



Friday 12th October 2018

Sir John Cass's Foundation
Primary School
Headteacher: Miss A Allan

Dear Parents and Carers,

There have been some cases of head lice in school. Please take the time to check your child's hair carefully following the advice below.

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insects which live in the hair and feed by biting the scalp and sucking blood. The female head louse lays her eggs close to the scalp where it is warm enough to incubate them. The eggs, or nits, hatch out, start feeding and soon begin to lay more eggs.

How are they transmitted?

Head lice are caught by head to head contact with someone who already has them. Although anyone can catch them, they prefer the heads of 4-11 year olds. Clean hair is no protection against them. When heads touch, the lice simply walk from one head to another.

What are the signs of head lice infestation?

The way head lice feed causes itching, so scratching the scalp is usually the first sign that a child has head lice. It should, however, be pointed out that the onset of itching may be delayed by weeks, or even months, when someone first catches lice. Another sign of head lice may be a rash on the base of the neck caused by lice droppings. Anyone who has had head lice for a while may begin to feel generally unwell or 'lousy'.

How are head lice detected?

Lice are most easily detected by combing really well conditioned soaking wet hair with a fine-tooth comb. Really wet lice stay still and cannot escape. Combing dry or damp hair with a fine-tooth comb is not a reliable way to detect lice.

The best (and cheapest!) way to beat head lice is by wet combing:

After washing the hair, copious amounts of conditioner should be applied and, after detangling with an ordinary wide-toothed comb, the hair should be combed, sitting upright or leaning over the bath, from the roots with a special 'bug buster' fine tooth comb, with the teeth of the comb slotting into the hair at the roots with every stroke. After each stroke, the lice should be cleared from the comb.

Wet lice find it difficult to escape from this combing. Hair which is slippery from conditioner makes it hard for them to keep a grip and so removal with the comb is easier.

This routine should be repeated every 3-4 days for two weeks so that any lice emerging from the eggs are removed before they can spread.

With thanks

Miss Allan

Headteacher

Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School
St James's Passage, Duke's Place, London, EC3A 5DE
0207 283 1147
www.sirjohncassprimary.org