



Bed Bugs in Schools

Guidance for School Nurses



Managing bed bugs can be a major challenge for any school. School nurses are often called upon to provide vital information to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. These tips on identifying, managing and preventing bed bugs will help you to effectively respond if bed bugs appear in your school.

If You Think You Have Spotted a Bed Bug

- Collect and keep it intact for proper identification.
- Discreetly remove the student from class but do not send him/her home or exclude them from school.
- Check the student's clothing and belongings for possible bed bugs.
- Inspect the area around where the bug was found.

Have a Positive Bed Bug ID?

- Oversee the case until the problem is resolved.
- Tell the child's parents about the bed bug sighting.
- Provide the student and parents with information on bed bug control.

What to Tell Parents

- Having a bed bug infestation does not mean their home isn't clean.
- A true bed bug infestation is unlikely in the school.
- It is not necessary for the school to close because of bed bugs.
- Students should limit the items they bring to school.
- Students should store school supplies in protective boxes at home and not under or near beds or couches.

Successful Bed Bug Management

- Uses a combination of strategies such as prevention, inspection, vacuuming, steam/heat treatment, and, if needed, pesticides.
- Recognizes that pesticides alone may not eliminate bed bugs.
- Involves placing clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least 30 minutes to kill any bed bugs.
- May include professional steam or radiant heat treatments.



Bed Bug Hot Spots in Schools

- Student and staff closets, lockers, coats and backpacks.
- Faculty lounges, classrooms or other areas with upholstered furniture or cots.
- Dormitories or other sleeping areas.

Finding a confirmed bed bug on a student or their belongings may not mean their home or school is infested.

Learn more at epa.gov/bedbugs

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

Evidence of infestation at home

- Encourage parents to treat for infestation
- Provide educational assistance

If instances are repeated, enlist appropriate social agencies

No evidence of infestation at home

Investigate for other sources

Classroom/Environment

Trained pest management professional inspects for bed bugs

Evidence of infestation

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

No evidence of infestation

Maintain vigilance