

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION: 300 - STUDENTS

CODE: AP 322

PROCEDURE: **BED BUGS**

BACKGROUND

The home of any person can be infested by bed bugs, regardless of race or economic status. Bed bugs prefer an environment where they can hide during the day and come out at night to feed on a sleeping host. Because most schools and institutional child care centers do not provide this type of environment, major infestations of school and child care center buildings are rare. However, bed bugs hiding in clothing or backpacks can hitchhike to and from school and child care centers, potentially providing a hub for bed bug spread. It is important to treat each child with dignity and respect when dealing with this issue.

Currently there is no scientific evidence demonstrating that exclusion policies are effective at reducing bed bug transmission in the school environment. What is encouraged and supported is for schools to develop a response plan based on the recommendation and management procedures outlined in this Administrative Procedure. These procedures would include:

1. Assist staff to identify bed bugs and the signs of bed bugs in the classroom and children's items. This may include actual insects, cast skins, or excessive insect bites on a child. (See *Resources*)
2. When a pupil with bed bugs is identified on their person or in their belongings, the pupil may remain in school. (See *Procedures to Follow if a Bed Bug is Found at School*)
3. Respond promptly to bed bug complaints within the school and through contact and counseling with parents/caregivers.
4. Parents/caregivers should promptly respond to bed bugs in the home for the health and safety of the family and school community.

PROCEDURES

1. Prevention

Bed bugs usually enter schools on the clothes or belongings of students, staff, volunteers, or visitors. While bugs may come from these individuals' homes, it is also possible they picked them up from classmates, transportation vehicles or some other source on their way to school.

What you can do to keep your school free of bed bugs:

- Reduce all clutter within a classroom and cloth furniture.
- Monitor backpacks, clothing, blankets and other personal items students bring into the school. Watch for any signs of bed bugs.
- Discourage families from sending blankets or stuffed animals with their children, if possible.
- Carefully inspect all second-hand or donated items for signs of bed bugs before they are brought into the school (e.g., books, stuffed animals, costumes, furniture). Lost-and-found items should also be routinely inspected.
- If you suspect bed bugs in clothing or cloth items, run them through the dryer for 20 minutes on high heat. This should kill all stages of bed bugs.
- When possible, keep each student's belongings separate by storing their coats, clothing, and personal items in individual lockers or cubby holes. Sealed plastic bags or containers can be used for extra clothing or cloth items.
- Vacuum daily, paying close attention to places bed bugs like to hide (e.g., along baseboards, around carpet edges). Dispose of vacuum bags / waste in an outside garbage container immediately after vacuuming.
- If bed bugs have been confirmed, contact the Maintenance Worker who will consult with the appropriate pest management resource.

2. Ensure all staff can identify bed bugs and signs of infestation.

School administrators should:

- Ensure all employees, including cleaning staff, are trained to recognize bed bugs and signs of infestation – both in the school and on students' items.
- Review this Administrative Procedure with all staff, emphasizing the key signs of bed bug infestation (e.g., discovery of actual insects, cast-off skins or droppings, excessive insect bites on students / others).
- Post bed bug fact sheets on school bulletin boards for students, visitors, and community users.

3. Procedures to Follow if a Bed Bug is Found at School

In the event that bed bugs are discovered in the school, the school response plan may be tailored to reflect the unique elements of the situation; however, it should align with the strategies suggested in this administrative procedure.

□ If a student is suspected of having bed bug bites:

- Immediately contact the student's parents / guardians and tell them they suspect their child has bed bug bites.
- Provide the family with educational materials. (See *Resources*)
- Search the school for any other signs of bed bugs.

- If a suspected bed bug is found on a student or in the school:
 - If the suspected bed bug was found on a student or his/her belongings, meet with the student privately, away from other students, so you can examine the student's clothing and personal items for bed bugs.
 - Any bugs found should be removed and collected for identification. Try to keep specimens as intact as possible and placed in a sealed container.
 - **Confirm that the insect is a bed bug before proceeding. If necessary, contact a licensed, professional exterminator or public health inspector to identify the bugs.**
 - If a confirmed bed bug was found on a pupil, then the principal should contact the student's parents or guardian to inform them of the bed bug presence on their child. Educational materials should be provided to the family.
 - If the specimen is confirmed to be a bed bug, the principal should notify the affected class or classes (*See Sample Parent Notification Letter for Schools*).
 - Pupils should not be excluded from school 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. This will be determined in consultation with the Maintenance Worker.
 - For students who repeatedly come to school with bed bugs, care for clothing and school item sanitation should involve:
 - a. At home, backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers or bags.
 - b. At school, the pupil could be provided with plastic bags or bins in which to store his/her belongings in order to prevent any bed bugs from spreading. Schools may want to suggest having a spare set of clothing sent for the child in a sealed plastic bag. If bed bugs are found, have the child change into the clean clothes and place infested clothes into the bag.

Other Options in Rare or Extreme Cases May Include:

- a. Notifying Child Protection Services in instances of suspected neglect.
- b. Notifying Public Health Inspection at Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Decisions to act through Children's Protection Services or Public Health Inspection should be a last resort. Every effort should be made to assist the family with control of bed bugs before taking this action.

If the procedures outlined above are unsuccessful, targeted intervention may be necessary:

1. This may include treatment of school facilities and property if an infestation is found in the school or on busses.
2. Investigative work may be required to figure out where repeated bed bug findings are originating. If a parent is or claims to be diligently dealing with an infestation and the pupil continues to come to school with bed bugs, there may be an alternative source or reason that the parents haven't been successful. Things to consider are:
 - a. Where the child spends time before school, after school, or with any family members. Any of these places could have an infestation and the child may be bringing bed bugs from this location or bringing them back home to the detriment of control efforts.
 - b. Cars and other modes of transportation can become infested. Inspect all the modes of transportation the child uses.
 - c. While bed bug treatment is ongoing, it is important to remain vigilant in keeping bed bugs out of clothing and personal items brought to school. Schools may want to suggest or require having a spare set of clothing sent for the child in a sealed plastic bag. If bed bugs are found, have the child change into the clean clothes and place the infested clothes into the bag.
 - d. In cases where tenant/landlord dispute is delaying effective treatment, parents should be directed to contact the local housing or bylaw enforcement.
 - e. In rare or extreme cases, a school may have to confront a situation where a parent or caregiver is incapable or unwilling to remedy a bed bug infestation in the home. These cases are difficult because a school must weigh several important factors:
 - i. Providing a healthy, pest-free environment for pupils to learn is a prime responsibility of the school.
 - ii. Providing a healthy, pest-free environment for staff is also a responsibility of school administrators.
 - iii. Repeated bed bug introductions by a pupil constitute a risk to other pupils and staff. While bed bugs do not transmit disease, they are a health issue because they are blood-feeding, human parasites. Once established in a home they can cause physical and psychological symptoms, and present a significant economic investment to eradicate. These facts are also true at the school level. Repeated inspections and potential treatment by pest management professionals, anxiety, frustration and lost instructional time on part of the staff, and administrative efforts constitute a serious cost both economically and in educational efficiency.

4. Resources

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/pest-control-tips/bedbugs-what-are-they.html>
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/environmental-health/bedbugs>

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 109, 175, 190, 231 Education Act
Date Issued: November 19, 2018

Sample Parent Notification Letter for Schools

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian:

This letter is to advise you that a bed bug was recently found in your child's class.

Bed bugs are small, brown wingless insects that feed on blood. Bed bug bites may look like red bumps or rashes on the skin and can be very itchy. These bites are usually found on the face, neck, upper body, arms, and hands. Bed bugs are a nuisance, but their bites are not known to spread disease. However, repeated scratching can cause secondary infections, and the rare person can experience an allergic reaction. If you have concerns for you or your child, please contact your doctor.

It is important to understand that having bed bugs does not mean the home, school, or public place is unclean or poorly kept. These bugs can travel on items like clothing, backpacks and lunchboxes, or can be picked up from many places including hotels, planes, and movie theatres. **As a precaution, we are asking parents to limit what students bring into the school (e.g., blankets, stuffed animals) and to thoroughly inspect all other belongings, such as backpacks and clothing, for bed bugs before your child leaves and/or returns from school.**

Even though it is unlikely for bed bugs to be spread in schools, Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division will conduct an inspection and, if needed, will treat the area to prevent any further occurrences in the school.

For more information on bed bugs, go the Saskatchewan government website at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/environment-public-health-and-safety/environmental-health/bedbugs>

If you have questions about bed bugs in the school, please contact me.

Sincerely,

(name of principal)