



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY (NPHA)



Address: 42A Main Motor Road, Wilberforce, Freetown

Contact: (+232) 73-906300/33-906200

Email: info@npha.gov.sl | Website: www.npha.gov.sl

Advisory to Schools on Mpox Prevention and Preparedness

Freetown – 1st September, 2025

For Immediate Circulation to Heads of Schools, Teachers, Parents, and Pupils and the Public

As schools reopen, it is vital to protect children, teachers, and staff from the risk of mpox transmission. The National Public Health Agency, Ministry of Health, in collaboration with education authorities, issues the following guidance to support safe school reopening and continuity of learning:

Key Actions for Schools

Health Education and Awareness

Teachers and school health clubs should share simple National Public Health Agency and Ministry of Health provided age-appropriate information about mpox—what it is, how it spreads, and how to prevent it. Encourage open discussions to address fears, stigma, and misinformation. Reinforce that anyone can be infected—no child or staff should be blamed or discriminated against.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Ensure soap, clean water, or hand sanitizers are always available, and encourage frequent handwashing. Clean classrooms, toilets, and shared items (desks, sports equipment) regularly. Discourage sharing of personal items such as towels, clothing, and bedding, especially in boarding schools.

Detection and Referral

Watch symptoms of fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, followed by a rash. Pupils or staff with these symptoms should stay home and seek care at the nearest health facility or call 117. If symptoms develop while at school, immediately separate the pupil or staff in a safe, well-ventilated area, inform parents/guardians immediately, and contact the nearest health facility or call 117. Schools should have a clear referral pathway and maintain regular contact with local health officials for updates and support.

Preparedness in Boarding Schools

Identify a temporary isolation space for suspected cases while awaiting referral. Ensure safe handling of laundry, bedding, and personal items of unwell pupils.

Protective Measures for Staff

Provide basic protective items (masks, gloves) for staff assisting unwell pupils or cleaning areas used by them.

School Organization and Monitoring

Designate a focal teacher or health officer in each school for mpox awareness and monitoring. Maintain an attendance and illness log to detect unusual absences or illness clusters quickly. Ensure focal staff receive orientation from local health teams on detection, safe handling, and reporting.

Parent and Community Engagement

Encourage parents to report immediately if their child or a household member is suspected or confirmed to have mpox. Share information through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), notice boards, and meetings. Remind parents to reinforce hygiene practices at home and keep unwell children away from school.

Support and Reintegration

Offer psychosocial support and anti-bullying guidance to students and staff returning after illness.
Reinforce messages of care, acceptance, and community responsibility.

Vaccination (Where Available)

Encourage eligible staff and families to seek mpox vaccination, according to Ministry of Health guidance.

Communication in Emergencies

Schools should have a clear communication flow with education supervisors and local health teams for timely reporting and feedback.

In the event of suspected cases, follow National Public Health Agency and Ministry of Health instructions immediately.

Reminder

Healthy children learn better. Preventing mpox in schools requires vigilance, cooperation, and timely action from everyone—teachers, parents, health workers, and students alike.

Brig. Gen. Prof. Foday Sahr
Executive Director



Media Contact: Harold Thomas -Risk Communication Lead/Health Education Manager Ministry of Health
health.education@mohs.gov.sl Phone: +232 766 024 60