

## Head Lice Summary

Although head lice can be an emotional issue, our nurses believe that policy and procedures regarding head lice and nits must be revised and based on research, evidence based studies and scientific evidence.

The attached draft head lice policy was created using the Boise model mentioned below along with advice from our head nurse, Special Services Director and our Director of Elementary Education. The draft policy will be presented to Elementary Principals for discussion on the matter. The following is a synopsis of previous investigations and meetings regarding the head lice policy.

According to our head nurse, current scientific studies and information from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), NASN (National Association of School Nurses), the Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics and others now suggest students should remain in school even with head lice or nits present.

When this question was presented to our policy contact, Jessica Harrison, Director of Policy & Government Affairs for Idaho School Boards Association (ISBA), she wrote back with the following comments.

I have been looking into this issue. In my research of local Idaho districts and their policies, many districts use our model and exclude children with head lice. I have attached the Boise School District's policy on this issue.

As far as statutory requirements go, it would depend on whether one classified head lice as a "contagious and infectious disease" as Section 33-512(7) requires that the Board "exclude from school, pupils with contagious or infectious diseases who are diagnosed or suspected as having a contagious or infectious disease or those who are not immune and have been exposed to a contagious or infectious disease...".

According to the CDC, "head lice are not known to transmit any disease and therefore are not considered a health hazard." Thus, if the Board determines that this is not a disease pursuant to the CDC classification they would be free to follow the head nurse's policy recommendation if they so choose. Ultimately, it will be up to the Board to decide whether they are willing to let these students remain in school.