**Bed Bugs in Schools**

*Guidance for Administrators, Teachers and Staff*

Bed bugs can hitchhike into your school creating challenges for administrators, teachers and facility managers. Education and preparation are the formula for success in dealing with bed bugs. Learn what your school can do to prepare and respond to the bed bug challenge.

### Develop a Plan

Develop a school-specific written bed bug action plan in advance of any problems. It should include specific procedures and responsibilities for responding to bed bug sightings, incidents, and suspected bites. Proactive monitoring, early detection, and prompt response can avoid larger, more costly problems.

A school is not an ideal place for bed bugs, but it can serve as a hub for their travel to other locations, including homes.

### Things to Avoid

- Over reacting - a sighting does not necessarily mean an infestation.
- Closing school - there is usually no need to close the school or to send students home.
- Stigmatizing or excluding students who you suspect may have brought bed bugs to school.
- Immediate pesticide applications - pesticides may not be needed to achieve control, so review your school’s pest control program and work with your pest control provider.

### Students and Bed Bugs

- Discreetly take students to the school nurse for inspection of their clothing and belongings.
- School health professionals should manage the case, including re-inspecting belongings, desks and classrooms until the problem is resolved.
- Isolate student belongings in tight-sealing containers or plastic bags in the nurse’s office to reduce the chance of bed bugs spreading while the problem is being resolved.

### Identification is Key!

**Actual Size**

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### Let Parents and Guardians Know

- The school recognizes there is a national bed bug resurgence, and the district has a bed bug action plan.
- They play an important role in keeping the school bed bug free.
- They should advise the school if bed bugs are found in their home.

### Pesticides used in schools must:

- Comply with state and local IPM and pesticide notification laws/regulations.
- Be applied only by appropriately licensed applicators.
- Be labeled for use against bed bugs and applied according to label directions.
Management

- Use control tactics consistent with your school’s integrated pest management plan and state/local regulations.
- Vacuum to remove bed bugs from cracks and crevices in furniture, equipment, walls, and floors.
- Put items in a dryer at high temperature for 30 minutes to kill bed bugs.
- Use other non-chemical approaches to eliminate bed bugs such as steam or heat treatment, sanitation, and trapping.
- If pesticides are needed, ensure that they are labelled for use against bed bugs, applied according to label directions by a licensed applicator, and that your school complies with all state pesticide laws.

Prevention

- Avoid storing students’ jackets, backpacks, and other personal items in close contact with each other.
- Limit items students transport back and forth to school.
- Regularly reduce the classroom clutter and remove cardboard.
- Store teaching aids in clear, lidded boxes.
- Seal crevices and utility conduits.

Inspection

- Use a strong flashlight and magnifying glass when conducting bed bug inspections.
- Regularly inspect clothing, backpacks, boxes, lockers, and desks.
- Have rooms with repeated bed bug sightings inspected by a pest management professional or other trained staff.
- Check faculty lounges, offices and the nurse’s office, as spaces with upholstered furniture or cots may become infested.
- Pay close attention to child care facilities, nap areas, and handicapped equipment - these may be bed bug hot spots.

School Response Flowchart

(adapted from Michigan Bed Bug Working Group)

Bed bug found in/on:

Student’s clothing or belongings

- Discreetly bring student to school nurse
- Examine clothes and belongings
- Collect specimen

- Notify student’s parents
- Send home educational materials

- Encourage parents to treat for infestation
- Provide educational assistance

If instances are repeated, enlist appropriate social agencies

Classroom/Environment

Trained pest management professional inspects for bed bugs

Evidence of infestation at home

- Follow IPM plan and treat for infestation
- Notify staff and parents of findings and treatment

No evidence of infestation at home

Maintain vigilance

Evidence of infestation

Investigate for other sources

No evidence of infestation

Learn more at epa.gov/bedbugs