

Welcome to a new school year at Willard! The elementary schools in Concord are making some changes in our lice checking procedures. The rationale for this change is explained below. Recommendations for avoiding an infestation and implementing our new procedure are also suggested.

For many years, parent volunteers have carried out all-school head lice screenings under the supervision of the Health Office. This occurred in September, January and early May of each school year. This year there will be just one all school head lice screening.

- The National Association of School Nurses states that "head lice screening programs have not had a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in the school setting over time ..."
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has come out with a similar statement.

Occasionally we have identified cases of head lice during the all school screening. However, most of the identification has come from parents who are aware of the prevalence of head lice. I recommend that you make it a habit to check your child weekly and especially for a couple of weeks after sleepovers. Look for nits, which are small tear-shaped eggs that are glued close to the scalp on a single hair shaft. They stick to a hair and cannot be easily moved.

Head lice can be a year round problem. It is most prevalent during the summer with overnight camps, traveling, and activities where helmets are shared. The *methods of prevention* entail: no sharing of any item that is used on the head, not even among siblings; such as helmets, hats, hairbrushes, combs, or hair accessories. Keeping hair contained close to the scalp can help to prevent an infestation and the spread of head lice. Your cooperation is necessary to have a lice-free school.

If you are unsure of how to check or you think your child might have lice, please contact me and I will help you. If your child does develop a case of lice, you need to let me know. Notification will be confidential. I can guide you on how to treat the condition. I will also check your child's classroom.

The school does need volunteers, **hopefully two from each classroom**, for our school-wide screening day. We will provide training in this useful skill. If you have a desire to be involved in your child's school, but are short on time, this is an ideal opportunity that does not take a huge commitment. You can e-mail at

jgaudreau@colonial.net or graceryan48@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Janine Gaudreau R.N. B.S.N.