

Indian River School District

Bed Bug Procedure

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, it may develop into an itchy welt similar to a mosquito bite. Bed bugs do not transmit disease, but they can cause significant itchiness, anxiety, and sleeplessness. Bed bug infestations are also very difficult and expensive to control. Usually, bed bugs will hide during the day and only come out to feed during the night. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person. However, they can “hitchhike” from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, luggage, books, and other items.

What if I find a bed bug on a student?

If a bed bug is found on a student, it may indicate that the student has bed bugs at home. However, bed bugs can crawl onto or off of a person (or their belongings) at any time, so it is also possible that the bed bug was brought to school by someone else. If a suspected bed bug is found on a student or a student’s belongings, the following procedures should be followed:

- The student should be discreetly removed from the classroom so that the school nurse or a qualified individual can examine the student’s clothing and other belongings. Any bugs found should be removed and collected for identification. Try to keep the specimens as intact as possible.
- If a confirmed bed bug was found on a student, then the school principal or nurse should contact the student’s parents or guardian to inform them of the bed bug presence on their child. Educational materials, such as those available at <http://www.michigan.gov/bedbugs> should also be provided to the family.
- Students should not be excluded from school due to bed bugs unless repeated efforts have been made to remedy an infestation. Schools should not be closed due to bed bug presence. If pest management is necessary, it will normally be targeted to certain areas of the school.

What can I do to eliminate bed bugs from my classroom?

- DO NOT allow untrained staff to apply pesticides on school property. By law, only IPM trained applicators can apply pesticides (even ready-to-use products like sprays) in schools and in compliance with the school’s IPM plan.
- Backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can also be inspected daily and sealed in plastic garbage bags to prevent bed bugs from getting into them at home.
- Hard surfaces can be cleaned with standard cleaning products.
- If bed bugs have been found repeatedly in a particular classroom, the room will be inspected by a pest management professional or other trained staff.

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What if one of my students has an infestation at home?

When a student is dealing with an infestation at home, it is important to be sensitive to his/her problem. Although bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status, there is still a stigma that can come with having bed bugs. As a result, parents may be hesitant to admit to having bed bugs, and students may not want others to know they have an infestation at home. Students living in an infested home may also feel anxious or tired during the school day. Schools should work with the parents of any student living in an infested home to develop strategies for preventing the further spread of bed bugs.

- Determine if the infested home is being treated. Home remedies and do-it-yourself treatments are usually insufficient and could cause negative health effects or produce potential hazards in the home.
- If a parent lacks the financial resources to hire a pest management professional, they should contact Delaware Health and Social Services. <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/>
- In an infested home, parents should store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are put on in the morning. This prevents bed bugs from hiding in the clothing and being carried to school.
- Backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can also be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers at home to prevent bed bugs from getting into them. In instances of extreme infestation, students may be limited in the items they are allowed to bring back and forth to school. Occasionally, two sets of textbooks may need to be issued: one for home and one for school.
- At school, the student could be provided with plastic bags or bins in which to store their belongings in order to prevent any bed bugs from spreading to other students' belongings. Schools could also require students to change into clean clothes upon arrival at school and place the original clothes in a hot clothes dryer for at least 30 minutes.
- Continue to use these measures until successful treatment of the home has been verified.

Resources

Bed Bugs: What schools need to know. Michigan Bedbug Working Group (May 2010)

Michigan Bed Bug Resources <http://www.michigan.gov/bedbugs>

Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force <http://centralohiobedbugs.org/>

Model IPM Plan for Michigan Schools http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mda_A_Model_Integrated_Pest_Management_Policy_for_Michigan_Schools4_130114_7.pdf