



## *Bed Bug Information Sheet*

### **What are Bed Bugs?**

Bed bugs are small, flat, wingless insects with six legs that, just like mosquitos, feed on blood from animals or people. They range in color from almost white to brown, but they turn rusty red after feeding. Bed bugs are ¼ to 3/8 inches long. They get their name because they like to hide in bedding and mattresses. Unlike some other pests, bed bugs do not transmit or spread disease.

### **Movement of Bed Bugs**

Bed bugs have spread throughout the country and are present in communities regardless of housing, income level, or ethnicity of the population. Schools are not ideal places for bed bugs as they prefer to hide during the day and there are few people in the school at night when bed bugs feed. So, how do they come to school? They can get into schools in a variety of ways:

- From “hitchhiking” in on clothing, backpacks, computer bags, books, stuffed toys, lunch boxes, etc.
- From infested items (e.g. furniture, clothing) that have been donated or brought into school
- From those who have stayed at hotels, motels, and other residences or traveled on cruise ships, planes, etc.

Often, the school system will not know how the “unwanted pests” are introduced to the school environment.

### **Prevention Methods**

Bed bugs feed on people. They do not infest people. They are “hitchhikers”. They are very much like mosquitos, which feed and then move off the body to find shelter. The following are some prevention strategies which may be done weekly or more often as necessary:

- Encourage your child to empty their backpacks outside of the home and inspect all items as they are removed. Put the child’s backpack and coat in the dryer on **high** for 30 minutes to kill bed bugs and eggs.
- Vacuum floors and furniture regularly, discarding the vacuum bag when you are done directly to the outside.
- Encourage your child to keep backpacks and coats out of the bedroom and off the bed and couch.
- Encourage students to take homework assignments out on a table or desk, not the bed or couch. You can consider isolating backpacks in a sealed plastic bag or a sealable plastic container.
- Inspect mattresses for signs of bed bugs at home and when traveling

### **Treatment**

If there is evidence of bed bugs in your home, it is recommended that you call a professional pest control company. While bed bug bites are not typically serious, the sooner you address a potential infestation in the home, the more likely you will be able to eliminate the bed bugs completely.

Hampton City Schools will take action as soon as a bed bug has been identified. We will notify our licensed pest control specialist to inspect and treat. They will provide the school system with the appropriate pest control management plan to address the situation.

### **For More Information**

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/bedbugs/index.html>