

NITS NO MORE

The North Douglas School District has adjusted Head Lice Policy JHCCF to become student “Nit Free”. With the newly adopted policy, parents are informed that any medical “Head Lice” concerns with a child will require the student to be totally nit free before returning to school.

The spirit of the No Nit Policy is to minimize head lice infestations as a public health problem and to keep children in school lice and nit free.

A Healthy Standard for Children and their Families

The National Pediculosis Association recommends the No Nit Policy as the public health standard intended to keep children lice free, nit free, and in school.

Pediculosis represents one of the most common communicable childhood diseases and whether or not we understand how this has evolved, it is important to acknowledge head lice as a problem when raising or caring for children.

Establishing Consistent Guidelines

The No Nit Policy encourages each family to do its part at home with routine screening, early detection, accurate identification and thorough removal of lice and nits. Establishing consistent guidelines and educating the public about procedures in advance of outbreaks helps minimize inappropriate responses.

Early intervention provides the needed assurance for those who have successfully eliminated an infestation that everything possible is being done to prevent new outbreaks when children return to groups where close contact is inevitable. Repeated exposures to pesticidal products put children at risk. Parents need to be informed that chemical treatments may also be dangerous for children with certain pre-existing medical conditions and/or medication regimens. Families with pregnant or nursing mothers should be given advance notice that early detection with manual removal of lice and nits can serve as a safe alternative to pesticidal lice treatment products.

Why the Controversy?

Without the No Nit Policy, communities are left with a hit-or-miss approach. Indifference about adopting a standardized management protocol permeates the attitudes of health professionals at every level. This in turn gives way to a maze of conflicting opinions and directives that are counterproductive. Public health policies for head lice cannot be based solely on the use of chemical remedies.

The Food and Drug Administration recommends repeating chemical treatments in 7-10 days because none of the available treatment products are 100% effective against lice eggs and that remaining viable nits will hatch lice. Unfortunately the FDA’s directive does not take into consideration the endemic nature of head lice. Children being managed in this manner can infest others or become reinfested in the interim. Mechanical removal of head lice and nits is less noxious and more likely to be successful than repeated chemical treatments.