

Once a **Week** take a **peek**

**Schools and families can work
together to fight head lice**

SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Get your school to join the
crusade against head lice
by putting the *Once a Week,*
Take a Peek campaign
into practice.



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Head Lice – Together We Can Fight Them!

Head lice are a normal part of childhood and school life with an estimated 8% of children infected at any one time. The 'Once a Week, Take a Peek' campaign is aimed at educating parents about the need to check their children's hair regularly for lice as a normal part of their family's personal hygiene routine and then to take swift action should any be found. Although the emphasis is very much on parents taking responsibility and action, there is still a real and valuable role for schools to play in keeping head lice infestations to a minimum.

A Primary School Project - why not replicate in your school?

Objectives

A pilot project involving a primary school was launched to put the Once a Week, Take a Peek concept to the test. It involved the school working in partnership with its parents to help:

- Increase awareness of the need to regularly check for head lice
- Create a sense of partnership between the school and its parents in the crusade against head lice
- Normalise the topic of head lice and decrease the sense of stigma associated with it

Logistics

The pilot campaign ran for a period of three months and involved:

- Announcements about the launch of the project and its progress being made to the parents via letters from the head, within the school newsletter and at parent evenings
- Once a Week, Take a Peek posters being put up around the school and the local community, including pharmacies
- Once a Week, Take a Peek leaflets being distributed to all parents
- School children being informed about the campaign to ensure they felt involved in the campaign
- Text alerts being sent by the school to the parents to help remind them to check for head lice 'once a week' and to inform them of an outbreak in their child's particular class (when reported by a fellow parent)



School Text Alerts

Three quarters of the parents that took part in the 'Once a Week, Take a Peek in action' campaign at the primary school and found the text messages sent out by the school - to help remind them to check for head lice once a week and to inform them of an outbreak in their child's particular class – very useful. Setting up a text alert system at your school could not be simpler – just follow these simple steps:

- The school sends out a letter informing parents that a text message system is being launched
- Parents who wish to receive the text alerts send back a slip providing their name, their mobile number, their child's name and the child's class number
- The school send out text message alerts to parents to inform them about an outbreak of head lice in their child's class
- The school send out text messages twice a term to remind parents to Once a Week, Take a Peek
- The text alerts can be sent out from a normal mobile phone (text messages can be purchased in bundles from service providers in order to keep the costs to a minimum)
- It is advisable to save the mobile numbers of the recipients into groups for each class in order to allow targeted messages to be sent following an outbreak
- The text messages should be clear and concise e.g. 'head lice found in your child's class - please take a peek at your family's hair and use an appropriate treatment if you find live lice' OR 'support the crusade against head lice by remembering to once a week, take a peek'



Results

The project proved a huge success. Parents were surveyed before the start of the campaign and again at the end of the campaign and key results were as follows:

- 88%** felt better informed about head lice treatment and prevention as a result of the project
- 77%** believed outbreaks of lice had been reduced due to this initiative
- 74%** of parents now checked their children's hair at least once a week
- 80%** check their children's hair more regularly than before the campaign
- 77%** of parents now felt more confident about dealing with head lice
- Just **3%** still felt embarrassed if their child got head lice

