***Sample letter for parents/guardians of child with head lice***

# School Letterhead

 Date:

Dear Parent of Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Student)

Head lice have been found on your child’s head. Head lice have nothing to do with cleanliness or parenting skills. They are spread mostly by direct head-to-head contact that occurs when students cluster together. Please check other family members for head lice. The hair and scalp around the back of the neck and behind the ears are likely places to find them. For your child’s well-being and to prevent further spread, you should take steps to eliminate lice from your child’s head. Here is some guidance on available treatment options.

1. **Apply an over-the-counter lice-killing product:**
* Head lice may be eliminated successfully with many prescription and over-the-counter products. To ensure effectiveness and protect your child’s health, read and follow directions carefully. Benzyl alcohol, dimethicone, and certain enzymatic products may be more effective irrespective of if you purchase them over-the-counter, via internet sites, or using a prescription.
* Most lice products will not remove or kill nits (eggs). If the package directions indicate, apply a second treatment to kill lice that hatch from eggs after the initial treatment.
* Some lice may be resistant to the chemicals found in some over-the-counter head lice products. If live crawling lice are found a day after treatment, nit-comb to remove nits and seek an alternative treatment option that uses a different class of active ingredient.
* Do not treat anyone who does not have live crawling lice and do not use these products as a prevention to avoid lice.
1. **Use a fine-toothed nit-comb to remove nits:**
* Thorough, repeated nit-combing may be effective alone or in combination with hair-drying and/or lice-killing products.
* Gather the items you’ll need: a nit comb (preferably with fine, closely spaced metal teeth, available at most drug stores), bowl of soapy water, towel, hair clips.
* Cover child’s shoulders with towel. Apply thick hair conditioner, a commercial lice-removal product, or vegetable oil (such as olive oil) to the hair.
* Comb or brush hair with a wide-toothed comb or wet-brush to detangle it. Divide and clip hair into small sections to allow you to work with one section of the head and hair at a time while keeping the rest of the hair out of the way.
* Sit behind your child, and using a bright light (and magnification if needed), carefully comb using a nit comb each section of hair from scalp to ends. Start from the scalp and pull the comb through the hair gradually, if you encounter tangles return to detangling with a wide-toothed comb or wet brush. Swish brushes and combs in soapy water after each pass to remove lice and nits from the tools.
* Focus on removing nits that are close to the scalp. Nits more than ½ inch from the scalp are usually empty or dead so their removal is not as critical.
* Nit comb daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks. It may take an hour or more each time. An entertaining video or television series may help keep everyone occupied.
1. **If needed, talk with your doctor about a prescription lice-killing product.**
* If nit-combing and over-the-counter products fail to eliminate live lice, your child’s doctor may order a prescription for treatment of head lice. As with any treatment product, follow the directions carefully. Ask your doctor, the school nurse or the pharmacist if you don’t fully understand the directions. **Do not repeat treatments with failing products, try something different.**

**After treatment, change or launder pillowcases, pajamas and towels that were in direct contact with the infested person within the past day. Vacuum furniture, put throw pillows and items that are not washable in the clothes dryer for 20 minutes or freezer for 48 hours.**

**Discourage sharing of combs, hairbrushes and hair accessories.**

**Do NOT apply any insecticide or other chemical** not specifically labeled for treating head lice on people. Well-intentioned parents treating their children with toxic or flammable substances have caused poisonings and deaths.

**Do NOT spray furniture, carpets, rooms or bedding with pesticides.** Do not apply pesticides to your home or car. Treating rooms, furniture, bedding, rugs and vehicles with pesticides is not necessary or beneficial.

**Do NOT treat pets.** Pets do not get head lice.

**For more information on head lice and their management, see** [**https://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/docs/az1687-2015.pdf**](https://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/docs/az1687-2015.pdf)**.**

Please contact me if you have any questions.

 Sincerely,

 *School Nurse*

 *Phone #*