Roosevelt families,

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the identification and treatment of head lice. The links at the end of the document and consulting with your health care provider are also excellent resources.

**Information about the Identification & Treatment of Head Lice**

**Transmission of Head Lice**

♦ It is important to note that head lice are not “long-distance” travelers. Although adept at moving from hair to hair, they cannot jump (from the floor to someone’s head, for example). Head lice move from person to person primarily by direct hair to hair contact, as well as shared bedding (i.e.: pillowcases, sleeping bags), shared hair utensils or outerwear. In the active stages, they survive for up to a few days away from the host.
♦ They will not survive or proliferate on pets—you cannot get lice from your dog or cat.
♦ Instruct your children not to share combs, brushes, hats, scarves, coats, or other clothing with other children.

**Identification of Head Lice**

♦ Observe your child for head scratching and listen to complaints about itching of the scalp.
♦ Head lice are best identified by inspecting the hair and scalp for live lice or nits. Lice and nits are most often found at the nape of the neck, and above and behind the ears, but can also be found when the hair is parted along the scalp.
♦ Examine your child’s hair carefully. Do not expect to see the lice, but rather look for the nits (eggs). These are not much bigger than a grain of sand, they are oval shaped and are attached to the hair usually close to the scalp. They are fixed to the hair, and you will not be able to pull them off. The nits are grayish in color. Lice can spread rapidly, and eggs may hatch in 3 to 14 days. Frequently the scalp and neck are bitten.
♦ Nits are usually found one-quarter inch or more from the scalp due to hair growth following the initial attachment.
♦ If you find nits, don’t panic! Treatment with special medication is easy and thorough if you follow all the directions carefully. **Ordinary shampoo does not kill lice** and having clean hair does not prevent them. Hair does not have to be cut, and kerosene is not an appropriate treatment.
♦ **Please notify fellow playmates and those with whom your child has been in contact if you find nits, as these children should be examined. This will help control lice from spreading.** Identification of the problem and treatment of all affected children at the time is necessary to prevent the problem of reinfestation of your child or others. Unfortunately, some parents feel unnecessarily ashamed and keep it “quiet.” **That is the way it can keep spreading.**
Instructions for Treating Lice

- Use a medicated shampoo for lice from the pharmacy or obtain a prescription from your physician. **BE SURE TO FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.**

- After shampooing, comb hair with a fine-tooth comb, designed to remove nits. The comb is also available at the pharmacy. Use this comb to remove any remaining nit shells. **All nits must be removed to prevent further infestation. If nits do not comb out, you will need to remove them by hand.**

- Nit combing should be continued for **up to two weeks after identification of head lice**—it should not stop after one or two days. After you comb out a one-inch swath of hair, twist and put up with a bobby pin. The special comb should then be wiped clean with a tissue to remove any nits, lice or other debris before being put back through the hair. This can be a very tedious process but must be completed to assure that all nits/eggs and lice have been removed. Otherwise, **new lice will hatch within 7-10 days.**

- Check everyone in the household at the same time, prior to cleaning the environment.

Treatment of the Environment

- Machine wash and dry clothing, bedding, pillows, pajamas, coats, etc., in the **hottest water and heat temperature** recommended for fabric. Items that cannot be washed may be stored in a tightly sealed plastic bag for two weeks.

- Vacuum all upholstered furniture, carpeting, bare mattresses, floors, stuffed animals, coat collars, hats, and all upholstered automobile seats, etc. daily for several days.

- Inspect hairbrushes, combs, hair ties and barrettes. For washable accessories, wash and dry (on high heat) for at least 30 minutes. Boil combs, brushes, hair picks and barrettes in water hotter than 130 degrees F. If items cannot be exposed to high heat, soak them in Lysol, rubbing alcohol or a pediculicide for one hour.

We hope this information is helpful. You can also visit [https://www.wayne-health.org/head-lice](https://www.wayne-health.org/head-lice) or [https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html) for additional information.

Please contact our school office should you have any additional questions.

Mr. Green