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1. Statement of Intent

Head lice are a common issue amongst school-aged children and can be distressing for children and families. Lawnside Academy is committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

This policy outlines the school's approach to the identification, treatment and prevention of head lice. It aims to minimise disruption to learning, reduce the spread of infestations and ensure that pupils are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

The school recognises that head lice are a common occurrence and are not linked to poor hygiene or cleanliness. We are committed to minimising any social stigma associated with head lice whilst ensuring that parents, carers and staff understand their responsibilities in preventing and managing infestations.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance *Health Protection in Education and Childcare Settings* (or its most current version at the time of review).

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies:

- Infection Control Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Attendance Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
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3. Definitions

Head lice

Small, wingless insects that live on the scalp and feed on blood. They are spread through close head-to-head contact.

Nits

The empty egg cases left behind when head lice hatch. The presence of nits does not necessarily indicate an active infestation.

Outbreak

For the purposes of this policy, an outbreak is defined as more than two confirmed cases of head lice within the school at the same time.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy throughout the school.
- Ensuring that staff, pupils and parents are aware of the school's approach to head lice.
- Ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.
- Designating an appropriate member of staff to respond to head lice enquiries and concerns.
- Ensuring that pupils with head lice are not excluded from school activities or treated unfairly.

The Designated Member of Staff is responsible for:

- Acting as the main point of contact for head lice enquiries.
- Remaining informed about current guidance relating to head lice.
- Providing information and signposting parents to appropriate sources of advice.
- Supporting communication with families during outbreaks.
- Maintaining confidentiality for pupils and families.

All Staff are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy.
- Being aware of common signs and symptoms of head lice.
- Being alert to signs that may indicate the presence of head lice and reporting concerns to parents and the school office where appropriate.
- Creating an inclusive environment where pupils are not subject to teasing, prejudice or discrimination.
- Directing parents to the designated member of staff where further advice is required.

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Regularly checking their child's hair for signs of head lice.
- Informing the school if their child has an active infestation.
- Ensuring prompt treatment where head lice are identified.
- Following advice provided by healthcare professionals.
- Carrying out regular wet-combing checks during any reported outbreak.
- Supporting efforts to reduce the spread of head lice within the school community.

5. Identified Cases

Parents and carers are primarily responsible for identifying and treating head lice.

If a member of staff notices signs that may indicate the presence of head lice, they will inform the child's parent or carer privately and sensitively.

If several cases are identified within a class or year group, the designated member of staff will coordinate communication with affected families.

Where more than two cases are identified at the same time, the school may notify parents and carers of an outbreak and encourage them to check their child's hair.

The identity of any pupil with head lice will remain confidential and will not be shared with other parents, pupils or staff who do not need to know.

The school will periodically remind parents and carers of the importance of checking their child's hair through newsletters, the school website or other communication channels.

Attendance

Head lice are not considered a reason for exclusion from school. Pupils are expected to attend school as normal following treatment.

Attendance will be recorded in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy.

Respect and Inclusion

Any teasing, name-calling or discriminatory behaviour relating to head lice will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

6. Prevention

The school recognises that head lice cannot be completely prevented; however, early identification and prompt treatment can reduce transmission.

The school will:

- Provide information and advice to parents and carers where appropriate.
- Promote awareness of effective detection and treatment methods.
- Encourage pupils with long hair to keep it tied back where practical.
- Discourage the sharing of personal items such as hairbrushes, combs, hats and scarves.

Staff members will not routinely inspect pupils' hair for head lice.

Parents and carers are responsible for checking their child's hair regularly and taking appropriate action where required.

The school may provide information and signpost parents and carers to reputable sources of advice regarding the identification, prevention and treatment of head lice.

Parents are encouraged to use regular wet-combing as an effective detection method.

7. Transmission

Head lice spread primarily through direct head-to-head contact.

Children of primary school age can be particularly susceptible due to the close contact that naturally occurs during play and learning activities.

Where a child is identified as having head lice, parents and carers are encouraged to check all household members and treat any active infestations promptly.

The school will provide information to families to help dispel common myths regarding head lice, including the fact that:

- Head lice cannot fly or jump.
- Head lice are not linked to poor hygiene.
- Anyone can contract head lice.

The school will support families in accessing accurate information and reassure pupils that having head lice is a common occurrence and nothing to be embarrassed about.

8. Treatment

School staff will not recommend specific treatment products.

Parents and carers seeking advice regarding treatment will be encouraged to consult:

- A pharmacist
- Their GP
- NHS guidance

Information may be provided regarding recognised treatment options, including:

- Wet-combing
- Non-insecticidal treatments
- Medicated treatments recommended by healthcare professionals

Treatment remains the responsibility of parents and carers.

Treatment products will not be supplied or administered by the school.

Where treatment is unsuccessful, parents and carers should seek further advice from a healthcare professional.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the designated member of staff, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, guidance or school procedures.

Any amendments will be communicated to staff, governors and other relevant stakeholders.

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes on Revision(s)	Date Ratified by LGB	Next Review Date
3	September 2026	C. Johnson	Annual review. Updated guidance references, staff responsibilities and attendance wording.	September 2026	September 2027
2	March 2025	C. Johnson	No changes.	March 2025	January 2026
1	February 2024	C. Johnson	New policy written for adoption.	08.02.2024	January 2025