THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**KELLY M. LYMAN, SUPERINTENDENT**

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**Mansfield, CT 06268**
**Phone: (860) 429-3350**

February 12, 2019

Dear Vinton Families,

I am writing to update you on the status of our optimal corrosion control treatment plan since previously notifying you of elevated lead levels found in a faucet at Vinton School. Environmental engineers completed a thorough plumbing profile of the south wing which confirmed that the lead is primarily emanating from the plumbing and fixtures within each individual classroom.

As plumbing replacement is an acceptable form of remediation by the US EPA, we have submitted our proposal to replace internal plumbing and fixtures to the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health for review and approval. We are planning to replace the internal piping for the south wing during the upcoming holiday break. Once the pipe replacement is complete, additional samples will be collected.

The south wing is the only area of Vinton School that was shown to have elevated levels of lead in the water. Until complete remediation can be confirmed, water use in this wing is restricted to handwashing only and bottled water will remain available for drinking.

Attached please find a copy of the public lead notice that was sent to you on January 14, 2019. You can see a copy of all of our water testing results at the school district's central office which is open Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. For more information about water quality and sampling for lead at home, contact your local water supplier or state drinking water agency.

Sincerely,

Kelly M. Lyman
Superintendent of Schools

Encl. (1)

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

Annie E. Vinton School *found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.* Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L).

## What Happened? What is being done?

Under State and Federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education. We are currently conducting additional monitoring and reviewing treatment options to correct the situation. We are also required to replace the portion of each lead service line that we own if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb after we have completed the comprehensive treatment program.

This brochure explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation please call 860-429-3322.

## Health Effects of Lead

*Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.*

## Sources of Lead

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food, and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead can also be found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry.

Drinking water is also a possible source of lead exposure. Most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%. Homes built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes or lead solder.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead. EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

## Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water

Despite our best efforts mentioned earlier to control water corrosivity and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. To find out whether you need to take action in your own

home, have your drinking water tested to determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead. Testing the water is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water. For more information on having your water tested, please call 860-429-3322.

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, then you can take the following precautions:

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer water resides in your home's plumbing the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15-30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time, perhaps one minute, before drinking. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of your home's plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the tap, and whenever possible use the first flush water to wash the dishes or water the plants
- **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not to cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Lead can dissolve more easily in hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Clean and flush faucets.** Periodically remove the faucet strainers from all taps and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time by running the water for 3 to 5 minutes.
- **Identify and replace plumbing fixtures containing lead.** Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free," may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead free." Visit the Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.
- **Have an electrician check your wiring.** If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere. DO NOT attempt to change the wiring yourself because improper grounding can cause electrical shock and fire hazards.
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Home treatment devices are limited in that each unit treats only the water that flows from the faucet to which it is connected, and all of the devices require periodic maintenance and replacement. Devices such as reverse osmosis systems or distillers can effectively remove lead from your drinking water. Some activated carbon filters may reduce lead levels at the tap, however all lead reduction claims should be investigated. Be sure to check the actual performance of a specific home treatment device before and after installing the unit.
- **Get your child's blood tested.** Contact your local health department or health care provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead, if you are concerned about exposure.

**For More Information**

*Call us at* 860-429-3322 or visit our website http://www.mansfieldct.gov/content/11634/11644/default.aspx

*For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at http://www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.*

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