

Better hygiene in schools in Ebola epicentre pays off: UN

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Better hygiene in schools in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea—the epicentre of the Ebola epidemic—has dramatically cut infections among teachers and students, the UN said on Wednesday.

Some five million children in the three west African countries had their studies disrupted as schools were closed from July last year until January, the UN children's agency said.

"There have been no reported cases of a student or teacher being infected at a [school](#) since strict hygiene protocols were introduced when classes resumed at the beginning of the year," a UNICEF statement said.

But it added that in Liberia, two schools had to be decontaminated as a precaution after a student died in June and another was infected in July.

"The massive effort that went into making schools as safe from Ebola transmission as possible appears to have paid off," said Geoff Wiffin, the UNICEF representative in Sierra Leone.

"Children learned in school how to protect themselves and others from Ebola, and they passed on those messages to their parents and their communities. This played an important role in the battle against the epidemic."

The measures developed by UNICEF and its partners include taking the temperature of children and staff at the school gate and installing hand

washing stations. They also involved the distribution of millions of bars of soap and chlorine.

Ebola has claimed around 11,300 lives since late 2013. More than 99 percent of these occurred in the three west African countries, according to the World Health Organization.

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