**Gilmer County Schools**

**Head Lice Procedure**

**Overview**

The head louse, (Pediculus Humanus Capitis), is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head. Head lice feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are a nuisance, but they do not spread disease. Secondary skin infections can develop from excessive scratching. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of a person with live lice. Contracting head lice by coming into contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an individual with live head lice is uncommon. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

**General Considerations**

* Nits are lice eggs laid by the adult female head louse. They are firmly attached to the base of the hair shaft and will not easily move. Nits take about 8-9 days to hatch.
* A nymph is an immature louse that hatches from the nit. It is small and matures into an adult after 9-12 days.
* An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has 6 legs, and is tan to grayish-white in color. An adult louse lives about 30 days on a person’s head but will die within 1-2 days if removed from the head.
* Head lice crawl; they **do not jump or fly**.
* Pets such as **dogs/cats do not spread** head lice.
* Lice and eggs are killed by exposure for 5 minutes to temperatures greater than 128.3°F. Items that cannot be laundered may be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.
* Retreatment is only recommended if live lice continue to be present several days after the initial treatment.

**School Considerations**

* According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Gilmer County Health Department, students with head lice **should not be excluded** from school or separated from their classmates.
* Research shows that school/classroom checks for head lice are not warranted and are no longer justified. Such checks results in unnecessary lost educational time.
* Students exhibiting signs of head lice (complaining of tickling/crawling sensations on their scalp, itching, etc.) can be checked for the presence of lice.
* A parent/guardian can request for their child to be checked for the presence of lice.
* The school will not check students at the request of someone else’s parent/guardian.
* If live head lice are found on a student, the School Nurse, Administrator, or Administrator’s Designee will notify the student’s family.
* The student and family will be instructed to follow-up with their health care provider for proper treatment.
* The student will be instructed not to share personal items and to keep their hair pinned up and back if applicable.
* Educational information and materials will be sent home with the student.
* Educational materials will include written information along with picture diagrams to ensure proper treatment and prevention.
* If a secondary skin infection is suspected, the family will be notified and instructed to follow-up with their health care provider for farther evaluation and treatment.
* The student should be reassessed periodically until the condition is resolved, with the school nurse giving educational support as needed.
* Extra cleaning in the classroom is not warranted.
* It will be the collaborative decision of the School Nurse and Administrator to determine the need to notify classroom teachers, support staff, or to send home a parent notification letter regarding cases of head lice.

May 2015