**Preventing and Managing Lice**

By Ginger Hao, Licensed School Nurse

Dear Yinghua Families,

The beginning of winter, with increased indoor playing amongst children, is a good time to start checking your children regularly for lice. Because lice is always around in the community, experts recommend **checking your children weekly for lice**, especially young children who tend to play close together with other children. We suggest establishing a routine, such as after bath time, or every Sunday evening.

Although it is not possible to completely protect your child from getting lice, it is possible for parents to find lice early. Research shows that without regular checks, lice is often not discovered until 3-4 weeks after exposure. However, if parents regularly screen and find lice earlier, it makes treatment easier. I have included some basic facts about lice and how to screen your child. Remember, screens **should be done weekly** or any time you think your child may have been exposed.

Below are some important things to remember about lice:

* **Lice is always around in a community**, including Yinghua Academy. Just like a cold, someone always has lice. Research says usually 3-5% of students at any elementary school have lice. Although desirable, **it is impossible for a community (or school) to be 100% lice free.**
* Research shows that lice are **RARELY** caught at school, only about 10% of the time.The **most common places** that a child may get lice is at a sleepover, from family members or other people in the same household, or when spending a lot of time with another child with lice, **with their heads very close together**. Occasionally, lice can travel from one child to another on hairbrushes, scrunches and fuzzy hats.
* Lice do not live off a child’s head for more than a few hours**. S**o ***places*,** like school, or houses, or even pets, **do not spread lice.** Only a person with lice can give lice to someone else.
* **If the school knows** of a child with lice, the school nurse will help the family with the proper treatment. There are many different treatment options, including over-the-counter treatments and professional lice removal companies. You can also ask your doctor for recommendations.