Edith Creek Primary School
Head Lice Policy

As parents, you have the primary responsibility for detecting and treating head lice. If your child has head lice, they must remain at home. The Edith Creek Primary School Association has agreed that all eggs must be removed before your child can return to school.

Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. People get head lice from direct hair to hair contact with another person who has head lice.

To help prevent the spread of head lice, we ask that you:
• Regularly check your child’s hair.
• Notify the school as soon as you detect head lice or eggs (nits) in their hair.
• Wash your child’s hair in a lice-killing shampoo available from your local chemist or pharmacy.
• Apply plenty of conditioner and comb your child’s hair with a fine nit comb, looking out for the lice’s empty egg cases or ‘nits’. The lice themselves are harder to spot, but look out for brown or grey insects about the size of a match head that lurk at the roots of your child’s hair.
• Teach your child not to share brushes, combs, hats, swimming caps and hair bands.
• Braid long hair, or tie it back while your child is at school.

Finding Head Lice

Head lice are found on the hair itself and move to the scalp to feed. They have six legs which end in a claw and they rarely fall from the head. Louse eggs (also called nits) are laid within 1.5 cm of the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair. They resemble dandruff, but can’t be brushed off.

Lice can crawl and hide. The easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps:

1. Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.
2. Now comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth, head lice comb.
3. Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.
4. Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.
5. Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least four or five times.

Head Lice
**Treating Head Lice**

Treating head lice involves removing lice and eggs from the hair. There are two ways you can do this:

1. Buying and using a head lice lotion or shampoo, following the instructions on the product
2. Using the conditioner and comb method (described under ‘finding head lice’) every second day until there have been no live lice found for ten days.

If you choose to use a head lice product always read and follow the instructions provided with the product carefully.

There is no need to treat the whole family - unless they also have head lice. Only the pillowcase requires washing – either wash it in hot water (at least 60ºC) or dry it using a clothes dryer on the hot or warm setting.

**Head lice eggs**

Head lice eggs are small (the size of a pinhead) and oval. A live egg will ‘pop’ when squashed between fingernails.

Dead eggs have crumpled sides and hatched eggs look like tiny boiled eggs with their tops cut off.

**Head lice combs**

Combs with long, rounded stainless steel teeth positioned very close together have been shown to be the most effective; however any head lice comb can be used.