

ST ALPHEGE CE INFANT SCHOOL

Head lice

Who catches head lice?

There are many common myths surrounding head lice and nits. See the handy myth-buster guide to make sure you know the truth about head lice and nits.

Head lice myth buster				
Myth or truth	 State of hair	 Length of hair	 Spread of lice	 Itchy scalp?
Myth	Prefer clean hair	Prefer long hair	Jump and can spread via clothes/towels	Always means itchy scalp
Truth	Infect both clean and dirty hair	Infect all lengths and types of hair	Walk from head to head	Only itches if allergic to bites/faeces

Check for head lice and nits

Head lice are extremely common – they're nothing to be embarrassed about. They will be part of your child's school life probably until the end of junior school. This is because small children will often sit very close to their friends and touch heads together. This will allow the lice to walk from one head to the other.

Regularly checking your child's hair will mean you can spot head lice at the very first sign, and treat them effectively.

Throughout infant school we suggest you check your child's hair at least once a week!

Head lice are small insects that live for approximately one month. A female can lay 5-8 eggs a day from the time she is 19 days old. This means she could lay over 100 eggs before she dies and the first ones to hatch will be reaching maturity 19 days later and laying their own 100 eggs each! This quickly means lots of lice!

When and how to treat head lice

Treat head lice as soon as you see a live one. Check all the family and treat anyone who has lice.

If you choose to use a medicated product, use it only when you see live head lice. Do not use a medicated product as a preventative method, otherwise head lice can build up a resistance.

There are many products on the market and some can be very expensive. Even with lotions you will need to comb out the dead lice and eggs after the prescribed application time. Always follow up any treatment method as directed by the instructions on the product you're using. **Even with treatments that are claimed to kill head lice after one application, the Department of Health suggests checking for lice again after three to five days, and again 10 to 12 days after using the treatment. This is because not all the eggs may be killed by the first application.**

Wet combing, using conditioner and a head lice comb, is often just as effective and much cheaper.

If you choose the conditioner-and-nit-comb method, repeat this at regular intervals until all the nits and lice have gone. Regularly combing through your child's hair and checking will help prevent a re-infestation.

