

**- H -**

**BED BUGS**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bed bugs are small, reddish-brown, flat insects that feed on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease. However, different people react differently to bed bug bites. Some people do not react at all, and others have severe allergic reactions. Depending on the student's immune response to bed bug bites, and the severity of the infestation, there may be a few, or many, welts on the face, torso, and limbs. The visible marks, and itchiness, may make the student very uncomfortable. Students may also display anxiousness, and/or sleepiness, due to interrupted sleep as a result of bed bugs biting them.

Actual bed bug infestations in schools are uncommon. 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. Occasionally, a few bed bugs will hitchhike from an infested staff member, teacher, or student's home on personal possessions, such as backpacks, clothing, books, and other items.

On the occasion that an infestation starts in a school, it will be because bed bugs have found a site where people rest or sit for a time. A common example of this is with the younger grades, or pre-school, where rest time or nap time still occurs.

It is important to remain vigilant for bed bugs in the school. Treating a bed bug infestation can be difficult and costly. The sooner an infestation is detected the easier it will be to control. In addition, there are steps that can be taken to prevent future infestations.

### **Procedure for Handling Identified or Suspected Cases of Bed Bugs**

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 a qualified staff person can examine the student's clothing and other belongings. It is important that any bugs found should be removed carefully without squishing, and collected for identification. The specimen can be put on a piece of clear tape, a plastic bag or container. Try to keep the specimen as intact as much as possible.
- The Principal should be notified and DCPS Custodial Services should be called (904-858-6310) to verify that the specimen is a bed bug.
- DCPS Custodial Services will determine the necessary response, following verification of the bug. Ongoing Integrated Pest Management (IPM), that includes the use of pesticides indoors, should be overseen by the school principal, or designee, and must conform to the school's integrated pest management plan. Students should not be excluded from school due to bed bugs unless repeated and unsuccessful efforts have been made to remedy an infestation. The principal will make that decision.

- If a confirmed bed bug is found on a student, the school principal, or designee, should contact that student's parent/guardian, to inform them of the bed bug presence on their child. The Bed Bug Guidance for Parents (Attachment H-I) should be provided to the parent/guardian, along with a parent/guardian notification letter (Attachment H-II).
- The school principal should consider notifying all parents or guardians in the affected class or classes (Attachment H-III).

### **Eliminating Bed Bugs from the Classroom**

- DO NOT allow untrained staff to apply any pesticides on school property (even ready-to-use products like sprays).
- If bed bugs have been identified, backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can be inspected daily and sealed in plastic containers to prevent bed bugs from getting into them at home until the problem has been resolved.
- Hard surfaces can be cleaned with standard cleaning products.
- If bed bugs have been found repeatedly in a particular classroom, have the room re-inspected by a DCPS Custodial Services professional.

### **Infestation at Home**

When a student is dealing with an infestation at home, it is important to be sensitive to their 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, the parent/guardian 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 parent/guardian 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 may be insufficient and could cause negative health effects or produce potential hazards in the home.
- The family may not be able to afford proper control measures or their landlord refuses to properly treat their home. If so, online resources are available at University of FL Extension Service: [http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/Bed\\_Bugs.shtml](http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/Bed_Bugs.shtml)
- In an infested home, the parent/guardian should store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are ready to be worn. This prevents bed bugs from hiding in the clothing and being carried to school.
- Isolate the student's belongings.
- Reduce the number of items that the student has to transport between school and home.

- In a discreet manner, regularly inspect the student's desk and/or locker for bed bugs.
- Avoid accumulation of clothes, shoes and boots in the classroom.
- 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.
- 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.
- Continue to use these measures until successful treatment of the home has been verified.

### **Preventing Bed Bugs in the School**

- To prevent a bed bug infestation in the school, be proactive.
- Educate all members of the school community.
- Provide educational materials to staff and parents/guardians.
- Explain what your school is doing to prevent and control bed bugs.
- Keep the facility clean and uncluttered. Bed Bugs are not associated with uncleanliness, but a clean facility makes it easier to detect bed bugs before an infestation is established.
- If students take naps at school, regularly wash the bedding in hot water and place in the dryer on the highest setting for 30 min. The same should be done for clothing items used in school, such as dress up clothes and theater costumes. This will kill all stages of bed bug development. Place items that cannot be washed in the dryer on the highest setting for 30 minutes.
- Keep all areas as uncluttered as possible.
- Regularly clean lost-and-found, sleeping areas, upholstered furniture, and wall mounted items (pictures, clocks, signs, mirrors, etc.).
- Regularly inspect the classrooms.