

# CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEALTH SERVICES

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are pleased to announce a change to our head lice guidelines that will ensure students with active cases are properly educated and treated, while ensuring that students without active cases remain learning in the classroom. This change comes after careful consideration of the medical evidence and medical practice standards.

Our new guidelines have been put together based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Harvard School of Public Health, among others. These medical professionals discourage the use of “no nit” policies, while encouraging the prompt treatment of active, spreadable cases. Current research does not support “no nit” policies because:

- ✓ *Nits, the eggs of live lice, are not contagious. Only live lice can be spread.*
- ✓ *Many children with nits never develop live lice.*
- ✓ *Millions of valuable school days are missed each year because of “no nit” policies.*

For more information, you may view the American Academy of Pediatrics’ official statement at <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;110/3/638>.

Please check the Health Services web page (<http://www.cantonma.org/health/index.htm>) for information from us regarding head lice and steps that can be taken at home to avoid this nuisance. **Parental education and involvement is the most effective tool against head lice.**

As always, your child’s school nurse is an excellent source of information about head lice. Please contact us if you have questions or need help in treating your child.

Sincerely,

Janet Donnelly, RN, BSN  
Canton Public Schools  
Nurse Leader

## Head Lice Information Internet Resources

**The Harvard School of Public Health:**

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice/flow2.html>

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice/flow.html>

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health:**

[http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/factsheets/head\\_lice.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/factsheets/head_lice.pdf)

**National Association of School Nurses Position Statement:**

<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=237>

**American Academy of Pediatrics:**

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/107/5/1011> (scroll down to read the summary nit study done by the Academy. Only *18 percent* of children excluded for nits in this study developed live lice.)

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;110/3/638.pdf>

**Centers for Disease Control:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/default.htm>