



### Human Monkeypox (MPX) Interim Guidance for Schools

MPX is an illness that can cause a rash, and (in some patients) flu-like symptoms. MPX spreads between people through direct contact with an infectious rash, body fluids, touching objects, fabrics, and surfaces that have been used by someone with MPX, or from exposure to respiratory droplets (such as mucus, spittle, snot, etc.) during prolonged face-to-face contact. A person is contagious until the rash/lesions have completed healed and a new layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks. The virus can survive on surfaces/objects in the environment for as long as a month without proper cleaning and disinfection.

### Preventing the Spread of Infection

School staff should be on the lookout for MPX among staff and students, and implement the following strategies to prevent spread within school settings:

- **Monitor staff and students for the presence of new, unexplained rash or lesions<sup>1</sup>** (other than acne or other chronic skin conditions such as eczema<sup>2</sup>). Instruct them to seek medical care and return with a doctor's note including alternative diagnosis (e.g., hand, foot, and mouth).
- **Encourage staff and students to stay home if ill** and maintain supportive sick leave protocols for staff and absentee policies for students to support this. Other symptoms of MPX may include fever, headaches, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion, and respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough).
- **Ensure access to handwashing.** Soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should be available and its use encouraged. Always wash hands before eating or touching your face. Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, playing sports, or handling sporting equipment. Place visual cues such as [posters](#), [fact sheets](#), and [stickers](#) in highly visible areas throughout the school.
- **Limit sharing of personal items.**
  - Do not share eating utensils, cups, or food.
  - Do not share bedding, towels, or clothing.
  - Do not share personal items such as razors, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, or personal athletic items.
- **Clean and disinfect** surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of spreading germs. Additionally, schools should follow recommended procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection. See: [Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings](#).

### Managing Potential Exposure

Although the risk is low, if a staff member, volunteer, or student has a MPX infection, transmission could occur within the school setting.

- **Contact your local health department<sup>3</sup>** to report any suspect or confirmed cases and discuss next steps for managing potential spread within the school.
- **Communicate with staff, volunteers, and parents.** Provide information about the potential exposure, guidance for monitoring for signs and symptoms, and when to seek medical attention if symptoms develop.

<sup>1</sup> Monkeypox rash photos: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/symptoms.html>

<sup>2</sup> Eczema rash photo: <https://phil.cdc.gov/Details.aspx?pid=16526>

<sup>3</sup> See list of local and regional health departments here: [Local and Regional Health Departments \(tn.gov\)](#)

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- **Exclude from school** any persons with MPX until symptoms have gone away, the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed (typically 2-4 weeks). A provider letter stating that the person is approved to return may be considered.
- **Watch for new symptoms in staff or students that were exposed.** Consider requesting daily confirmation from staff and parents/students that they are free from symptoms and rashes.
- **Ensure access to handwashing.** Soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should always be available to staff, volunteers, and students. Anyone who touches rash/lesions or clothing, linens, or surfaces that may have had contact with rash/lesions should [wash their hands](#) or use hand sanitizer immediately.
- **Clean and disinfect the areas where people with MPX spent time as the virus can survive on surfaces for weeks.** Avoid activities that could spread fluid, drainage, or material from rash/lesions (e.g., use of fans, dry dusting, sweeping, shaking of blankets, or vacuuming) in these areas. Use an [EPA-registered](#) disinfectant, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Follow all directions for use, including concentration, contact time, and care and handling. When choosing a disinfectant, it is important to consider any potential health hazards, and do not mix disinfectants or add other chemicals. Linens can be laundered using regular detergent and warm water. However, soiled laundry should be gently and promptly contained in a laundry bag and never be shaken or handled in a manner that may spread infectious material. Linens should be bagged and sent home for laundering by the family if they belong to students.
- **Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for custodial staff.** Employers are responsible for ensuring workers are protected from exposure to MPX virus and workers are not exposed to harmful levels of chemicals used for cleaning and disinfection<sup>4</sup>. PPE should be worn by staff in these circumstances:
  - **Laundry** — When handling dirty laundry from people with known or suspected MPX infection (e.g., gym towels) staff should wear a disposable or launderable gown, disposable gloves, eye protection, and a well-fitting face mask. PPE is not necessary after the wash cycle is completed.
  - **Cleaning and disinfection** — Staff should wear a disposable or launderable gown, disposable gloves, eye protection, and a well-fitting face mask when cleaning areas where people with MPX spent time.

## Learn More

- CDC MPX Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>
- CDC Guidance for Schools, Early Care and Education Programs, and Other Settings Serving Children or Adolescents: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/schools/faq.html>
- Disinfection: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/home-disinfection.html>
- Prevention at Home: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-home.html>
- Information for teens: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/pdf/MPOX-info-teens-young-adults.pdf>

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<sup>4</sup> Employers must comply with OSHA's standards on Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#)), PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132](#)), Respiratory Protection ([29 CFR 1910.134](#)), and other requirements, including those established by state plans, whenever such requirements apply.