HeadLiceWise / PARENT CHECKLIST

School sent a lice notice? Here’s what to do.

A school notice means possible exposure, not a diagnosis. Start with a careful check.

1 / Check calmly

- ☐ Read the notice. Ask the school nurse whether your child had close contact and what the school recommends.
- ☐ Use bright light and a fine-toothed lice comb. Work through small sections, especially behind the ears and at the nape. Wipe the comb on a white tissue.
- ☐ Look for crawling lice. Nits stick firmly to hair; dandruff usually moves easily. Possible nits within ¼ inch of the scalp need closer evaluation.
- ☐ If unsure, ask a school nurse or clinician to identify what you found. Do not wait for itching; it can take weeks to appear.

2 / If no infestation is established

- ☐ Do not use lice medicine just because of exposure. Repeat checks if symptoms or further reports arise; ask the nurse about a checking schedule.
- ☐ Avoid hair-to-hair contact and sharing combs, brushes, hats, or hair accessories. Ordinary housekeeping is enough.

3 / If lice are confirmed

- ☐ Check household members and close contacts. CDC advises treating infested people and bed-sharing contacts at the same time.
- ☐ Choose an age-appropriate treatment with a pharmacist or clinician. Follow its exact label; do not mix medicines. Set repeat dosing from that product’s instructions.
- ☐ Check hair every 2–3 days for 2–3 weeks; comb as directed. Ask a clinician about live lice after a correctly completed course or signs of infected scalp sores.
- ☐ Clean recently used bedding, clothes, and hair tools according to CDC guidance and care labels. Avoid whole-house decontamination, foggers, or furniture insecticides.
- ☐ Tell school staff and close contacts privately. CDC says children need not leave school early and may return after appropriate treatment starts; confirm local policy.

More guidance: https://headlicewise.com/

Parent education, not a diagnosis. Ask a clinician about uncertain findings, age limits, allergies, or treatment failure.

Source: CDC head lice guidance • Guidance checked October 8, 2026