with other family members.

Alternate Treatments:

Other products such as essential oils, food oils, salts, mayonnaise, etc., have not been studied sufficiently to determine effectiveness. Do not apply any household insecticide, (i.e., Raid) or other chemicals not specifically labeled for treating head lice on people. Well-intentioned parents treating their children with toxic or flammable substances, or hair dryers, have caused injuries and death. Because it is easy to burn the hair and the scalp, this method is not recommended.

Prescription Medications:

In some cases the over-the-counter products fail to eliminate live lice. Your child's physician may then order a prescription for treatment of head lice. Ask your physician, the school nurse, or pharmacist if you don't fully understand the directions.

Treatment of clothes/household cleaning:

All items your child has been in contact with in the past two days such as towels, pillowcases, sheets, pajamas, clothes, coats, hats, and similar items should be washed in hot water (130°F) and dried on high heat for at least 30 minutes. Items that cannot be washed may be stored in a tightly sealed garbage bag for a period of two weeks or may be placed in a freezer or outdoors (if temperatures are below freezing) for 24 hours. Lice in the environment (not on the head) usually die within a day and the eggs generally cannot live much longer. Vacuuming the house, mattress, and furniture is recommended. Using household insecticides to treat the home, vehicles, carpets, or furniture will unnecessarily expose your household to harmful chemicals.

Please contact the Bay County Health Department at 989-895-4003 with questions.

Sincerely,