



Health Services Department

## Head Lice Classroom Exposure Parent Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to lice. Lice are small, tan-colored insects about the size of a sesame seed that lay tiny, gray/white eggs (nits) in the hair. Lice do not cause or spread disease. Head lice occur in all socioeconomic groups and do not represent poor hygiene.

### What are the symptoms of lice?

Symptoms include lice visibly crawling on scalp and hair and/or nits (head lice eggs) adhered to hair shaft, tickling feeling or something moving in the hair, itching and scratching on the scalp, sores on the head caused by scratching and/or irritability and trouble sleeping. Eggs (nits) may be glued to the hair shaft close to the scalp.

### How are lice spread?

Lice are spread by direct contact with the hair or headgear of a person infested with lice. Lice can only spread by crawling; they do not fly, swim or jump. They may also spread when a person shares items such as combs, brushes, hats, blankets, or pillows with another person with lice. Lice can live only 1 to 2 days away from the scalp.

### How is lice identified and treated?

Lice and nits can be identified by carefully inspecting hair with a bright light and/or a magnifying glass. There are a variety of treatments for lice. Treatments that kill lice and most eggs are available in drug and grocery stores. It is extremely important to follow the directions on the box and not overuse these chemicals. Suggested remedies using common household products (e.g., salad oils, mayonnaise, Vaseline) have not been shown to be effective. It is more important to comb the hair with a special nit comb to remove lice and nits daily for 2–3 weeks. There is also lice and nit treatment facilities in Alachua County and/or you can get a prescription from your doctor to treat lice/nits.

### How do you control the spread?

Items exposed to lice or nits should be washed using hot water in a washer and then dried on the hot setting which kills lice in bedding and clothing. Toys, stuffed animals, bedding, other fabrics and upholstered furniture that cannot be laundered can be sealed in a plastic bag for at least 10 days. Floors, carpets, mattresses and furniture can be vacuumed. Do not share hats, hair accessories, combs, pillows or other personal items.

**How do I get more information?** For more information about lice, contact your School Nurse

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School Nurse

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Phone