

Pest management best practices for schools



Pest management is a partnership that begins with your school. To help protect your students, staff, and faculty from pests and reduce pest-related disruptions, follow these best practices. Call your pest management provider right away if you notice signs of pest activity.

CHECKLIST

General sanitation (applies to all areas)

- Clean up any food or beverage spills immediately
- Vacuum carpeted areas daily to remove food debris
- Consider shampooing/steaming carpets regularly
- To close gaps under doors leading to the exterior, install door sweeps
- Ensure that baseboards and baseboard coverings are attached to the wall securely
- Inspect corners and windowsills regularly for cobwebs; use a duster or vacuum to remove
- Use liners or garbage bags in all garbage cans
- Clean and sanitize garbage cans regularly (interior and exterior) to remove food residues and organic debris
- Empty trash cans daily to an exterior dumpster
- Have mandatory locker cleanouts and pest treatments a minimum of quarterly

Classrooms and modular classrooms

- Encourage teachers to keep any personal food items in sealed plastic containers
- If students store personal items in the classroom (coat closets, desks, etc.), have monthly cleanouts of the area and inspect for pest activity
- Keep closets neat and clean; to allow for pest inspection, do not store items on the floor
- Ensure that any windows opened for fresh air have screens in place

- Inspect modular classroom skirting monthly for gaps or damage; repair as needed
- If a classroom pet is present, keep any food in a sealed container and clean cages/aquariums regularly

Restrooms

- Remind students and staff to report plumbing issues right away
- Repair plumbing leaks, drips, or condensation and pooling water issues immediately
- Inspect pipes regularly for corrosion and repair if necessary
- Regularly clean and flush floor and sink drains to prevent small fly activity
- Escutcheon plate intact and flush/tight to the wall

Cafeterias or dining areas

- Mop floors daily; do not powerwash as this can damage flooring and floor wall juncture
- Thoroughly wipe down tables and chairs daily to remove food residues
- Do not keep food on serving lines overnight; refrigerate or throw away
- Clean fountain soda and ice machine drip trays daily and beverage nozzles weekly; have drain lines flushed regularly
- Establish good communication with any vending machine partners; have vending companies notify you of any pest activity in machines



Kitchens and food storage

- A minimum of weekly, use a bright flashlight to inspect under heavy equipment for food debris or trash that has fallen to the floor; remove if found
- Mop floors daily; do not powerwash, as this can damage flooring and floor wall juncture
- Vacuum and wipe down food storage shelves regularly to remove food debris/dust
- Store open food in plastic/glass storage containers
- Do not store any food items on the floor; ensure at least 6-inches of clearance to allow for thorough pest inspections
- Repair plumbing leaks, drips, condensation, or pooling water issues immediately
- Repair missing/damaged grout or floor tiles; food and moisture can accumulate and attract pests

Engineering, maintenance, or janitorial areas

- Have engineering and boiler rooms inspected during regular pest management service
- Regularly clean floor drains and flush any with p-traps to help prevent pest issues
- Seal gaps or holes around pipes
- Fix plumbing leaks, drips, condensation, or pooling water issues immediately
- Hang mops to dry
- Replace mop head when it becomes visibly soiled/dirty
- Empty mop buckets after use and fill with fresh water daily

Exterior

- Keep mulch pulled back away from the foundation of buildings
- If possible, replace mulch with egg rock
- Create an 18-inch space between the structure and any vegetation
- Seal cracks, crevices, holes, or gaps ¼-inch or larger
- Use pest-proof material to seal gaps or holes where pipes/cables enter the building

- Ensure that doors and windows that remain open have screens that are in good condition and are of adequate gauge (18 mesh/inch or smaller)
- Remove standing water; it can provide a breeding source for mosquitoes or water source for other pests
- Have gutters cleaned regularly to remove debris, leaves, or material to allow free-flowing drains and prevent leaks into the building
- Trim trees and vegetation away from rooftop; allow for at least 3 feet of clearance
- Have roof inspected for leaks and pest activity annually and following severe storms
- Inspect eaves regularly for signs of bird and stinging pest activity (nests, hives, etc.)
- Screen vents and access points to attics or voids to exclude insects, rodents, wildlife, bats, etc.
- Always use liners or garbage bags in garbage cans
- Ensure that all dumpsters and trash receptacles are in good condition, are cleaned and sanitized or replaced regularly, and have lids (consider self-closing lids for trash cans)
- Arrange for regular trash pickup; place all trash in dumpsters or cans, do not place directly on curb; consider increasing frequency of pickup in warm weather months
- Paint or stain wooden playground equipment to help prevent stinging pest activity
- Alert a pest management provider immediately if you notice mounds (ants, gophers) in areas where children play or are active
- Properly dispose of food or snacks in trash cans in outdoor areas; clean up or hose down food spills to prevent attracting pests
- Remove clutter from foundation of building
- Ensure storage or maintenance sheds are sealed tightly
- Modify exterior lighting to avoid attracting flying insects and spiders; change direction lights aim or swap bulbs for sodium vapor or LED lighting