

Academie Lafayette lice procedure

Revised September 16, 2016

Academie Lafayette understands the stress and time lice can cause our families, and we empathize with all our families who have to invest their time and energy into treating this condition. However, lice are benign, do not transmit disease, and are not an indication of poor health or hygiene. (2) Lice typically spread through direct head-to-head contact. Though indirect transmission is possible, it is not probable. *“In most cases, transmission occurs by direct contact. Indirect spread through contact with personal belongings of an infested individual (combs, brushes, hats) is much less likely to occur. Lice found on combs are likely to be injured or dead, and a louse is not likely to leave a healthy head unless there is a heavy infestation. In 1 study, live lice were found on only 4% of pillowcases used by infested volunteers. Thus, the major focus of control activities should be to reduce the number of lice on the head and to lessen the risks of head-to-head contact.”* (1)

In coordination with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and the National Association of School Nurses, it is the policy of Academie Lafayette to not exclude students from school for cases of head lice or the presence of nits. *“‘No-nit’ policies that require a child to be free of nits before he or she can return to school lack evidence of being effective, result in unnecessary absenteeism, and may violate affected children’s civil liberties. Unnecessary absenteeism leads to missed learning opportunities for the student and potentially lost family wages due to loss of parent/guardian workdays.”* (1,2)

If there has been a known exposure to lice, the Academie Lafayette nurses can screen your student upon request, as well as guide you in effective management of the condition. However it is not recommended practice to provide mass lice screenings at school. *“Studies have shown that control measures such as, mass screenings for nits, have not been shown to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community.”* (3)

Finally, while we strive for open communication with our families, in order to maintain medical confidentiality for our community, it is not the practice of Academie Lafayette to send home classroom notification letters regarding lice. If there is higher incidence rate of lice than is typical within this community, school-wide notification may be made. *“Communication between school personnel and parents/caregivers highlighting cases of head lice (e.g., ‘head lice outbreak letters’) has been shown to increase community anxiety, increase social stigma causing embarrassment of affected infested students, and puts students’ rights to confidentiality at risk.”* (3)

1. American Academy of Pediatrics Clinical Report on Head Lice. Devore, Schutze. PEDIATRICS Volume 135, number 5, May 2015.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2015/04/21/peds.2015-0746.full.pdf>
2. Center for Disease Control. Head Lice Information for Schools. September 2015.
<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>
3. NASN position statement on Head Lice Management in the School Setting. January 2016.
<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/934/Head-Lice-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2016>