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Justin Elicker, Mayor • Maritza Bond, MPH, Director of Health

From: \_\_\_\_\_ Nurse  
School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Re: Head Lice Education**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome back! I am looking forward to a productive and enriching new school year.

As you may know, head lice cases are common and affect schools around the country. Pediculosis, or head lice, affects approximately 6 to 12 million children yearly. We are writing to you to help you learn how to identify lice and provide information on what you can do if lice hit your home.

**What are head lice?**

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that live close to the human scalp. They feed on blood. The eggs, also called nits, are tiny, tear-drop shaped eggs that attach to the hair shaft. Nits often appear yellowish or white and can look like dandruff but cannot be removed or brushed off. The nymph, or baby louse, is smaller and grow to adult size in one to two weeks. The adult louse is the size of a sesame seed appears tan to grayish-white. An itchy and inflamed scalp is a common symptom of lice.

**Who is affected by head lice?**

Head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene and they do not transmit disease. Infestations can occur at home, school or in the community. Head lice are mostly spread by direct head-to-head contact with an infested person—for example, during play at home or school, slumber parties, sports activities, or camp. Less often, lice can be spread via shared objects such as hats, scarves, hair ribbons, combs, brushes.

**What to do if an infestation occurs?**

If you think your child has head lice, it is important to talk to a healthcare provider to discuss the best treatment approach for your family. Our procedure for school is based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Screening for nits or lice has not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school... classroom or school-wide screening should be strongly discouraged." (AAP- Policy on Head Lice).

Notices about individual cases of head lice will not be sent home every time the school becomes aware. As lice can occur any time of the year. you should check your child periodically.

As your school nurse, I want to provide you with the information you need to safeguard your children's health and pave the way for a healthy school year. I hope you find this information useful.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_

