

Ghost Hill Infant School advice on head lice:

What are head lice?

- Head lice are small, six-legged wingless insects, pin-head size when they hatch, less than match-head size when fully grown and grey/brown in colour.
- They are difficult to detect in dry hair even when the head is closely inspected. They very often cause itching, but this is not always the case, particularly when recently arrived on the head.
- Empty egg sacs are white and shiny and may be found further along the hair shaft as the hair grows out. Lice take 6-14 days to become fully grown, after which they are capable of reproduction.
- Head lice are not fussy about hair length or condition. Clean hair is therefore no protection, although weekly hair washing and combing offer a good opportunity to detect head lice.
- Head lice cannot fly, jump or swim, but spread by clambering from head to head. Anyone with hair can catch them, but children who have head to head contact, either at school or during play are most commonly affected.

Key things to remember:

- If you find head lice, check and treat the whole family at the same time. Inform the school, baby-sitters, friends etc.
- Lice only live on human heads they will not live on bedding or clothes.
- They cannot jump or fly. They are only caught by head to head contact.
- Lice are not fussy about the length of hair or how clean it is.
- Check your child's hair weekly – don't wait for there to be symptoms. This is by far the best way to prevent head lice.

How can you get rid of head lice?

Option 1 – Wet Combing



1. Wash hair using ordinary shampoo.



2. Apply a conditioner to make combing easier. This also makes it harder for the louse to cling on.



3. Lightly towel dry the hair and divide into sections ready for combing.



4. Using a specialist head lice comb, comb hair from the scalp to the end. Wipe the comb each time and check for live lice. Repeat until the whole head is combed.



5. Thoroughly rinse the hair and comb. Comb every three days for at least two weeks until no more lice are found. In the meantime, keep your child's hair tied back (plaited if possible) to prevent the spread of lice.

Option 2 – Medicated Treatment

There are a variety which are available from pharmacies. Please follow the treatment's instruction leaflet.

Where can I find more information?

If you wish to, you can speak to your child's teacher or another member of staff with any further questions. If not, use the following websites: www.onceaweektakeapeek.com or www.nhs.uk