

Bed Bugs Go to School

A Guide for Teachers and Staff



Bed bugs can hitchhike into your school creating challenges for administrators and facilities 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.

Educate Everyone

Bed bugs are brought into buildings on personal belongings. Anyone can bring in bed bugs. The key is to educate the entire school community by teaching the administration, maintenance and custodial staff, faculty, support staff, students and parents about:

- Basic bed bug biology, identification and habits;
- Roles and responsibilities regarding bed bug control;
- The school district’s philosophy about being proactive on bed bug issues;
- Actions needed to reduce the risk of bed bugs spreading; and
- Who to contact with questions.



Bed Bug Life Stages

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.

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.

Responding to Bed Bug Incidents

- If bed bugs are found, avoid damaging them. Instead, catch and contain them with clear tape for expert identification.
- Get a positive ID as many insects are easily mistaken for bed bugs.
- Check the surrounding area for more bed bugs, then arrange for an inspection by a pest management professional.
- Have a trained professional inspect the area where the bed bug was found - including desks, floors, walls, and storage areas where student belongings are kept - to determine if you have an infestation or a lone bed bug.
- Map bed bug sightings and confirmed findings.

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.

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.



Prevention

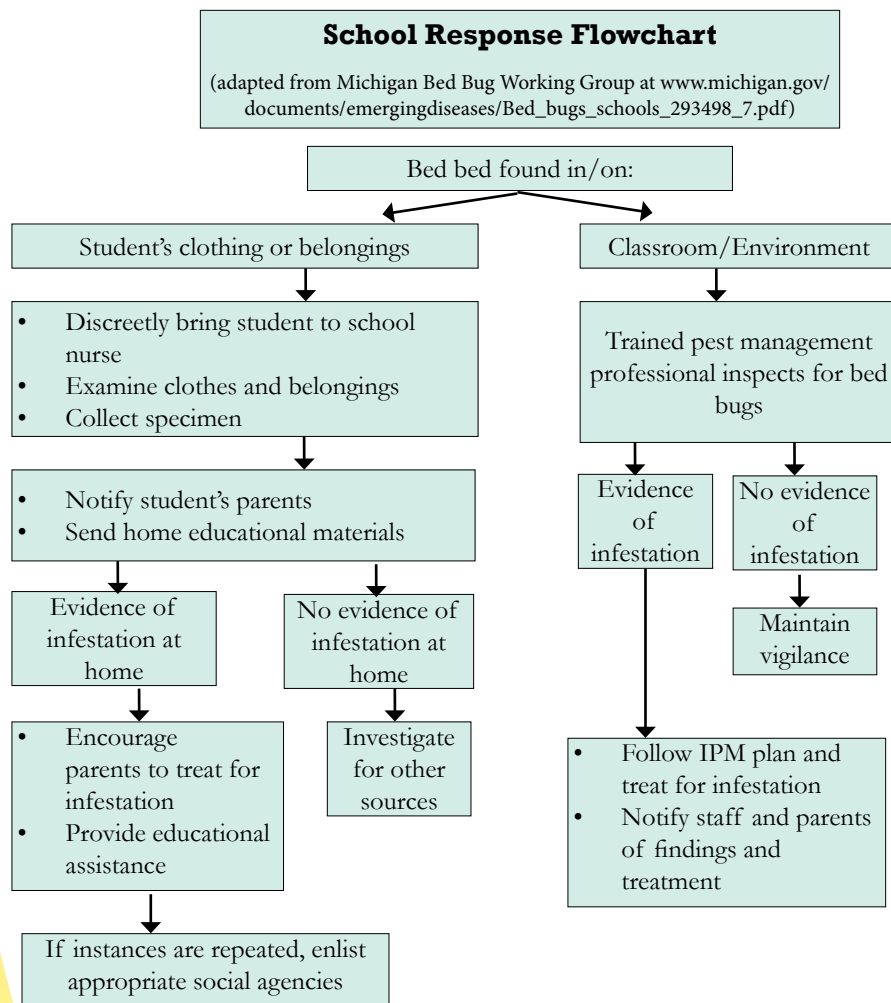
- Avoid storing students' jackets, backpacks, and other personal items in close contact with each other.
- Limit items students transport back and forth to school.
- Regularly reduce the classroom clutter and remove cardboard.
- Store teaching aids in clear, lidded boxes.
- Seal crevices and utility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

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.

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.



For more information go to www2.epa.gov/bedbugs