



Head Lice Policy

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Policy Statement

Play Inclusion Project recognises that head lice are a common community issue that can affect children and young people at home, school, or other activity settings. This policy outlines the shared responsibilities of parents/carers and Play Inclusion Project staff in the prevention and management of head lice outbreaks.

What are head lice?

- Head lice are tiny insects, about the size of a sesame seed, which live on human hair.
- They spread only by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact; they do not jump or fly.
- Lice lay eggs close to the scalp that hatch after 7–10 days. The empty white shells left behind are called nits.
- Nits look similar to dandruff but stick firmly to the hair shaft and cannot be easily brushed out.
- It takes about 10 days for a newly hatched louse to grow into an adult and begin laying eggs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Learn about head lice identification and treatment (e.g. via the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet).
- Check their child's hair regularly for signs of infestation.
- Treat their child's hair promptly if head lice are found, using NHS/Department of Health guidance.
- Inform the Area Manager if their child has head lice and confirm that treatment has begun.
- Notify close contacts (e.g. family, friends, or others the child interacts with) so they can check their own hair.
- to learn about head lice infestation and management by reading the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet

Play Inclusion Project

The organisation will:

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By Joanne Barnes

- Maintain a clear and up-to-date Head Lice Management Policy.
- Ensure that all parents, carers, and staff are aware of the policy and its procedures.
- Manage cases sensitively and confidentially, maintaining the dignity of all children and young people.

Head Lice Procedure

If lice are observed during a session:

- Staff will discreetly inform the Area Manager.
- A notice will be sent to all parents/carers advising that a case of head lice has been reported and encouraging them to check their child's hair for the next few weeks.
- Staff must not diagnose head lice infestation unless a live, moving louse is seen.
- The affected child will remain fully included in play and social activities under normal supervision until collected.
- The child will never be isolated or made to feel singled out.

If staff discover lice in their own hair:

- The staff member will be sent home to commence treatment and may return once treatment has been completed.

Communication and Dignity:

- The child's head will never be covered.
- Staff will communicate discreetly and respectfully with other staff and children to prevent stigma.

Prevention and Hygiene:

- All staff and children will avoid head-to-head contact where possible.
- Staff and volunteers will be reminded to check their own hair routinely.

Attendance:

- There is no exclusion period following head lice treatment.

- Children and young people should continue to attend sessions once treatment has begun on the same day.

Confidentiality:

- The identity of any child or family affected will remain confidential.
- The source of the outbreak will never be disclosed.

Information for Parents and Carers

Parents can access current NHS or Department of Health guidance on detection and treatment at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits>