

# Elm Academy

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**Principal:** Mrs J Fish

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Dear Parents/Carers

## Head Lice

We have had a number of reported incidents of Head lice.

Head lice are tiny insects that live in hair. Nits are the empty egg cases attached to hair that head lice hatch from.

Head lice are a common problem, particularly in school children aged 4-11.

They're largely harmless, but can live in the hair for a long time if not treated and can be irritating and frustrating to deal with.

### How you get head lice

Head lice are spread by direct head to head contact. They climb from one person's hair to another's. Head lice:

- can't fly, jump or swim
- are very unlikely to be spread by objects such as hats, combs and pillows
- don't have a preference for dirty, clean, short or long hair
- only affect people and can't be caught from animals

Once detached from the hair, head lice will usually die within 12-24 hours.

### How to spot head lice

Head lice can be difficult to spot, even when the head is closely inspected.

They're very small whitish or grey-brown insects that range from the size of a pinhead to the size of a sesame seed.

The only way to be sure someone has head lice is to find a live louse by combing their hair with a special fine-toothed comb. This is called detection combing.

### Preventing head lice

It's very difficult to prevent head lice.

You may want to consider regular detection combing on a weekly basis.

Lotions and sprays don't prevent head lice and should only be used if a live louse has been found in your or your child's hair.

Staying off work or school and washing clothing and bedding on a hot wash is unnecessary, as it's unlikely to help prevent the spread of head lice.

Yours Sincerely,

**Elm Academy**

