

SOUTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear South Allegheny Community,

After communication with the Center for Disease Control, Environmental Protection Agency, and multiple pesticide companies, I feel it is necessary to speak to how this concern will be addressed moving forward.

First, these are the steps that have been taken both times ONE bug was found in the middle/high school building.

- Outsourced and in house licensed pesticide control professionals treated and monitored areas. Please understand that these treatments have a lifespan of over two months, ensuring that any additional bugs would not survive.
- Traps have been in place throughout the building and no additional bugs have been found.
- The treatments implemented have always been and will always be what is allowed and regulated by law to be used in schools.

I feel confident in stating that there is not any type of infestation within our school buildings. Each time, there has been a single bug found and no additional bugs found on the day of treatment or after treatment, either in the building or in the traps. One bug is NOT an infestation. These bugs are being brought in from the outside, just as they can in a movie theater, mall, restaurant, office space, or other public area.

Moving forward, if a bug is seen in a classroom or any other area of the buildings within the District, we are asking that the following steps be taken:

- Notification of an adult immediately.
- The adult will contact an administrator and the bug will be collected for identification by a trained professional.
- The classroom or area will be closed for the remainder of the day, students and staff relocated.
- A determination will be made as to whether this is an isolated incident or an infestation, and the area will be treated properly upon student and staff dismissal so school can operate the next day.
- School WILL remain in session.

As a school community, we are asking for your help, as parents are partners in their child's education, and this includes helping us provide a safe place for our students to learn.

- Encourage your child to handle things in an appropriate manner. Taking a video or picture of a bug and posting it on social media instead of reaching out to an adult in the classroom or school so that we can immediately identify the problem is not appropriate and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Please check your child's belongings. Specifically check creases and crevices of book bags, purses, outerwear, or other areas where bed bugs can hide. Additionally, in your home, please check couch cushions, mattresses, and reduce clutter if possible, as it gives these insects more places to hide.
- If you know you have a problem in your home, please reach out to us. We will work with families to connect you with the appropriate services to assist in treating your home.

Please know that the District takes this very seriously, but will not cause unnecessary panic and disruption of the educational process occurring daily in our schools. We are on top of the situation, we will never put our staff or children in harm's way, and we are willing to assist our families in need in any way we can.

I have included additional documentation from the CDC and EPA that can be useful in educating yourself about bedbugs.

Yours in Education,

Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent



Bed Bugs in Schools Guidance for Administrators, Teachers and Staff

Bed bugs can hitchhike into your school creating challenges for administrators, teachers and facility 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.

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

- Overreacting - 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Bed Bugs FAQs

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat, parasitic insects that feed solely on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless, range from 1mm to 7mm (roughly the size of Lincoln's head on a penny), and can live several months without a blood meal.

Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bugs are found across the globe from North and South America, to Africa, Asia and Europe. Although the presence of bed bugs has traditionally been seen as a problem in developing countries, it has recently been spreading rapidly in parts of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe. Bed bugs have been found in five-star hotels and resorts and their presence is not determined by the cleanliness of the living conditions where they are found.

Bed bug infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people sleep. These areas include apartments, shelters, rooming houses, hotels, cruise ships, buses, trains, and dorm rooms. They hide during the day in places such as seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, dresser tables, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, or any other clutter or objects around a bed. Bed bugs have been shown to be able to travel over 100 feet in a night but tend to live within 8 feet of where people sleep.

Do bed bugs spread disease?

Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. Bed bugs can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.

What health risks do bed bugs pose?

A bed bug bite affects each person differently. Bite responses can range from an absence of any physical signs of the bite, to a small bite mark, to a serious allergic reaction. Bed bugs are not considered to be dangerous; however, an allergic reaction to several bites may need medical attention.

What are the signs and symptoms of a bed bug infestation?

One of the easiest ways to identify a bed bug infestation is by the tell-tale bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands, or any other body parts while sleeping. However, these bite marks may take as long as 14 days to develop in some people so it is important to look for other clues when determining if bed bugs have infested an area. These signs include:

- the bed bugs' exoskeletons after molting,
- bed bugs in the fold of mattresses and sheets,
- rusty-colored blood spots due to their blood-filled fecal material that they excrete on the mattress or nearby furniture, and
- a sweet musty odor.

How do I know if I've been bitten by a bed bug?

It is hard to tell if you've been bitten by a bed bug unless you find bed bugs or signs of infestation. When bed bugs bite, they inject an anesthetic and an anticoagulant that prevents a person from realizing they are being bitten. Most people do not realize they have been bitten until bite marks appear anywhere from one to several days after the initial bite. The bite marks are similar to that of a mosquito or a flea — a slightly swollen and red area that may itch and be irritating. The bite marks may be random or appear in a straight line. Other symptoms of bed bug bites include insomnia, anxiety, and skin problems that arise from profuse scratching of the bites.

Because bed bug bites affect everyone differently, some people may have no reaction and will not develop bite marks or any other visible signs of being bitten. Other people may be allergic to the bed bugs and can react adversely to the bites. These allergic symptoms can include enlarged bite marks, painful swellings at the bite site, and, on rare occasions, anaphylaxis.

How did I get bed bugs?

Bed bugs are experts at hiding. Their slim flat bodies allow them to fit into the smallest of spaces and stay there for long periods of time, even without a blood meal. Bed bugs are usually transported from place to place as people travel. The bed bugs travel in the seams and folds of luggage, overnight bags, folded clothes, bedding, furniture, and anywhere else where they can hide. Most people do not realize they are transporting stow-away bed bugs as they travel from location to location, infecting areas as they travel.

Who is at risk for getting bed bugs?

Everyone is at risk for getting bed bugs when visiting an infected area. However, anyone who travels frequently and shares living and sleeping quarters where other people have previously slept has a higher risk of being bitten and or spreading a bed bug infestation.

How are bed bugs treated and prevented?

Bed bug bites usually do not pose a serious medical threat. The best way to treat a bite is to avoid scratching the area and apply antiseptic creams or lotions and take an antihistamine. Bed bug infestations are commonly treated by insecticide spraying. If you suspect that you have an infestation,

contact your landlord or professional pest control company that is experienced with treating bed bugs. The best way to prevent bed bugs is regular inspection for the signs of an infestation.