

Lice... from the AAP and the NASN

Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of uncleanliness and are not responsible for the spread of any disease.

It is the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that the management of pediculosis should not disrupt the education process. Children found with live head lice should be referred to parents for treatment. Data does not support school exclusion for nits. Because no disease process is associated with head lice, schools are not advised to exclude students when nits remain after appropriate lice treatment. Further monitoring for signs of re-infestation is appropriate.

Screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children will become infested, and screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community over time. Such screening has not been shown to be effective; therefore classroom or school-wide screening should be strongly discouraged.

Because a child with an active head lice infestation has likely had the infestation for a month or more by the time it is discovered, poses little risk to others, and does not have a resulting health problem, s/he should remain in class but be discouraged from close head contact with others. If a child is assessed as having head lice, confidentiality must be maintained so that the child is not embarrassed.

A child should be allowed to return to school after proper treatment. The AAP and NASN strongly discourage no nit policies. No child should be allowed to miss valuable school time because of head lice.

The Certified School Nurse retains an important role in educating all constituencies about lice and dispelling myths and stigmas regarding lice infestation.