



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

October 3, 2008
Volume 38, No 2

October and On Our Way

by Nancy Kolb, McT Interim Principal

We're well on our way into the new school year and it's going great. Classrooms are developing their rhythm and students have settled in. I look forward each day to greeting the students as they arrive and waving good-bye as they leave. It's a tribute to McCarthy-Towne that our children arrive happy, excited and eagerly anticipating the day's activities. It speaks volumes that they leave with relaxed smiles and a sense of well-being. Having students who feel connected and happy to be here is the cornerstone of learning.

I am most impressed with our students' care and respect for each other and the adults in our community. Our older students are bus buddies for our youngest children, making sure that they find bus rooms and get on their buses without mishap. Students routinely stop and help younger students in the halls and common places. Students respond quickly to adult requests. You should be proud of your children and the way they accord themselves at McT.

Our bus times are busy, and we collaborate with Merriam to diminish the "hectic" quality and assure each child that he/she will be safely escorted to her/his bus. We need your help in the process. If you are picking up your child, please do not linger for conversations by the main stairs or in front of the building. We have over 1,000 students and people who interrupt bus lines can lead a small child astray.

You will note that included with this Bulletin is the McCarthy-Towne School Behavior Contract. We ask that you take the time to review the contract with your child and discuss behavior at school. Students take an active part in creating

our school culture. They work with their teachers to establish classroom behavior rules and logical consequences. We at McT believe our students want to do what's right, and most of the time they succeed. But they are still children. At times, they may find themselves angry, sad, excited, anxious or worried, and their behavior may not be what they, you or we expect. It's our job as adults to help them understand when their behavior is inappropriate, and to help them find ways to change that behavior. We do it in a positive way because we want children to feel successful and powerful. I was most proud of a second grader who skipped out to the bus, high-fived me and announced, "Wow, I was just great today. That plan we made really worked. I was awesome!" So when "behavior bumps" appear, please work with us and believe in your child's ability to learn from mistakes.

The faculty has met twice to brainstorm, discuss and refine our work to articulate McT values, goals and future directions. This continued process is key in defining what makes McT unique, as we work to hire a principal who is a match for the school. I will share our finished products with you in future Bulletin articles.

The Principal Search Committee has been selected. This Committee will meet six to eight times before December holidays. They will establish procedures for obtaining parent and community input, write an ad and develop a brochure that reflects McT philosophy and values, and decide how to publicize the position. Part of the Committee's work is confidential. Confidential work includes reading applications, interviewing and discussing candidates, and recommending four

Mark Your Calendar

OCTOBER

- 9, Thursday
NO SCHOOL, Yom Kippur
- 13, Monday
NO SCHOOL, Columbus Day
- 15, Wednesday
Scrip order deadline
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 17, Friday
BOX TOPS deadline
NSTAR bulb orders due
- 19, Sunday
Family Photo Day,
8:30 AM-3 PM
Fall Clean-Up, 10 AM-1 PM
- 21, Tuesday
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
No PM Kindergarten
- 23-27, Thurs.-Mon.
Book Fair
- 24, Friday
Fall Social, 6-8 PM
- 29, Wednesday
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
No PM Kindergarten

NOVEMBER

- 4, Tuesday ★ VOTE ★
NO SCHOOL,
Professional Day
- 11, Tuesday
NO SCHOOL, Veterans Day
- 12, Wednesday
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM
- 26, Wednesday
Early Dismissal, 1 PM
No PM Kindergarten
- 27-28, Thurs./Fri.
NO SCHOOL,
Thanksgiving recess

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finalists to the Superintendent. We anticipate interviews will occur in January. Once four candidates are chosen, the process is public. Each candidate will visit McT for a day and meet with teachers, administrators and parents. All are invited to give their input to Bill Ryan, our Superintendent, who will make the final decision and offer the position to one of the four candidates. We hope to have a principal appointed by March.

The Search Committee is comprised of the following faculty and parents:

Ann Budner, McT parent

Noreen Cohen, McT 2nd grade teacher and former McT reading and 6th grade teacher and parent of former McT students

Carolyn Imperato, parent and newly appointed McT/Merriam psychologist

David James, McT P.E. teacher and former McT student

Robin Kynoch, McT 3rd grade teacher

Tara Matthews, McT 6th grade teacher and former McT special education teacher and McT parent

Kim McGlothlin, McT parent

Allison O'Leary, McT special education teacher

Christine Price, Principal of Conant School

David Rachlin, McT 4th grade teacher, former McT 5th and 6th grade teacher

Ann-Marie Sweeney, McT parent

Robyn Winick, McT Administrative Assistant and parent of former McT students

Here at McCarthy-Towne we are excited about the process and invite you to be active participants.



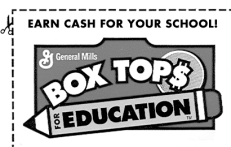
by Lynne Densen and Kim Clark, PTSO co-chairs

We're off to a great start this year. The first Scrip order has been given out and the gift wrap/bulb fundraiser has come to a close. School pictures went off without a problem. The Fall Family Photo Day was rained out, but has been **rescheduled for Sunday, October 19th**, so if you were not able to make the first date, here's your chance.

Thank you to all those who participated in our September fundraisers. We have many exciting events planned for October. We start the month off on October 1st with a 40-minute presentation from Radio Disney, teaching the kids about conserving energy during an all school assembly. This is a kick-off to the NSTAR sponsored light bulb fundraiser we will be running. We will again be running the Scrip cards and the fall social and Book Fair will also be happening at the end of the month—both very popular events.

Calling All BOX TOPS!

Our first of two class contests to collect Box Tops for Education will run from **October 1 through, Friday, October 17**. The class with the most Box Tops will win \$25 worth of playground equipment for their classroom. All other classrooms win too, with \$25 worth of playground equipment being donated to the shared bin in the office. So go through your pantries and Clip, Clip, Clip—Save, Save, Save - and send them in to your child's teacher for collection. For a full list of products go to www.boxtops4education.com. Questions? Contact Maureen Ryan-Friend or Joanie Davis.



Don't miss the 25th Annual Fall Social on October 24!

Bring the family, grab a costume and head down to the McT Cafeteria for a great evening full of games, crafts, goodies and a DJ!

The event runs from 6-8 PM and at the same time, don't forget to stop by the Book Fair that will set up downstairs in the Multi Purpose room.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to help run some of the activities—please contact Kate Murray at lfdtmurray@verizon.net or Maryellen DiPalo at meboyled@aol.com if you are interested. Thank you and see you all on October 24th!

Change a Light, Change the World

This October, McCarthy-Towne will participate in “**Change a Light Fundraiser**” sponsored by NSTAR which benefits both our school and our environment. For this event, we will be selling energy-efficient Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs which are donated by NSTAR. **All of the proceeds will go directly to our school.**

Our NSTAR fundraiser began with a presentation by Radio Disney on Wed., Oct. 1 at an all school assembly. Students learned about conserving energy. Attached is a package that includes information about the advantages of changing to Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL), the order form and a fun activity booklet for our kids. By ordering even one Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb, you will benefit the school, the environment and save money on your electrical bill.

Order forms are due back on Friday, October 17th. Light bulbs will be delivered in November just in time for daylight time savings when it is recommended to change the light bulbs because the days are shorter.

If you have any further questions, please call Maria at (978) 263-0723 or e-mail at marilcid@gmail.com. Thank you for participating in “Change a Light Fundraiser” that will benefit our school, homes, community and world.

Family Fall Clean-Up

Get out your gardening gloves and show your school pride by helping to clean up the Parker-Damon Building grounds. Family Fall Clean-Up is on **Sunday, October 19th from 10 AM–1 PM.**

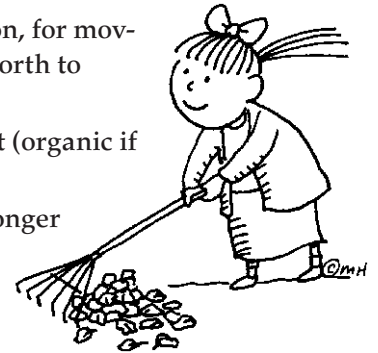
The landscape and clean-up work is done only by volunteers and we need you! With your help we can make our school look beautiful. Bring your rakes, weeding tools and wheel barrows. **The whole family is welcome—we need all the help we can get!**

There are other opportunities to help out! Every Thursday at 10 AM, we meet to work on the gardens. No experience is needed, just enthusiasm and garden gloves.

For more information, please contact Amanda Lye, at amandalye1@yahoo.com or 978-635-9879.

Wish List (if you can't donate a little time—perhaps donate one of these...

- A small child's wagon, for moving hoses back and forth to gardens
- 40 lb. bag of compost (organic if possible)
- Small tools you no longer need, but that are in good condition



BOOK FAIR 2008

This year's McCarthy-Towne Book Fair will be held **Thursday, October 23 through Monday, October 27**, in conjunction with the Fall Social. The Book Fair is great fun for the kids, a nice way to spend a couple of volunteer hours, and a wonderful fundraiser for the school.

Students will visit the Book Fair with their classes at assigned half hour slots, as determined by their teachers, on Thursday (10/23), Friday (10/24), and Monday (10/27). The Book Fair will also be held Friday night during the Fall Social. Families are encouraged to buy books for their children, as gifts for others, and as gifts to specific classrooms by purchasing books from the Teachers' Wish List. This is a terrific way to help the teachers build their classroom libraries.

Volunteers are warmly welcomed! Parents can choose to volunteer at times when their child/children's class attends the book fair. The more the merrier! We also will need volunteers to set up the book fair on Wednesday, October 22, work the social on the evening of Friday, October 24, and break down the book fair on Monday afternoon, October 27. We have a list of volunteers that Astrid has collected but it is not too late to add your name to the list. Volunteers will be contacted as soon as teachers sign up so you can be sure to be there when your child's class comes in.

More specific information regarding the Book Fair and your child/children's classroom visit will be coming via backpack mail. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer for the Fair, please contact Susan Lerner (sammyabe@aol.com, 978-263-0045) or Julie Jannke (julie.sweitzer@gmail.com, 978-263-1924).

Professional Development Day

Professional Development Day is scheduled for Tuesday, November 4th this year. During this day, the staff attends a variety of meetings. While they are away, as in past years, we would like show our gratitude for all their hard work throughout the year by having a nice luncheon awaiting their return.

We are looking for volunteers: bakers who would provide a luncheon item (hot or cold), appetizers, salads, or desserts. If you don't bake, we will need drinks, paper goods (napkins, plates, cups, and plastic ware), table cloths, clean-up items (paper towels, wipes, sponges, plastic storage containers/baggies), and flowers. We are also looking for a few parents who can help with set-up and clean-up.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Lynne Densen at 978.266.2952 or lynne.densen@verizon.net or. We ask that, if you are planning on making something, please let us know what it is, so we end up with a variety of items for the luncheon.

Tidbits from Tina

McT School Counselor

For those of us who need a little help in understanding baseball, as we watch the World Series—

Baseball through the eyes of an eight year old, a conversation between mother and son when they were about to watch a World Series game:

Mom: "It's so exciting! I hope I can understand when it all starts. You know it's my first time going to a real big league game."

Boy: "Do you want me to tell you how it works?"

Mom: "Sure"

Boy: "OK. You have two sides, one out in the field and one in. Each man that's on the side that's in goes out and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out. When three men are out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out. When both sides have been in and out nine times, including the not outs, that's the end of the game. What do you think?"

Mom: "I think it's wonderful!"

Family Photo Day Rescheduled!

GREAT NEWS! Family Photo Day has been rescheduled for October 19th. Just when you thought you wouldn't be able to swing a family picture... you have a second chance! Besides the date, everything remains the same.

Photographer Julie L'Heureux (McT Mom!) will be at Acton Arboretum from 8:30 AM- 3:00 PM. Sittings are scheduled every 10 minutes and cost \$40 per family grouping (\$35 goes directly to McT!). The sitting fee includes one 8x10 photo. You can see examples of Julie's work at www.sunlightphotography.net.

Appointments can be scheduled by contacting Sandy Billings—sandybillings@verizon.net. Please include your name, phone, 3 time choices, and who will be in the picture. Send payment to Sandy at 33 Mohegan Rd, Acton, MA 01720. Make checks payable to McT PTSO. Book today!

McCarthy-Towne Yard Sale

This year, the annual McCarthy-Towne Yard Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 9th. Last year this event grossed over \$3,600 thanks to your generous donations. It is never too early to pack away your items to donate for our spring sale. If you are interested in organizing or helping at the Yard Sale, or if you have any questions, please contact Tina Narbonne (narbonnefamily@yahoo.com) or Brenda Simpson (brendahsimpson@hotmail.com). Look for more information soon on what and how to donate.

McT News Email List

Did you get an email about the buses that can no longer take bus passes? Or the email with scrip and gift wrap deadlines? Did you receive emails about the McT and Superintendent search committees? If you answered NO, then you need to join the McTNews email list. This is a moderated Yahoo! group, so only school and PTSO-related information is sent out.

In an effort to reduce paper, instead of using the Friday backpack system, we are going to try to use email for some of our communication regarding fundraisers and reminders, so don't miss out. Nancy Kolb, our new interim Principal will also be utilizing this medium to communicate with families. To join, simply visit our website—www.mctptso.org and sign up for the email list (far right side of the website). Questions, please contact Lynne Densen at lynne.densen@verizon.net.

Get a Clue Costume Party

Calling all detectives, your help is needed! A limited number of tickets are still available to the Get a Clue Costume Party at the Dr. Boddy's Maynard Mansion (AKA Maynard Rod and Gun Club- 45 Old Mill Road, Maynard). **This an adults only event to raise funds for the McCarthy-Towne PTSO.**

Plan on arriving, in a costume of your choice, at 7:30 PM on **Saturday, October 18th.** Help our not-so crack detectives figure out who killed her, with what and in what room. Upon arrival, each guest participating in the case will be provided with different clues as to who murdered Dr. Boddy. It is up to you! Was it Ms Scarlett with the rope in the kitchen? Reverend Green with the knife in the library? Your hosts are of course... the murder suspects!

Busted Flat will again be rockin' the detectives in the ballroom. And for those guests with a hankerin' for some Sox—television will be available to cheer the boys on to another victory. Fun is guaranteed to be had by all. Vote for your favorite costume.

Tickets are \$25 per person. Send an email reserving tickets to AnwenHayes@arundela.com. Upon receipt of your check, your space will be confirmed and tickets sent to you via backpack mail. Please make checks out to McT PTSO and mail to Anwen Hayes, 108 Summer St., Acton. Please include your name, as well as your child's name and class, to facilitate delivery.



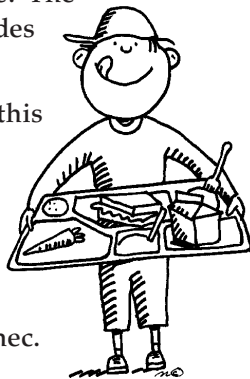
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Food Service News

Did you know that with the daily alternate lunch choices we offer an 8 ounce carton of milk, choice of fruit and vegetables? For example: The sandwich of the week also includes milk, fruit and vegetables.

Please see the back of the menu for this month's healthy recipe!

If you have any comments or questions please feel free to contact the Food Service Department. We can be reached at 978-264-4700 x 3221 or by e-mail at knelson@mail.ab.mec.edu. It is our pleasure to serve you!



Thank You

by Astrid Trostorff

Thank you to all the members of the McCarthy-Towne community who volunteer in so many ways to make our community so wonderful for children. The beginning of the year is such a busy time, both in and out of school, and McT volunteers help make it run smoothly. Some of the volunteers include:

- Marie Clougher for organizing the Buddy Family program, which extends a personal welcome to families new to McCarthy-Towne
- Martha Day for assisting the school photographers during a very busy School Picture Day
- Amanda Lye (Merriam parent) for organizing and training parents in weeding and maintaining gardens around the Parker Damon Building
- all the parents who returned PTSO and School volunteer forms

A Workshop for Parents

The CASE Collaborative is sponsoring a parenting workshop that is open to McCarthy-Towne parents. Occupational therapist Amanda Martinage will be presenting a workshop on "Applying Sensory Processing Techniques to Positively Impact Behavior" at the Ripley Building, 120 Meriam Rd, Concord on Thursday, October 23 from 7 - 8:30 PM.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Carole McCarthy by Oct. 16, 978-318-1536 or email cmccarthy@colonial.net.

Superintendent Search Committee

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committees are looking for parents, staff and community members to join the Superintendent Search Committee. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please forward a letter of interest to Suptsearch@mail.ab.mec.edu by October 3, 2008. Throughout the process we will also hold forums for public input. Questions can be directed to Heather Harer at 978-263-0793.

Scrip Gift Card Program

Thanks to all the families that ordered Scrips in the month of September. We are already off to a terrific start this year, raising almost \$350 for our school.

The October orders are due on **Wednesday, October 15th**. This Scrip program is a great way for your family to help the school raise money, without doing anything different. Just shop as you normally would on a regular basis, but instead of paying with cash or credit card at checkout, pay with your gift cards.

Attached is a list of participating merchants in our area. Order forms are also available on our website, <http://mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip>. Please note the specials for the month are in bold on the order form. **Please note a new merchant—The Container Store.**

Please contact Lynne Densen at lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978.266.2952 or Maureen Jones at maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978.266.2874 with any questions. The November Scrip deadline will be November 19th and the December Scrip deadline will be December 11th.



Photo Wall

from the office

The McCarthy-Towne School creates a display of student and staff photos from the School Photos. Students are displayed in class groups with their name. The display is usually on the Bulletin Board in the hallway near school office and health office. Students enjoy looking at the photos of their classmates and friends.

If there is any reason why you DO NOT want your child's photo included in the hallway display, please notify the school office in writing.

Dismissal During the School Day

from the office

If you are picking up your child during the school day, please send in a Dismissal Form indicating what time the child will be dismissed and who the child will be dismissed to (parent or other adult.) The form is available in the school office and on the school website. We will call your child to the office when you or the designated adult comes to the office to them out. Students WILL NOT be called to the office until they have been signed out.

Executive Functioning Seminar

Is your child having a rough start to the school year? Come and join the ABPCC (Acton Boxborough Parents of Children with Challenges) for one of our next two upcoming day meetings. Due to parent request, we will be splitting our morning meetings this month into separate age groups. **The first meeting on October 15th** will focus on children from preschool through 5th grade. **The second meeting on October 24th** will be geared toward children from 6th through 12th grade. We are hoping to be able to focus on the individual issues that are more pertinent to each grouping in order to best support each other. Please join us! Both meetings start at 9:30 AM at ABRHS room 131E.

We are also pleased to announce Kalyani Krishnan will give a presentation on **Executive Functioning on October 29th at 7:30 PM in the R.J. Grey Library**. Kalyani will speak to parents about the challenges faced by children who struggle with executive function weaknesses. She will provide a brief theoretical perspective to help parents understand the source of their children's difficulties and will discuss a range of strategies and solutions. She will take questions so come with your queries and concerns. Our follow up morning meeting will be held on **November 14th at 9:30** at ABRHS room 131E to discuss this among ourselves.

Kalyani Krishnan is a Language and Learning Specialist at the Institute for Learning and Development in Lexington MA (www.ildlex.org). She provides comprehensive evaluations, weekly educational therapy to students and consults with teachers, parents and schools to maximize outcomes for all types of learners.

Finally, on **November 20th at 7:30 PM** in the Parker-Damon Library, we will hold another presentation on the topic of **Siblings of Children with Special Needs** to discuss how the everyday lives of siblings and families are affected by living with a child with challenges. Dr. Le Clair from Children's Hospital will be giving us some insight and strategies to deal with this significant issue within many of our home lives.

The primary goal of our support group is to connect parents with others confronting similar issues. By sharing concerns, experiences, resources and ideas with each other, we strive to form a community of parents who can provide mutual support and comfort. Please join us! For further information on our group, contact Francesca Ricciardi at fmr08@verizon.net or Lynn Armstrong at lynn.armstrong2@verizon.net.

McCarthy-Towne School – OCTOBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	NO SCHOOL Columbus Day	McT Student Council Meeting 8:15 AM	Community Assembly Scrip orders due PTSO Meeting, 7 PM	NO SCHOOL Yom Kippur	NSTAR "Change a Light Fundraiser" orders due BOX TOPS due	Get a Clue Costume Party 7:30 PM
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	NO SCHOOL Columbus Day	McT Student Council Meeting 8:15 AM	Community Assembly Scrip orders due PTSO Meeting, 7 PM	NO SCHOOL Yom Kippur	NSTAR "Change a Light Fundraiser" orders due BOX TOPS due	Get a Clue Costume Party 7:30 PM
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Family Photo Day (rescheduled) 8:30 AM–3 PM Fall Clean-Up, PDB 10 AM–1 PM	School Picture Retake Day	Early Dismissal, No PM Kindergarten	Community Assembly Scrip orders due PTSO Meeting, 7 PM	BOOK FAIR Multi Purpose Rm.	Fall Social 6-8 PM BOOK FAIR Multi Purpose Rm.	
26	27	28	29	30	31	NOVEMBER 1
	BOOK FAIR Multi Purpose Rm.	Early Dismissal, No PM Kindergarten	Early Dismissal, No PM Kindergarten	PDB Phys. Ed. Back-to-School Night 6:30-8 PM	HALLOWEEN	
NOVEMBER 2	NOVEMBER 3	NOVEMBER 4	NOVEMBER 5	NOVEMBER 6	NOVEMBER 7	NOVEMBER 8
		★ VOTE ★ NO SCHOOL Professional Development Day	McT Student Council Meeting 8:15 AM		November McT Bulletin in backpacks	

Attendance at School: Should I Keep My Child Home with this Illness?

from Betty Johns, McT School Nurse

Fever

Fevers are generally a sign of illness/infection. Your child should stay home if his/her **TEMPERATURE is 100° F or above**. He/she should not return to school until their temperature has been normal (97°–99° F) for at least 24 hours.

Cold, Cough, Sore Throat

Most children can attend school with cold symptoms as long as they do not have a fever. If your child has a **cold with a fever over 100° F**, he/she should be kept at home and your health care provider should be consulted. Your child should also **stay home if they have greenish nasal discharge or cough production**. **A sore throat with a fever, swollen glands, headache, stomachache, or rash may indicate strep**. You should consult your child's doctor for evaluation. If strep is confirmed, your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics, if they feel better.



Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea

A child with **vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept at home until symptoms have resolved for at least 12 hours**. Your child also needs to be able to eat and drink normally before returning. Consult your doctor if you suspect dehydration.

Red Eyes

Your child should stay home if he/she has **red eyes that itch and/or have a crusty discharge**. Consult your doctor for evaluation of possible conjunctivitis. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

Pain

Earache: Consult your doctor if your child complains of ear pain.

Toothache: Consult your dentist.

Headache: If headaches are frequent you should consult your doctor. Dehydration, stress, and fatigue can cause a headache.

Rash

A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to medication, plants, or chemicals such as soaps or detergents. If your child has **an unusual rash or it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor**.

Tips to Stay Healthy

- Good hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.
- Give your child a separate towel and washcloth.
- Change your child's toothbrush after an illness and every 3 months.
- Have your child examined annually by her/his health care provider.
- School age children require at least 8–10 hours of sleep each night.
- A healthy diet is important in creating a healthy student.
- Please call your school nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

And remember, a sick child belongs at home!

LOOKOUT FOR LICE!

A Guide for Prevention and Treatment of Head Lice

from Betty Johns, McT School Nurse

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny, wingless, elongated insects that are tan to grayish-white, but may take on a reddish-brown color after feeding on their host. They are about the size of a small sesame seed, and their six legs have claws for grasping hair. They cannot fly nor can they jump. Head lice, which have a life span of about 30 days on a host, are parasites that feed on human blood. The lice bites cause itching, which is often the first sign of infestation.

A female louse lays 100 or more eggs ("nits"), which hatch in 7-10 days. Nits are oval or teardrop shaped, and may be colored yellowish-brown, white, or silver. They are quite tiny, about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Lice attach nits at an angle to the side of a hair shaft with a water-proof, cement-like substance; therefore, nits cannot be washed or brushed out of hair like dandruff or other debris.

HOW ARE HEAD LICE SPREAD?

Head lice are most often spread through close contact with an infested person or by sharing personal items such as hats, clothing, combs and hair accessories. Not surprisingly, head lice can be spread in schools among play-mates. Because head lice can survive for 24-48 hours off of a human host, they also can travel through coats and hats that are hung or piled together. Also, head lice can remain undetected on upholstered furniture, stuffed toys, pillows, and bed linens.

HOW DO I CHECK FOR HEAD LICE?

Because head lice move so quickly, they are difficult to see, so the diagnosis of infestation is usually made on the basis of finding nits. Nits are barely visible to the naked eye. It can be especially difficult to see nits in light-colored hair. It may be helpful to use a magnifying glass to search for them. It is also essential to use a bright source of light, with natural sunlight being optimal. Comb carefully through the hair, looking for nits. Pay close attention to the back of the head, nape of the neck, and behind the ears. Nits are most commonly clustered in these areas, but examine the entire scalp. In rare, severe cases, nits may be found in eyebrows and eyelashes. Nits are usually found close to the scalp, about 1/4" to 1/2" away, but they can be found at any distance along the hair shaft, attached securely.

CAN HEAD LICE CAUSE INFECTIONS?

In general, head lice do not pose a human health risk. In some severe cases, excessive scratching can cause infections in children. These infections can cause swelling of lymph glands around the head, especially behind the ears and on the neck.

TREATMENT

- Treatment must be directed toward the infested person AND his/her personal articles.
- ALL family members must be checked and, if found to be infested, also treated. Males, as well as females, can be infested. Hair length does not matter (other than for ease of nit removal).
- The environment must be decontaminated.
- Rechecks are essential to control infestation and reduce the possibility of reoccurrence.

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WHAT DO I DO WHEN I FIND LICE OR NITS?

- STAY CALM!
- Contact your child's health care provider for their treatment recommendations.
- Following the recommended treatment method, remove remaining nits with a fine-tooth comb designed for nit removal. Continue to check for and remove nits DAILY for the next two weeks.
- Wash all clothing, bed linens, and other washable articles that have been in contact with the infested person using water that is at least 130 degrees F. Use the hot dryer cycle.
- Non-washable items can be left in a sealed plastic bag for two to three weeks.
- Soak combs and brushes in hot water for 10 minutes.
- Report all cases of head lice to the school nurse. You should also notify the parents of your child's close playmates. Don't be embarrassed; head lice are NOT a sign of uncleanliness.

PREVENTION

- Warn your child not to leave clothing items in piles at school or at after-school activities.
- Instruct your child not to share clothing, hairbrushes, etc. with friends.
- Tie back or braid long hair.
- Check your child's hair and scalp WEEKLY throughout the school year. This may take up to 30-45 minutes, but it will become routine. It is much easier to treat a mild infestation than when lice have been living on your child's head for weeks!
- Check your child's hair when you receive a lice notification from his/her classroom, then return the notice to school.

WHAT CAN I DO TO AVOID REINFESTATION?

- Recheck for reinfestation 7-10 days after the initial treatment, and treat again if necessary.
- Recheck all family members whether they were infested or not during the next two to three weeks.
- Remember to treat the home environment. Vacuum rugs and upholstered furniture, mattresses and car seats as needed to remove loose hairs and nits. Clean clothing, bed linens as outlined under treatment. Be sure to clean combs and brushes.

HEAD LICE PROCEDURE OF THE ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS

Like many school systems, the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Schools have a "No-Nit" procedure recommending that students have no nits in their hair in order to attend school. This increases the likelihood that the child is truly rid of the infestation.

IMPORTANT!

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to report all cases of head lice infestation and reinfestation to their child's school nurse immediately.

Only then can steps be taken to prevent increased transmission within the school environment. These steps include:

- Notification of parents/guardians of the presence of lice in the classroom.
- Individual head checks.
- Classroom decontamination following environmentally sound procedures.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Your school nurse or personal health care provider can give you more resources about head lice. There are helpful web sites, videos, articles and books that they can recommend and/or lend to you.