Rationale:
• Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time*. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled. Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.

Aims:
• To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
• To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
• To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

Implementation:
• Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for detection and treatment of head lice.
• Parents/guardians should regularly, preferably once a week, check for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and all household members.
• Parents should notify the school if their child is affected, and when treatment has commenced.
• Parents should not send their child to school with untreated head lice.
• While it is the parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information, and by offering a screening process conducted by trained head lice nurses.
• Parents will be alerted when head lice are detected in their child’s class. Students identified with live head lice will be provided with a note to take home at the conclusion of the day to inform the parent/carer that their child may have head lice.
• Students identified with live headlice will be excluded from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table.
• The Principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school.
• The school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be screened by trained personnel for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be checked
• All children screened will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the screening.
• Parents will be provided with advice on the latest information regarding head lice treatment and prevention.
• The Principal may request evidence that treatment has commenced upon the child’s return to school.
• The principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy outbreaks.

Evaluation:
• This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in August 2012.