



August 24, 2022

Dear Superintendents and School Administrators:

Thank you for all you have done over the past few years to keep schools safe and open. Your partnership has been vitally important, and we look forward to continuing our work together to keep Georgia's students healthy. With the recent emergence of monkeypox in Georgia, I wanted to take the opportunity to provide some resources to you as we know you will eventually receive questions in your community.

Currently, the risk of monkeypox to children and adolescents is low. This virus and its mode of transmission is different than COVID-19. Covid is an airborne disease and so can be transmitted relatively easily in the school setting. By contrast, monkeypox requires very close, prolonged, skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox. Most cases of monkeypox nationwide, and in Georgia, have been associated with sexual or intimate skin-to-skin contact. For these reasons, in-school risk of transmission in schools is extremely low. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released information for schools available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/schools/faq.html>

We have become aware of some confusion about the expected procedures for schools as it relates to suspected monkeypox cases among students, teachers, or staff. If you are made aware of confirmed or suspected cases within your schools, please notify your District Public Health office to get appropriate advice about next steps, risks of exposure, and to ensure the health department can perform appropriate contact investigations. Communication about confirmed and suspected cases and coordination of follow-up with parents and staff should be carried out in partnership with your District Public Health office.

We are here to serve as a resource for your schools for all health issues, and we can only be successful if we work together. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner & State Health Officer