

CSBA Sample

Board Policy

Head Lice

BP 5141.33

Students

Note: The following optional policy is consistent with the Guidelines on Head Lice Prevention and Control for School Districts and Child Care Facilities issued by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in March 2012. CDPH guidelines and a position statement by the California School Nurses Organization note that, although lice are a nuisance, they are not associated with the spread of disease and are not highly transferable in the school setting.

The Governing Board recognizes that head lice infestations among students require treatment but do not pose a risk of transmitting disease. The Superintendent or designee shall encourage early detection and treatment in a manner that minimizes disruption to the educational program and reduces student absences.

Note: The following optional paragraph provides for distribution of educational information to parents/guardians of preschool and elementary students based on a finding reported in the CDPH guidelines that children ages 3-11 years are at highest risk for head lice infestation. High school districts that choose to routinely provide information to parents/guardians should revise the following paragraph to reflect applicable grade levels.

Note: The CDPH publishes a brochure for parents/guardians, A Parent's Guide to Head Lice, which is available on the CDPH web site. As discussed in the brochure, the recommended treatment for head lice involves nit combing and use of an over-the-counter head lice shampoo. Prescription treatments are also available.

The Superintendent or designee may distribute information to parents/guardians of preschool and elementary students regarding routine screening, symptoms, accurate diagnosis, and proper treatment of head lice infestations. The Superintendent or designee also may provide related information to school staff.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

School employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the school nurse or designee as soon as possible.

***Note: The CDPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, and California School Nurses Organization all oppose "no-nit" policies (i.e., policies that require students to be free of nits before returning to school), citing common misdiagnosis

by nonmedical personnel, lack of evidence that such policies prevent or shorten outbreaks, and their belief that the benefits of school attendance outweigh the risks of head lice.***

If a student is found with active, adult head lice, he/she shall be allowed to stay in school until the end of the school day. The parent/guardian of any such student shall be given information about the treatment of head lice and encouraged to begin treatment of the student immediately and to check all members of the family. The parent/guardian also shall be informed that the student shall be checked upon return to school the next day and allowed to remain in school if no active head lice are detected.

Upon the student's return to school, the school nurse or designee shall check the student for active head lice. If it is determined that the student remains infected with head lice, the school nurse or designee shall contact the student's parent/guardian to discuss treatment. As needed, he/she may provide additional resources and/or referral to the local health department, health care providers, or other agencies.

(cf. 5141.3 - Health Examinations)
(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)

Note: The following optional paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice. CDPH guidelines recommend that, because continuing infestations may signify other family or socioeconomic problems, a student with a chronic case of head lice (i.e., a student found infested during three separate months during a school year or for six consecutive weeks) should be reported to the school attendance review board and addressed by a multidisciplinary team which may consist of the school nurse, representatives of the local health department and social services, and other appropriate individuals.

If a student is found consistently infested with head lice, he/she may be referred to a multidisciplinary team, which may consist of the school nurse, representatives from the local health department and social services, and other appropriate individuals, to determine the best approach for identifying and resolving problems contributing to the student's head lice infestations.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)
(cf. 5113.1 - Chronic Absence and Truancy)

Note: The following optional paragraph should be revised to reflect district practice. CDPH guidelines state that, although classroom or schoolwide notification is not recommended after student(s) have been detected with head lice, such notification is at the discretion of the school nurse or school administration.

When it is determined that one or more students in a class or school are infested with head lice, the principal or designee may, at his/her discretion, notify parents/guardians of students in that class or school and provide them with information about the detection and treatment of head lice.

Staff shall maintain the privacy of students identified as having head lice.

(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)
(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

48320-48325 School attendance review boards

49451 Physical examinations: parent's refusal to consent

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH PUBLICATIONS

Guidelines on Head Lice Prevention and Control for School Districts and Child Care Facilities,
rev. March 2012

A Parent's Guide to Head Lice, 2008

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL NURSES ORGANIZATION

Pediculosis Management, Position Statement, rev. 2011

WEB SITES

American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://www.aap.org>

California Department of Public Health: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov>

California School Nurses Organization: <http://www.csno.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Parasitic Disease Information, Head Lice:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head>

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