INFORMATION FOR PARENTS
HEAD LICE

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?
Head lice are one of the three species of lice - small insects - that prey on humans. Head lice are also parasites, which means they look to a host for food and a hospitable place to lay their eggs – in this case the human scalp. It is when lice begin to feed that the scalp usually begins to itch.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN MY CHILD HAS HEAD LICE?
It does not mean that you or your child has been guilty of poor hygiene, only that lice landed by chance in your child’s hair. Head lice can - and do - affect anyone. Children are particularly vulnerable because they congregate in groups and work and play in close proximity. Head lice can’t fly, but they’re adept at crawling quickly from one head to another. Children should be cautioned about sharing combs, articles of clothing, and other personal items. Lice don’t need much encouragement to spread.

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD HAS HEAD LICE?
Adult female lice lay eggs that are small, oval, and silvery-white. They are called Nits, and looking for them is the easiest way to discover whether your child has head lice. Nits may look like dandruff or particles of dried hair spray. Lice lay their eggs close to the scalp, tightly attached to the hair shaft. Check your child’s scalp (move the hair aside), the nape of the neck, and behind the ears. A magnifying glass may help. It is best to check in natural daylight.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT HEAD LICE? (TREATMENT)
The hair should be treated with any of the specific Lice Shampoos or Lotions, which are available from the Pharmacist or from your Doctor. After treatment, the hair must be thoroughly combed with a fine toothcomb to remove as many eggs as possible - starting near the scalp and carefully drawing the comb down to the ends of the hair.

There is always the possibility of skin irritation and you are advised to follow carefully the instructions for each preparation. Special care must be taken that no shampoo or lotion goes in the eyes.

Checking should be done on a regular basis.

Thorough laundering of clothes and bed linen in hot water is advisable. Soft toys etc. can be exposed to strong sunlight; this is an excellent way of ridding them of any unwanted visitors.

ALL FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS MUST BE TREATED, TO PREVENT RE-INFESTATION.

CHILDREN SHOULD NOT COME TO SCHOOL UNTIL ALL SIGNS OF THE INFESTATION HAVE CLEARED.

Sarah Ho
SCHOOL NURSE