



Head Lice Control Policy

Purpose

Water-Oak Football & Cheer is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and respectful environment for all athletes, coaches, volunteers, and families. This policy establishes procedures for preventing the spread of head lice while minimizing unnecessary disruption to participation and protecting the privacy and dignity of affected athletes.

Philosophy

Water-Oak Football & Cheer follows the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which recognize that head lice are a nuisance but are not a public health emergency and do not spread disease.

An athlete diagnosed with head lice will not automatically be excluded from participation. Instead, prompt treatment, parent communication, and appropriate follow-up measures will be implemented to reduce the risk of transmission.

Prevention

Water-Oak Football & Cheer encourages the following preventive measures:

- Athletes should avoid sharing helmets, hats, hairbrushes, combs, towels, hair accessories, or other personal items.
- Long hair should be tied back whenever practical during practices and games.
- Helmets should only be worn by the athlete to whom they are assigned.

- Families should routinely inspect their child's hair, particularly if lice have been reported within the household, school, daycare, or another activity.
- Equipment will be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Identification

If a coach, athletic trainer, team parent, or Board member observes signs that may indicate head lice, the athlete will be discreetly referred to a designated Board member or Coach for evaluation.

Water-Oak Football & Cheer personnel are not medical professionals and do not diagnose medical conditions. Parents will be notified if live lice or suspected lice are observed.

Parent Notification

If live lice are identified:

- The parent or guardian will be notified privately as soon as reasonably possible.
- The athlete will be encouraged to be removed from practice and/or events for the remainder of that day's activities.
- Parents are expected to begin treatment before the athlete returns to the next scheduled football or cheer activity.

Return to Participation

An athlete may return after:

- Appropriate treatment has been initiated; and
- The parent or guardian confirms treatment has been completed prior to returning.

Water-Oak Football & Cheer does **not** maintain a "no-nit" exclusion policy. The presence of nits alone will not prevent participation.

If live, active lice continue to be observed after treatment, the organization may request additional treatment before continued participation.

Confidentiality

The privacy of affected athletes and families will be respected at all times.

- Names of affected athletes will not be shared with other families.
- Coaches and volunteers shall avoid identifying or discussing affected athletes publicly.

- Communication will focus on education and prevention rather than identifying individuals.

Team Communication

When a confirmed case of head lice is reported, the organization may notify families on the affected team that a case has been identified without naming the athlete.

The notification will encourage parents to:

- Check all household members.
- Begin treatment promptly if lice are found.
- Continue monitoring for approximately two weeks.

Cleaning Procedures

Because head lice survive only a short time away from the scalp, extensive environmental cleaning is generally unnecessary.

Reasonable precautions include:

- Cleaning shared equipment as appropriate.
- Laundering towels or fabric items used by the affected athlete if applicable.
- Avoiding unnecessary chemical sprays or fumigation.

Responsibility of Parents

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Routinely checking their child's hair.
- Beginning treatment promptly if lice are found.
- Informing the Head Coach and/or Cheer Coordinator/Football Commissioner if their child has been diagnosed with active head lice.
- Completing recommended treatment before the athlete returns.

Questions

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the President of Water-Oak Football & Cheer.