HEAD LICE

Rationale:
Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Anyone can catch head lice. Most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching. While parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the school also has a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents and students. While teachers and/or local government nurses may believe that a child is infested with head lice, they are not permitted to search a child’s hair, inspect for head lice, or diagnose a case of head lice without written parental permission (Infectious Disease – Health Regulations 2001).

Aims:
- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are able to access information about head lice treatment.
- To ensure a cooperative and collaborative approach between parents and the school in the management of head lice.

Implementation:

School Action
- A commitment to distribute up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of every year and more frequently if required (available from website [http://health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm](http://health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm)) particularly at times of heavy outbreaks.
- Include an information sheet about head lice management in orientation and transition packages for new families/staff attending the school.
- Include information and updates in school newsletters and display the head lice policy on the school website.
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude to avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy as laid down by the Health Infectious Diseases regulations 2001 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the Principal or person in charge until treatment has commenced.
- Teachers or staff members suspecting that a child has head lice are to report their concerns to the first aid officer or Assistant Principal.
- The Assistant Principal and/or first aid officer will notify parents if a child is suspected to have head lice and a note will be sent home to all students in the class.
- The Assistant Principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears periodically throughout the year in the school newsletter.
- Educate students about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue.
- Parents/carers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when treatment has commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2001).
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

Suggested Parent Action:
- Children’s hair should be checked for head lice on a weekly basis at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method or as advised by your pharmacist and/or the school.
- Ensure the child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001).
- Regularly inspect all household members and treat them if necessary.
- Children with long hair should be encouraged to wear their hair tied back.
- Manage breakouts in accordance with the practices recommended by your pharmacist for safe treatment of head lice;

**Review Date:**
This policy has a four year life and will be reviewed by Moriac Primary School Council in 2019