

RESPONSE ^{TO} BED BUGS IN SCHOOLS



DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



As more and more homes are infested with bed bugs, the bugs may be carried by students or staff into schools. The issue of bed bugs in a school can be emotional and generate anxiety in parents, students, and school staff. Successful control is difficult because the locations of bed bugs are unpredictable since there are no sleeping areas where bed bugs concentrate. This protocol includes guidelines to help schools deal effectively and reasonably with a bed bug incident.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Do not overreact. Typically, one or a few bed bugs hitchhike into the school on clothing, book bags, and other possessions, and then wander looking for a host or another hiding place. A breeding infestation of bed bugs in a school is rare.
- There is no need to close the school or to send students home.
- Do not allow untrained staff to apply insecticides to control the bed bugs. Widespread insecticide applications are not necessary.
- Avoid stigmatizing students whom you suspect have brought bed bugs to school from home.

BE PROACTIVE

- Develop a written “bed bug action plan” in advance of problems being identified with specific procedures and responsibilities for responding to a bed bug incident.
- Educate teachers and staff on:
 - Basic bed bug biology and habits.
 - How to recognize bed bugs, and their evidence.
 - Their responsibility and roles regarding bed bugs and school response.
 - Actions to reduce the risk of bed bug spread.

RESPONDING TO A BED BUG INCIDENT

- If bed bugs are found in a classroom or other location, do the following:
 - Get specimens, if possible, for professional identification.
 - Check the surrounding area thoroughly for more bed bugs, and then arrange for an inspection as soon as possible by an in-house or outside pest management professional.
 - Consider the use of a certified bed bug scent detection canine team to locate all bed bug sites.
 - Map out bed bug sightings and confirmed findings.
 - Use control tactics consistent with school IPM guidelines and regulations.
 - Include nonchemical approaches such as steam treatment, cleaning and vacuuming, heat treatment, reducing clutter, trapping and monitoring.
 - All areas that have been serviced for bed bugs should be inspected and monitored until no more bugs have been found for at least two months.

STUDENTS AND BED BUGS

- If a bed bug is found on a student or on a student’s belongings it suggests, *but does not prove*, that the student may be living in a home with bed bugs.
- Students suspected of having bed bugs should be discretely removed from class so a school nurse or other authorized staff member can check for bed bugs in clothes and possessions. (Bed bugs are very seldom found on the body.)



- If bed bugs are confirmed, the student's parents should be notified.
- Provide guidance to student families who are known or suspected of having bed bugs.
- When bed bugs have been confirmed in a classroom, the school's administration should consider notifying the parents of other students in the same class, or even of the entire school.



bed bug on skin



For students in classes that have been experiencing problems with bed bugs consider regularly inspecting clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, lockers, desks, and even school buses.

BED BUG PREVENTION

- For students in classes that have been experiencing problems with bed bugs consider regularly inspecting clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, lockers, desks, and even school buses.
- Provide information to all parents on bed bugs, the importance of eliminating bed bugs at home, guidance for choosing a pest control company or requesting service from landlords, and how to avoid bringing the bugs to school.
- Reduce clutter. Avoid storing jackets, backpacks, and other personal items in close contact with those of other students.
- Encourage students to limit the items they take to school.
- Encourage students to store school supplies in protective boxes at home and not near beds or couches.
- Consider a dedicated commercial dryer or heating unit to selectively disinfest clothes, backpacks, and other items suspected of harboring bed bugs or eggs.
- If bed bugs are a common problem in the school, the pest management professional may recommend passive or active monitoring or periodic inspections, possibly including the use of a certified canine bed bug scent detection team.

For detailed information on bed bugs, control options, guidance on working with professionals or to find a local pest management professional, please visit www.pestworld.org.