

BOARD AGENDA ITEM
September 12, 2017

SUBJECT:

Changes to Policy JLCC Communicable/Infectious Diseases

BACKGROUND:

SECTION 44-29-195 of the South Carolina Code reads in part, "A student sent home from school for having pediculosis (head lice) only may return to school upon presentation of evidence of treatment and upon a physical screening conducted by the school nurse or other person designated by the principal indicating an absence of pediculosis." Further, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) requires that only students with "live, crawling lice" may not return to school.

Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) advocate that "no-nit" policies should be discontinued. "No-nit" policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to schools should be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Many nits are more than ¼ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or may in fact be empty shells, also known as 'casings'.
- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- Head lice are spread only through direct head to head contact with a person who has an infestation of live, crawling lice.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The proposed policy change removes the requirement that students be free of nits (lice eggs) before returning to school. Parents will still be required to produce evidence of treatment. A physical screening will still be required that shows an absence of live head lice.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the proposed changes on first reading

ATTACHMENT:

Policy JLCC Communicable/Infectious Diseases

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COMMUNICABLE/INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Code **JLCC** Issued **4/02**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for dealing with students who have communicable or infectious diseases.

It is the policy of the board of trustees to attempt to provide a safe and secure environment for all students and employees. Under certain circumstances, students with communicable diseases may pose a threat to the health and safety of other students and staff. The school board reserves the right to remove or exclude any child whose physical condition would interfere with his/her ability to learn or would expose other students or staff to infection. In an effort to maintain a balance between the need to educate all eligible students and to control communicable diseases, decisions regarding the educational placement of students with communicable diseases will be made in accordance with the accompanying regulation.

Communicable disease is an illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products which arises through transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal, or inanimate reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or inanimate environment.

Head lice (Pediculosis)

If a teacher suspects a child of having head lice, he/she will notify the school nurse or principal's designee. If the student has an active infestation and/or the presence of nits, school personnel will notify the parents/legal guardians by telephone or in writing with recommendations for treatment procedures.

The school will inform parents, teachers, school nurses and administrators of the following.

- recommendations for treatment procedures
- documentation required for readmission to school

Readmission to school

The district prohibits a student who is sent home with head lice from returning to school until he/she meets the following conditions.

- Student shows evidence of treatment as determined by the school.
- Student passes a physical screening by the school nurse or principal's designee that shows the absence of head lice ~~and/or nits~~.

At no time will a student be allowed to return to school without proof of treatment and a screening.

Adopted 5/10/83; Revised 3/11/86, 4/14/87, 11/26/91, 4/23/02

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Legal references:

A. South Carolina Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 44-29-200 - Attendance of teachers or pupils with contagious or infectious disease may be prohibited.
2. Section 44-29-195 - Requirements for returning to school after having head lice; department to provide treatment vouchers.

B. Department of Health and Environmental Control Regulations:

1. R-61-20 - Communicable diseases.
2. R-61-21 - Sexually transmitted diseases.