WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Pest Control Policy

Introduction

Vermin is the general term applied to animal and bird species regarded as pests and especially to those associated with diseases. Certain parts of schools, for example, kitchens, food stores, and dining halls can provide ideal conditions for certain pests and vermin.
WMS is committed to providing a safe, clean environment for the children under our care.

What we already do:

- At WMS we practice high levels of hygiene in all areas
- We employ Kill and Cure Pest Control to check for signs of pests in and around the premises
- Any bins are emptied daily and children are encouraged to clear up any spilt food immediately
- All 'practical life' foodstuff is stored in sealed plastic tubs overnight
- We stop pests getting in with well-fitted doors and covered drains
- All staff look out for the evidence of the presence of pests including droppings, "chew-marks" on carpets and wiring, insect droppings and nests

Awareness of different types of Vermin and procedure on discovery

Ants
The commonest species of ant is the black garden ant. A highly organised and social insect, a colony will nest and include worker ants which are attracted to sweet food stuffs. Ants may cause contamination to food stuffs and preparation areas. Limited measures can be taken by staff, but professional pest control contractors should be brought in if large numbers of ants' nests are found. If ants are found in any area the following procedure must be observed:

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control, Harlow on 01279 319261
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once the pest has been eradicated deep clean the area. If professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

Bats

Bats may only be handled by those licensed to do so. They cause no direct harm though their droppings may cause problems with smell and insect infestations. European Bat Lyssavirus (EBL) is a rabies-like virus which infects insectivorous bats in Europe. It is very rare, but anyone exposed to EBL should be given prompt treatment (immunisation and immunoglobin) and will not develop the infection. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides protection for all species of bat found in the United Kingdom. It is illegal to kill, or even disturb, bats in their roosts. If Bats are found in any area the following procedure must be observed

- Quarantine the area
- Call Waltham Forest Environmental health.
- Follow their instructions
- Ensure area is deep cleaned before allowing people back into the area
- The Bat Conservation Trust, www.bats.org.uk, can be contacted if help is needed to remove injured or dead bats.

Bees, Wasps and Hornets

Honeybees live in colonies often greater than 30,000 in roof and wall cavities and hollow trees. They swarm in early Summer. They have a barbed sting and die once used but will sting when provoked. Untreated infestations can cause contamination of foodstuff, harm to mortar and building fabric and the threat of stings. Some people may experience anaphylactic shock on being stung and will require prompt treatment.
(see WMS Anaphylaxis Policy).
If Bees, Wasps or Hornets are found in any area the following procedure must be observed, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE NEST YOURSELF

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control, Harlow on 01279 319261
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once the pests have been eradicated deep clean the area. If professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner.

Bird Mites

Bird mite infestations in schools are rare but late Spring to early Summer is the most likely time for an infestation to occur as that is when birds are nesting. Infestation begins with mites from abandoned birds' nests finding their way into buildings and feeding on humans once the bird host is no longer a source of food. The mites survive well in a human environment, by biting people, when the original avian host is not available. However they need a bird host for long-term survival. A mature bird mite is only about 0.5 mm or less, and the immature mite is even smaller. Bird mites do not fly, however they are small and aggressive and when a host is detected, they can float down from the ceiling or other places to land on a new host. If staff and children transfer mites from the school to their home, the problems will be compounded.
Symptoms include:

- Pinprick bites with or without lesions

- Frequently intense itching of the skin
- Vague sensation of crawling on the skin
- Bite marks and lesions that heal very slowly

Bird mites can be an extremely difficult problem to eradicate even for commercial pest control companies, as they are an unusual infestation, and a specialist firm with experience in this area may be required. The Local Authority's Environmental Health Department and the Health and Safety Officer need to be informed and they should be able to recommend an approved specialist company to undertake the eradication. All potential original sources of the infestation need to be checked and cleared, for example removal of abandoned bird nests in the roof space and all entry points for birds should be sealed off to prevent future roosting. However, this in itself may not be enough as the mites can get everywhere, including carpets, clothing, curtains, walls, ceilings, cracks and crevices. Staff need to consider the potential risk of introducing bird mites to the classroom when using bird nests for display purposes on nature tables or for science lessons. If Bird Mites are found in any area, the following procedure must be observed

- Quarantine the area
- Contact the Environmental Health Officer on and the Local Health and Safety Officer Bear in mind, if the infestation is great, the school may need to be fully closed in order to allow for full fumigation.

Further information can be found at www.birdmites.org.

Cockroaches

There are two types of cockroach found in the UK; the Oriental cockroach and the German cockroach. Cockroaches will feed on almost anything from food to faecal matter. They are commonly found in kitchens and heating systems. They prefer warm moist conditions and they reproduce rapidly; a German cockroach can produce up to 240 eggs per month. They can spread bacteria and usually indicate that food preparation areas are not clean. Germs can be spread from the body of a cockroach or from their droppings. They can carry dysentery, gastroenteritis, typhoid and food poisoning organisms. Contamination occurs when the cockroaches come into contact with foodstuff. If cockroaches are found in any area the following procedure must be observed

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control on 01279 319261.
- Ensure any contaminated foodstuff is professionally disposed of, Kill and Cure Pest control will have relevant contact details
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once cockroach infestation has been eradicated, deep clean the area. If professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

Fleas

Fleas are external parasites, living off the blood of mammals and birds and include cat/dog fleas, human fleas and rat fleas. Beside the problems posed by the flea itself,

they can also act as a vector for disease, for example, fleas can transmit a variety of viral and bacterial diseases to humans and other animals. Fleas have helped cause epidemics by transmitting diseases such as the bubonic plague between rodents and humans by carrying bacteria. In the UK human fleas are rarely a problem (and can be cured by removal of infested clothing) but cat/dog fleas may cause considerable nuisance. A few adult fleas live on the animal host, while hundreds of eggs and larvae contaminate the pet's bedding and favourite resting places. The eggs are just visible to the naked eye as small, pearly-white round objects. Adult fleas require blood meals to survive (and the female needs a blood meal for her eggs) but can survive months without a feed. Cat/dog fleas are not thought to transmit any serious illness to humans but they can cause severe irritation. If fleas are found in any area the following procedure must be observed

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control on 01279 319261
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once pest has been eradicated deep clean the area. If professional cleaning is needed Nottingham Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

Mice

"House" mice are considered amongst the most troublesome and economically damaging rodents in the UK. They nest in the ground or in any protected location in nests constructed of shredded fibrous material such as paper. The female produces 5 to 10 litters per year, averaging five per litter. Mice contaminate foodstuff with their urine, droppings and fur. They can transmit diseases to humans, including:

- salmonellosis (food poisoning)
- lymphotic chorio-meningitis
- leptospinosis

Mice also chew cables and wiring which can cause short-circuiting and increase fire hazard. If mice are found in the school area the following procedure must be observed

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control on 0115 987 29683) Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected) Once pest has been eradicated deep clean the area, if professional cleaning is needed Nottingham Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

If Mice are observed outside the school area:

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Walthamstow environmental health .

Pigeons

Pigeons are well-adapted to urban environments and lack natural predators. They can carry psittacosis which can cause respiratory illnesses and flu-like symptoms in humans, if they are exposed to infected birds. Local authorities are empowered to control and destroy pigeons if they pose a threat to public health. Other measures can be taken to

prevent pigeons nesting such as wires on window sills and netting across open pathways and courtyards.
If pigeons are found to be nesting in the school buildings

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Walthamstow Environmental Health .
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once they have been eradicated deep clean the area, if professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

Rats

Common rats live in any situation that provides food, water and shelter. The common rat is the most widespread of its species and is widely found in urban and rural areas. In homes they will live in loft spaces, wall cavities, cellars or under floorboards. In gardens, they will burrow into compost heaps and grassy banks or under sheds. They are also commonly found living in sewer systems and rivers. Rats will eat or contaminate food intended for humans. It is estimated that up to five per cent of food produced world-wide is lost as a result of rodent activity. Their favourite foods are cereal products, although they will eat almost anything that humans eat. Rats can transmit several diseases to humans including Weil's disease which is a bacterial infection that attacks the kidneys and liver and can be deadly. It can be contracted after swimming in rivers or lakes as it is spread by rat urine found in river water and banks and it can be transmitted through cuts and scratches or the lining of the mouth, throat or eyes, after contact with infected rat urine or contaminated water. Cases of Weil's disease have been increasing in recent years, linked to winter flooding of the rats' habitat, followed by high summer temperatures. Teachers organising visits to places where there is a risk of transmission from contaminated water need to be aware of this and include it in their risk assessment.

If Rats are found in the building, the following procedure should be followed:

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Kill and Cure Pest Control
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once the rats have been eradicated, deep clean the area. If professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

If rats are noted outside the building:

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Waltham Forest environmental health

Squirrels

Grey squirrels were introduced in this country during the nineteenth century. They now occupy most of the mainland of England and Wales. They are resident in woodland as well as urban parks and gardens. The main threat from squirrels is that they enter roof spaces and chew woodwork, strip insulation from wiring and water pipes and drown in open

water tanks causing contamination. Professional vermin control contractors should be employed to deal with squirrels. Preventative measures should also be taken such as blocking gaps and entry holes with wire mesh and ensuring frequent inspection of roof spaces.

If squirrels are found in the school building

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Waltham Forest pest control
- Ensure that the surrounding areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Once squirrels have been eradicated deep clean the area, if professional cleaning is needed Kill and Cure Pest control can assist with the current competent cleaner

Foxes

Foxes are increasingly seen in urban and suburban areas as well as rural areas. They are primarily carnivorous and are highly effective scavengers, finding plentiful waste in towns and cities. The law prevents the use of poisons or illegal traps or snares to control foxes and it is illegal to shoot them in urban areas. Foxes can carry toxocariasis, a parasitic roundworm which can be passed to humans. Infection is extremely rare and only affects around two people per million in the UK each year. Fox faeces may contain bacteria which can cause sickness in humans, so faeces should not be directly handled. Fox dens are established in January/February for cubs born in March. If a fox den is found in school grounds:

- Quarantine the area
- Contact Waltham forest environmental health

Further information can be found at:

British Pest Control Association (www.bpca.org.uk)
NUT Briefing on vermin control (www.teachers.org.uk/help-and-advice/ health-and-safety/v/vermin-and-pest-control
Environmental Health (www.ehjournal.net)

Date Last Reviewed: 14th September 2026

Date to be Reviewed: 14th September 2027