

Caban Y Faenol CYF

Guidelines for Managing Head Lice

Head lice are one of the challenges faced by children and their families during their time at the Cylch Meithrin. Effective head lice control is reliant on awareness and prevention by both staff and families. Head lice are a common occurrence amongst young children, consequently Caban Y faenol Cyf will follow the procedures outlined in this document to manage any outbreaks which occur.

What are head lice?

Head lice are small insects, which are no bigger than a sesame seed, with moving legs. Nits are the egg cases which stick to the hair and look like specks of dandruff. Head lice refers to a moving louse, and not the egg cases (nits). Remember that your head may not always itch to have head lice.

How do you 'catch' head lice?

Anyone can catch head lice, but pre-school children and their families are most at risk of doing so. They often spread from close family and friends in the community, as well as amongst peers who attend the same childcare setting or other activities. Children's play activities, and tendency to have close contact, means that head lice are often found on children, but can also spread to adults.

Head lice walk from one head to another – they cannot fly, jump or swim from one person's head to another's. They aren't fussy about hair types either, and will live in long or short hair, whether it is clean or dirty. Human head lice are not found on animals, and are not transferred from animals to humans.

Can head lice be prevented?

The best way to stop the spread of head lice is for families to check the heads of every family member regularly, using a detector comb to wet comb the hair.

A child who has head lice does not need to be asked to stay away from the setting. One reason for this is that if a child does have lice, he or she will have had them at the setting for several weeks before diagnosis.

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How can you treat head lice?

Head lice can only be treated by checking and treating all infected members of a household at the same time. Your GP or Pharmacist can give you advice on the best treatment to use, and can advise on which treatments are suitable for use by people with asthma or other respiratory conditions. Apply the treatment carefully to all infected heads in the household, making sure to follow all instructions provided on the treatment pack.

At all times, Caban Y Faenol Cyf will:

- ensure that children's coats and hats are kept on the child's designated hook / in their designated space. Head Lice do not hop, jump or fly and this should minimise the risk of infection.
- wash dressing-up clothes regularly.
- inspect hats / headgear and resources used as part of the dressing-up corner / role-play activities for signs of head lice on a regular basis.
- ensure that carpeted areas are vacuumed daily.

When a case of head lice is detected, Caban Y Faenol Cyf will:

- inform the parents / guardians / carers of all children who attend the setting when a case of head lice is detected by letter, email and/or Facebook message.
- share the current Welsh Government Head Lice Fact sheet with all parents / guardians / carers of all children who attend the setting.
- prepare any child / children who are infested with head lice for pick-up with a minimum of fuss at the end of the session. When the parents / guardians / carers arrive to collect the child / children, they will be given a copy of the letter and guidelines for parents / guardians / carers.
- Remind/ prepare a letter to parents / guardians / carers to check all children and other members of the household carefully for the next few weeks.
- reassure parents / guardians / carers that head lice are not indicative of unsanitary households.

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An example of a letter that may be used to send to parents is shown below.

Dear Parent / Guardian / Carer

A case of head lice has been detected at Caban Y Faenol.

Anyone can get head lice, they travel through direct head-to-head contact.

In order to prevent them from spreading further, please could you help us by checking your child(ren)'s hair daily for the next few weeks. The earlier it's noticed, the easier it is to treat.

Please help us to stop the spread of the head lice by checking your child(ren), and taking the necessary treatment steps where necessary this evening. Head lice treatments and specialist combs can be obtained on prescription through your GP, from your local Pharmacist, or they can be purchased at any chemist or most large supermarkets.

Further information can be found in the Welsh Government's Fact Sheet on Head Lice attached to this letter.

Many thanks for your help and support.

Hints and Tips for Detecting and Preventing Head Lice

- Check all members of the household regularly to identify any signs of head lice or nits as early as possible.
- If head lice are found;
 - treat all infected members of the household swiftly, following the instructions on the treatment pack.
 - after applying the treatment, remove the nits / head lice from the hair using a specialist comb in a well-lit area. Take care to separate the hair into sections, removing the nits / head lice from the scalp to the ends of the hair.

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- remember to clean the comb between sections to remove nits / head lice.
- change and wash all bedding.
- check recently used headwear, headphones and hair accessories.
- re-check, and re-treat as required.