

## **HEAD LICE POLICY**

Unfortunately, it is always possible to catch head lice, no matter how careful we are. Children can pick up head lice just by coming into close contact with someone who is infected. It is important to know how to recognise the problem early and to know how to cope with it.

### **Symptoms of Head Lice**

**Itching** - Head lice often cause the scalp to itch, although this is not always the case. Itching is not caused by the lice biting the scalp but by an allergy to the lice. Some people are not allergic to head lice, so they may not notice that they have a head lice infestation. Even if someone with head lice is allergic to them, itching can take up to three months to develop. In some cases of head lice, a rash may appear on the back of the neck. This is caused by a reaction to louse droppings.

### **Causes of Head Lice**

Head lice are transmitted by close head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice. The lice cannot fly, jump or swim, but they can climb from one hair to another. A head lice infestation is not the result of dirty hair or poor hygiene. Head lice can affect all types of hair irrespective of its condition and length. Head lice only affect humans and cannot be passed on to animals or be caught from them.

### **Procedures**

- There is no need for children with head lice to be kept at home. They will probably have had the infestation for several weeks, so keeping them away from the service is unlikely to affect transmission.
- Staff will inform other parents verbally or in writing in the event of an outbreak of Head Lice. Staff should be tactful and maintain confidentiality.
- Parents can be given a copy of our Head Lice information leaflet or referred to the HSE website for more information on the prevention and treatment of Head Lice.
- Staff should inform parents to check their child's hair carefully and regularly, and to use the treatment recommended.
- The importance of not sharing other people's combs, hats etc. is stressed to parents and children.
- If more advice is needed, the service will contact the public health nurse.

This policy was adopted by **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
co-Manager

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_