

Bed Bugs in Schools

Recommended procedures to follow if a bed bug is found:

If a bed bug is found on a child in school or child care center, it does not necessarily mean that child brought the bed bug into the school or child care center from home. Although bed bugs feed on people, they are not capable of transmitting diseases or infesting our bodies. However, bed bugs can crawl onto or off a person (or their belongings) at any time. If a suspected bed bug is found on a child, a child's belongings, or anywhere else at a school or child care center, the following procedures should be followed:

- If the bed bug was found on a child or a child's belongings, the child should be discreetly removed from the classroom so that the school nurse can examine the child's clothing and other belongings. Any bed bugs should be removed and collected for identification. Try to keep the specimens as intact as possible.
- The school principal or child care center director should contact the Alameda County Vector Control Services District for assistance in identifying the specimen(s). It is important to confirm that the bugs found really are bed bugs before proceeding.
- If the specimen is confirmed to be a bed bug, then the school principal, nurse, or director should notify the affected class or classes.
- If a confirmed bed bug was found on a child, then the child's parents or guardian should be contacted by phone. An inspection report should be sent home with the student, and completed promptly.
- In most instances, students should not be excluded from school or child care due to bed bugs. Schools and child care centers should not be closed due to the discovery of bed bugs. As discussed above, infestation of a school or child care center building is unlikely, rather the school or child care center may become a source of dispersal.

For children/students who repeatedly come to school with bed bugs, institute clothing and school item sanitation:

- 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.
- 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 student's belongings.