

# A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF

*Willow Avenue Elementary School*

## Lead Testing of School Drinking Water

*March 8, 2024*

Safe and healthy school environments can foster healthy and successful children. To protect public health, the Public Health Law and New York State Health Department (NYSDOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. Revisions effective March 22, 2022, reduce the lead action level in drinking water from 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 5 ppb. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 5 parts per billion (ppb)<sup>1</sup>, which is equal to 5 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ), the NYSDOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

### *Rule of Thumb<sup>2</sup>*

- Any outlet in a room or office within a school not used by students (pre-kindergarten through grade 12), for drinking or cooking, does not require sampling. An example is custodial storage closest dispensing cleaning chemicals
- **Lavatory Sinks:** Toilet rooms and bathrooms are building environments that can present unique challenges to water portability. These challenges are reflected in various code provisions that prohibit the installation of drinking facilities, drinking fountains, water coolers, and water dispensers within toilet rooms and bathrooms. NYS DOH would not object to designating these outlets as not applicable where controls (e.g., education and signage) exist to prevent the consumption of water. "Handwashing Only, Not for Drinking" signs have been posted
- **Dishwashing outlets:** If an outlet is designated for dishwashing only and involves no opportunity for drinking or cooking including food preparation, the outlet does not require sampling.
- **Science/Art sinks:** Classrooms in these settings prohibit eating and/or drinking. The sinks within these rooms are not for drinking or cooking. "Handwashing Only, Not for Drinking" signs have been posted.
- **Classroom sinks:** If the outlet is used for drinking and/or cooking, it must be sampled. However, if the school has controls in place to prevent the consumption of water, Superintendents or their designees have the discretion to exclude these outlets from sampling and include them in the Remedial Action Plan.

### **What is first draw testing of school drinking water for lead?**

The "on-again, off-again" nature of water use at most schools can raise lead levels in school drinking water. Water that remains in pipes overnight, over a weekend, or over vacation periods stays in contact with lead pipes or lead solder and, as a result, could contain higher levels of lead. This is why schools are required to collect a sample after the water has been sitting in the plumbing system for a certain period of time. This "first draw" sample is likely to show higher levels of lead for that outlet than what you would see if you sampled after using the water continuously. However, even if the first draw sample does not reflect what you would see with continuous usage, it is still important because it can identify outlets that have elevated lead levels.

### **What are the results of the first draw testing?**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Sampling Dates</i>	<i>Results PPB</i>	<i>Summary of Results</i>
<i>Kitchen Sink</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	
<i>Kitchen Sprayer</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	
<i>Cafeteria Sink</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>Passed EPA; Results fails NYS standards</i>
<i>Cafeteria Bottle Filler</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	
<i>Cafeteria Bubbler</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	
<i>Faculty Room Sink</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Passed EPA; Results fails NYS standards</i>
<i>Bottle Filler: 1930: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Gym Door</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	<i>Filter: None Detected</i>
<i>Drinking Fountain: 1930: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Gym Door</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	<i>Filter: None Detected</i>
<i>Bottle Filler: 1930: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Security Office</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	<i>Filter: None Detected</i>
<i>Drinking Fountain: 1930: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Security</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	<i>Filter: None Detected</i>
<i>Room 1: Nurse's Office Bubbler</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	
<i>Room 2 Classroom Sink</i>	<i>2/23/2024</i>	None Detected	<i>Kindergarten</i>

<sup>1</sup> Action Level lowered from 15 ppb to 5 ppb. Revisions to the Public Health Law (PHL) Section 1110 went into effect on December 22, 2022

<sup>2</sup> *New York State Department of Health Lead Testing in School Drinking Water Program Guidance Manual; November 6, 2023*

Room 2 Bubblers	2/23/2024	None Detected	Kindergarten
Room 3 Classroom Sink	2/23/2024	None Detected	Kindergarten
Room 3 Bubblers	2/23/2024	None Detected	Kindergarten
Bottle Filler: 1973: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Area 10	2/23/2024	None Detected	Filter: None Detected
Drinking Fountain: 1973: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Area 10	2/23/2024	None Detected	Filter: None Detected
Room 114 Classroom Sink	Not in Service	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	
Room 116 Classroom Sink	Not in Service	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	
Library Bottle Filler	2/23/2024	None Detected	Filter: None Detected
Library Bubblers	2/23/2024	None Detected	Filter: None Detected
<b>“Non-applicable outlets”</b>			
Hallway Sink Outside Room 9	Hand Washing Only	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Hallway Sink Outside Room 12	Hand Washing Only	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Art Room Prep Room Sink (Ground Floor)	Science/Art sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Art Room Sink	Science/Art sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Book Room Bathroom Sink	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
P.E. Office Sink	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Boys’ Gang Bathroom Sink #1 1973 Wing	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Boys’ Gang Bathroom Sink #2 1973 Wing	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Accessibility Bathroom Sink O/S Room 9	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Girls’ Gang Bathroom Sink #1: 1 <sup>st</sup> (1930)	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Girls’ Gang Bathroom Sink #2 1 <sup>st</sup> (1930)	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Room 1: Nurse’s Office Sink	Tempered Outlets	Touch Free	Posted: Do Not Drink
Room 1: Nurse’s Office Bathroom Sink	Tempered Outlets	Touch Free	Posted: Do Not Drink
Faculty Bathroom Sink: 1 <sup>st</sup> 1930 #1	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Faculty Bathroom Sink: 1 <sup>st</sup> 1930 #2 (Window)	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Security Office Sink	Hand Washing Only	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Security Office Bathroom Sink	Lavatory Sinks	Posted	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Library Bathroom Sink (Unisex) 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1930	Lavatory Sinks	Replaced 2023	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only
Library Bathroom Sink (Staff) 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1930	Lavatory Sinks	Replaced 2023	Posted: Do Not Drink; Hand wash Only

### What is being done in response to the results?

Outlets that tested with lead levels above the action level (5 ppb) were removed from service, unless an outlet is a sink faucet needed for handwashing. In that case, a sign was posted at the outlet indicating that the sink is not to be used for drinking. Outlets that tested below the action level remain in service with no restrictions.

Location	Immediate Action	Remediation
Cafeteria Sink	Handwashing Only	Review
Faculty Room Sink	Handwashing Only	Review
Room 114 Classroom Sink	Not in Service	Test once repaired
Room 116 Classroom Sink	Not in Service	Test once repaired

Water Fountain and sink faucets requiring replacement, as part of the remediation plan will be retested after installation; all other locations will follow the Department of Health guidelines and are scheduled for retesting in the year 2027.



### What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under 6 years old. Lead can harm a young child’s growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

## **What are the other sources of lead exposure?**

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

## **Should your child be tested for lead?**

The risk to an individual child from past exposure to elevated lead in drinking water depends on many factors; for example, a child's age, weight, amount of water consumed, and the amount of lead in the water. Children may also be exposed to other significant sources of lead including paint, soil and dust. Since blood lead testing is the only way to determine a child's blood lead level, parents should discuss their child's health history with their child's physician to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. Pregnant women or women of childbearing age should also consider discussing this matter with their physician.

## **Additional Resources**

**For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results,** contact John Pinckney at (845)534-8009, ext. 5228, or go to our school website: [www.cornwallschools.com](http://www.cornwallschools.com)

**For information about lead in school drinking water, go to:**

[http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead\\_testing\\_of\\_school\\_drinking\\_water.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead_testing_of_school_drinking_water.htm)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/LeadTestinginSchoolDrinkingWater.html>

**For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to:**

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

**For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":**

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).