

***The following information has been compiled by several Robious Elementary parents. Our goal is to provide information and resources to families as they deal with head lice – to treat the issue and prevent future re-infestations.***

***Should you discover that your child has head lice and they are not at school, it is IMPERITIVE that you notify the school at 378-2500 as soon as possible.***

What to do if a student in your child's class has lice:

Ok, so you open your child's backpack, pull out their daily folder and your heart stops. There it is....The Letter. The Lice Letter. (I guess it's better than The Phone Call From The Clinic Lady, but not by much....). The following are recommendations which have been collected from other parents who have been *there* to help prevent your child from bringing the little critters home for an extended play date:

- Check your child's head DAILY. Check it thoroughly and do it EVERY DAY.
- What you are looking for is VERY small. The lice are clear-ish, gray-ish bugs that move in the hair and on the scalp, the nymphs (newly hatched lice) are little black dots (think a pepper shaker) and are typically on the scalp, and the nits/eggs are tiny whitish bumps on the hair shaft, usually within two or three inches of the scalp.
- The nits/eggs are stuck pretty firmly to the hair shaft. Flicking them with your finger does not dislodge them (vs. dandruff)
- Encourage your child to put their jacket/hat/mittens/scarves *into their backpack* once they get to school
- Educate your child to ways in which lice are spread: head-to-head contact, sharing headbands, hairbrushes, hats and other items which could touch one child's head, then touch your child's head are a BIG "no no".

- Once your child comes home from school, have them change clothes in the garage and put their clothes directly in the washer. Same for the back pack – it never comes into the home (and goes directly into the wash).
- Having some purchased products on hand at home can be helpful:
  - Fairy Tales Rosemary Repel products: shampoo, conditioner, leave-in conditioning spray, spray & shield and gel. These products contain natural oils which have been shown to repel lice
- Also consider environments outside of school and home which can be opportunities for lice to spread: play dates, sleepovers, playing dress up and sharing dress up clothes, movie theaters, fitness center child care facilities, day care providers, children’s birthday party environments and businesses (Pump it Up, Monkey Joe’s, etc) – any environment in which there are a lot of children which share common items. Remember, lice crawl (not fly) so they can crawl from child to object to child if given the chance.

**What to do if you get “The Phone Call From The Clinic Lady”:**

- Go ahead....I am giving you permission to panic. You probably have about 20 minutes to get it out of your system before you walk into the school office to get your child, so might as well get it out now. Once in front of your child, *please* be calm and act as if this happens every day at your house.
- Purchase a GOOD nit comb (*not the plastic ones that come from the drug store!!*) The one many parents recommend is called **The Terminator** (I’m really not kidding....). It is a metal comb and the teeth are SUPER close together and have some kind of swirly swirl down each tooth to really comb those critters out. Probably one of the single-most important things you can do at this point to prevent re-infestation is thorough combing (see resource list for where to purchase the products recommended in this letter).

- Treat your child's head with a product similar to the LiceKiller products. Many Robious parents have used this product very successfully when their children were found to have lice. Visit [www.licekiller.com](http://www.licekiller.com) for more information. (probably not a bad idea to have this, or a similar product, on hand for days just like this).
- PICK, PICK, PICK!!! Combing 3 times a day for the first few days after discovering lice is important as you will often miss nits as they are so small. Continue to comb several times a day until no nits or bugs are found for 7-11 days. (this is no picnic, trust me....it takes HOURS every day as you have to go through each child's head strand by strand)
- Make sure to check your other children daily, also. Same routine as above....
- Please put your embarrassment aside (I promise you'll be over it soon enough anyway...) and call parents of any other children with whom your child has had recent contact. Again, no lie...these are difficult calls to make but it is super important as it may prevent a bad situation from becoming much worse.
- Understand the life cycle of little lice and the upcoming important dates in your near future. There is conflicting information on the incubation period of nits. Some say 2 days, others 7-11 days. Taking the conservative approach, and assuming 7-11 days, is probably wise. So.....the nits (or eggs) have a 7-11 day incubation period (either in your child's head or in your family room rug), then they hatch and are called "nymphs". The nymphs grow into full grown lice which are what crawl from person to person. If the nymph or lice do not have a human host for 48-72 hours, they die.
- Also have the understanding that a significant percentage of lice have become resistant to the over the counter (and many prescription) products available – see licekiller.com video
- When your child(ren) get home from school, have them change clothes in the garage and put their clothes, jackets and backpacks in the laundry (hot water in the washer and high heat in the dryer) every day until the immediate threat of lice is past

- *Cleaning your home environment is essential:* vacuum all floors, upholstered furniture and mattresses (don't forget your car) daily for 7-11 days until the threat of a "fallen nit" is past
- Change your vacuum bag daily – put it in a trash bag, tie it up and put it in an outside trash can
- Anything that is not nailed down goes into trash bags (tied up at the top) for 2 weeks (...unless you like to do copious amounts of laundry on top of copious amounts of laundry.....). This includes stuffed animals, throw pillows, furniture cushions – anything you can't wash. You want to keep them isolated for the life cycle of a nit incubation (7-11 days) plus the 48-72 hours it takes for a live bug to die if it does not have a host.
- Washing all clothing, bedding and towels in hot water and drying on high heat daily for 7-11 days
- After putting pillow cases in the wash each morning, put the pillow insert in the dryer on high heat for 20 minutes
- Do not share hairbrushes, hats, towels, pillows, etc with a friend or family member
- Be aware that play dates and other places outside of school are also avenues through which head lice can spread: just be aware when sending your child into situations where there may be the potential for this to occur
- Be prudent and do not invite other children to your home if you have had a lice outbreak within the previous few weeks
- Dogs cannot get head lice (horses can, not sure about cats)

**Fall through winter is the “peak season” for lice. Be aware and check your child’s head frequently during this time**

## **Head Lice Product Resource List:**

[www.mothersagainstheadlice.org](http://www.mothersagainstheadlice.org)

[www.licekiller.com](http://www.licekiller.com)

- Great information on one website. I personally endorse this product have had great success using it. Not a bad idea to keep it “on hand” in case of an outbreak (ask me how I know....I paid WAY too much \$\$ to have it over-nighted in the midst of a crisis!!)

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

- To purchase the Terminator comb

## **Fairy Tales Lice Products:**

- Pigtails & Crewcuts and Ulta (and several online sites) carry these products. Many parents will use the Rosemary Repel Leave-in Conditioning spray, Rosemary Repel gel or Rosemary Repel Spray & Shield each day on their children’s heads and backpacks prior to sending them to school.

Pigtails & Crewcuts (both Southside and West End locations) also sell The Terminator comb

## **The Nit Fairy**

- aka Beverly Man
- Recommendation from a Robious parent:
  - “... I did have her come to the house and check us all out. I had luckily gotten rid of the problem by then, but she was full of current, helpful information that was often

different and certainly more in depth than the information being sent out by the school. I found her to be an invaluable resource as well as comforting and professional.”

- 804.739.4762
- [nitfairies@gmail.com](mailto:nitfairies@gmail.com)
- [nitfairies.vpweb.com](http://nitfairies.vpweb.com)

### **Parents Resource List:**

The following is a list of Robious Elementary parents who have been through this ordeal (and aren't embarrassed ☺) and have agreed to be a resource for those who may have questions about the process. If you would like to be on this list as a resource for others, please contact Christine Shepard at [ckshepard@verizon.net](mailto:ckshepard@verizon.net). Contact information for these parents is available in the school directory.

Missy Bane

Margo Suddeth

Cindy Landergan

Alyssa Pearson

Wendy Morgan

Julie Rusin

Brooke Shepard

Christine Shepard

Kim Williams