

## Parent Letter Template

The following sample letter is provided for use when communicating information about the lead testing program in your school's drinking water. This letter is not required to be used but serves as a guide for completing the public notice required under 10 NYCRR Subpart 67-4.

Note: Schools should modify sections in italic using their own words to cover the subject.

# A NOTICE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, and STAFF

*[Insert school name]*

## Lead Testing of School Drinking Water

*[date]*

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 (NYS DOH) regulations require that all public schools and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) test lead levels in water from every outlet that is being used, or could potentially be used, for drinking or cooking. If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 5 parts per billion (ppb), which is equal to 5 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ), the NYS DOH requires that the school take action to reduce the exposure to lead.

### 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?

*Provide information/status of what has been done to date, including, but not exclusive of Sampling locations (e.g., building names, room numbers) and dates, and laboratory results.*

*Example:*

| Samples Collected on <i>mm/dd/yyyy</i> |                  |          |                     |                |
|--|------------------|----------|---------------------|----------------|
| Floor                                  | Function / Space | Room     | Fixture Type        | Sample Results |
| 01                                     | Hallway          | Near 107 | Drinking Fountain   | 2 ppb          |
| 01                                     | Classroom        | 107      | Cold Water Faucet 1 | 15 ppb         |
| 02                                     | Girls Lavatory   | 207      | Cold Water Faucet 3 | 8 ppb          |

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

*Insert information on remedial actions completed/planned, and retesting and future testing plans (e.g., next event).*

*If appropriate, add the following language:*

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.

### **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 exposure 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, including but not limited to, 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** [\_\_\_\_\_ at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ ], or go to our school website: *[insert link to school website]*

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

[https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/lead\\_testing\\_of\\_school\\_drinking\\_water.htm](https://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 DOH Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, 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/> (English)

[https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/education\\_materials/index.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/education_materials/index.htm) (available in ten languages).