

MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Due to recent occurrences of head lice at the Middle School, we are glad to provide this information, as head lice can affect children in many group settings, such as schools, day care centers, and athletic teams. Cases of head lice at Memorial Middle School are relatively infrequent, but it is important to enlist ongoing parental support in monitoring students for this condition. We hope that you will find the following information helpful:

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insects that feed on human blood. Of all communicable childhood diseases, only the common cold has a higher incidence than head lice. Full grown lice are about the size of sesame seeds and are brownish in color. The female louse lays tiny eggs called nits that are silver in color. Nits attach themselves to the hair shaft near the root of the hair. Lice hatch approximately 10 days later. Lice can live a maximum of 24 hours away from the human body.

How are lice spread?

Lice cannot jump or fly. They can, however, crawl quickly. Lice are spread from an infected person through direct contact or by sharing personal items, such as hats, brushes, hair accessories, and pillows.

How do I know if my child has lice?

One telltale sign of lice is a persistent itch of the scalp. If your child complains of an “itchy head” or scratches his or her scalp, please check your child immediately for head lice.

How do I check my child for head lice?

Examine your child’s scalp, particularly behind the ears and near the nape of the neck. It is sometimes difficult to find lice in a child’s head, as they move quickly. Nits are much easier to detect. They will appear as tiny silver or white beads near the roots of the hair. Unlike dandruff, nits are attached firmly to the hair shaft. Nits are also usually most prevalent behind the ears and near the nape of the neck.

What should I do if my child has lice?

Please call Mrs. Ewtushek, our school nurse, immediately to make her aware that your child has head lice. This will help us to monitor other students and prevent the spread of head lice. Head lice are not a cause for embarrassment, as it is a common childhood condition. Treat your child’s hair with medicated shampoo that can be bought at any drug store and remove all nits with the special comb provided with the treatment product. Wash clothes (including outerwear), bed linens, and towels in hot water and dry for at least 20 minutes. Items that cannot be washed, such as stuffed animals, should be dry cleaned or stored in sealed plastic bags for two weeks. Soak brushes and hair accessories in extremely hot water. Vacuum carpets, mattresses, and upholstered furniture, as well as your car. Discard the vacuum

bag immediately. Check other family members for head lice and treat them if necessary. Pets are not affected by head lice.

Can my child come to school with head lice?

Children with head lice are excluded from school and may return only when there is no trace of lice. Please bring your child to the school nurse's office the morning after treatment. Mrs. Ewtushek must check your child before he or she is permitted to return to school.

What steps does Memorial Middle School take to prevent the spread of head lice?

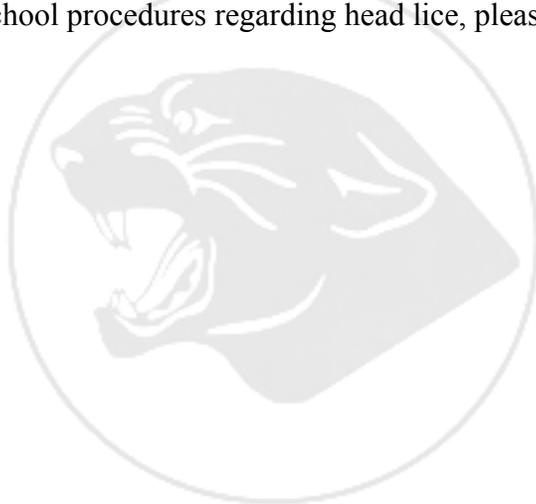
If a child in a particular class has head lice, the student is examined by the school nurse. Siblings of affected students should also be examined. Any child who has lice or nits is excluded from school until he or she shows no trace of lice. Students must be examined by Mrs. Ewtushek before they return to class.

Classrooms are cleaned daily. Students' coats, hats, and scarves are contained in their lockers. Teachers have been instructed to send students to the nurse's office immediately if they suspect a case of head lice. Students are constantly discouraged from sharing personal belongings.

We hope that this information is useful to the parents in our school community. Additional information can be obtained from the Harvard School of Public Health at www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html. If you have questions about our school procedures regarding head lice, please contact me, or our school nurse, Mrs. Ewtushek.

Yours truly,

Gary Floyd
Principal



MMS Roars With Panther Pride!

Respect Responsibility Kindness Character