



BED BUGS

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

The Facts

Bed bugs have become a re-emerging problem in the United States due to increased international travel and resistance to commonly used pesticides. They do not transmit disease, but individuals who live in infested homes suffer from lack of sleep, anxiety and secondary skin infections resulting from the itching bites.

Bed bugs are very difficult to control and it's recommended that all infestations are handled by a licensed and trained professional who can develop an integrated pest management plan. Often multiple treatments are needed to effectively treat an infestation in the home environment. Bed bugs are not a factor of the cleanliness of the environment; they affect everyone equally.

Bed bugs are more likely to feed during the night-time hours and reside in places where people sleep. Therefore, infestations of school buildings are uncommon, although bed bugs may "hitch-hike" on a student's clothing, books or backpack from an infested home.

Schools, in conjunction with the State Entomology Lab and the Local Health Department, should develop a policy to minimize the spread of bed bugs. A review of publications suggests that schools take the following actions when dealing with a potential bed bug infestation in the home of a student or on the school property. It is **not recommended** to exclude students from school for an infestation in the home. School closure related to bed bugs is not recommended during an infestation.



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Inspection & Reporting

- If the bug is found on a student or his/her belongings, it is important to discretely remove the student from the classroom and examine the student's clothing and other belongings. Remember that it is possible the bug did not originate from the student's home and may have crawled from another student's items. Store the student's personal items in a garbage bag or plastic bin until the student leaves school.
- Collect any bugs found and send to the IDOH Entomology Lab or the Purdue University Entomology Lab for proper identification; many bugs closely resemble bed bugs. The bug should be kept intact and in a jar. Please do not submit the bugs attached to scotch tape. It is advised to place the jar overnight in the freezer to kill the bugs.
- Contact the parent/guardian of the student by telephone or through a notification letter to let them know a bug was found on the student's belongings and recommend a home inspection by a licensed professional.
- If bed bugs have been trapped or visualized in a classroom on multiple occasions within a short period of time, the school should call a licensed professional exterminator to inspect the classroom. A listing of licensed professional exterminators is available on the [Office of the Indiana State Chemist website](#).

Treatment & Prevention

- Only a trained professional, or someone under the direct supervision of a licensed professional, should perform the inspection and apply pesticide treatments to affected areas in the school building. A school administrator or nurse should oversee the implementation of the integrated pest management plan.
- It is unlawful to have students present in the area of the school while the treatment is being applied (357 IAC 1-16-1). Consider having the treatment applied after school hours.

Providing Education

- Provide education to the parent/guardians of students who have suspected infestations of the home information on the treatment of the bites, control of the infestation and the need to use professional exterminator service in the home. Template letters are available on the next page.
- Provide instruction on actions parents can take to reduce the spread of bed bugs to the school environment. This includes:
 1. Laundering items worn outside the home first with dry heat for 20 minutes followed by washing in hot water and drying again in high heat.
 2. Storing freshly washed clothing and other items taken daily to school, such as lunch boxes and coats in a sealed clear plastic bin or garbage bag until the student needs to take them outside the home. These items should be inspected for the presence of bed bugs daily.
 3. Routine cleaning of all hard surfaces with normal cleaning solutions.
- If the bed bugs were found in the classroom upon inspection, send notification to all parents/guardians and staff in the classroom or in the school signs of a bed bug infestation as well as the describe treatment plans for the classroom in advance notice of the pesticide application. Template letters are available from the Indiana Department of Health.



RESOURCES

[Bed Bugs: What Schools Need to Know](#)

Includes sample Parent Notification Letters

[CDC Bed Bugs](#)

[Controlling Bed Bugs at Home Brochure](#)

[EPA's Top Ten Bed Bugs Tips](#)

[IDOH Bed Bugs Brochure](#)

[IDOH Bed Bugs Fact Sheet](#)

