

## You Have the Power to Enact Change

What should you do if your child attends a school with unsafe lead levels?



First, do not stay silent. If your child's school has lead levels above 1 part per billion, reach out to school administrators to demand that they address this contamination and prevent further health risks to your child.

Whether you call or write your school administrator, you can use these talking points to help guide you. Your child's school may even be eligible for grant money to help them de-contaminate their water. If your school has a water fountain or faucet with a lead level of 15 parts per billion or higher, they should have already addressed it as required by law. However, it's better to be safe than sorry with an issue as serious as lead poisoning.

*Please note, these talking points are just suggestions – you can edit them or use your own.*

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### If your school has conducted testing, and you want to demand action based on the results:

#### Sample email

Dear [administrator],

My name is \_\_\_\_ and my child(ren) attend(s) [name of school]. I am writing because I have checked the Department of Environmental Services' data for lead contamination in water, and I found that the [name of school] has [XX] faucets with lead contamination levels at or above the state standard of 15 parts per billion.

*(If applicable: I also found that [XX] of the school's faucets have lead levels above 1 part per billion, which is a dangerous level according to the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.)*

According to the EPA, "[e]ven low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in: behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia. In rare cases, ingestion of lead can cause seizures, coma, and even death."

Those are not symptoms I want my child, or any child, to have to endure. Have you addressed these faucets that have high lead levels? If not, do you have a plan to? And how will you keep children such as my own safe in the meantime?

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]

## Sample Phone Talking Points

Hi [administrator],

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my child(ren) attend(s) [name of school]. I checked the Department of Environmental Services' data for lead contamination in school water and I found that the school has [XX] faucets with lead contamination levels at or above the state standard of 15 parts per billion.

*(If applicable: I also found that [XX] of the faucets have lead levels above 1 part per billion, which is dangerous according to the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.)*

Have you addressed these faucets? If not, do you have a plan to? And if so, how will you keep children safe in the meantime?

**If they say:** Yes, we have addressed this contamination and our water is now safe.

**Then you could say:** Thank you for working to keep the children at our school safe from lead contamination. I hope that you will continue to address lead contamination if you receive more concerning test results in the future.

*(If applicable, if the school has posted signs not to drink the water: I appreciate the interim measures you have taken to post the "no drinking" sign, but a sign is not sufficient to protect children from drinking water contaminated with lead. Not all children can read, and even when they can they often don't read signs or obey them.)*

*(If applicable, if the school has remediated some taps, but not others: Thank you for fixing those taps (over 15 parts per billion). Now that that first step is accomplished, will the school be addressing the remaining taps that still have high levels of lead? Even though the state action level is currently 15 parts per billion, scientists agree that no amount of lead is safe for kids. In fact the EPA, CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics all recommend a limit of 1 part per billion of lead in drinking water).*

**If they say:** We have plans to address this contamination but have not gotten to it yet.

**You could say:** I'm glad you have plans to decontaminate the water, but this is a matter that really cannot wait. If you are concerned about how the school will afford to fix its water, you may be eligible for grant money from the Department of Environmental Services. And while you wait to fix these faucets that contain lead, please do not let students drink from them.

**If they say:** I am not aware of this data. Where can I find it?

**You could say:** It is on this DES page, under the link titled "SB247 Lead in DW Data Received to Date." You can search for [name of school] and look at the results column to find the lead

levels. 0.001 mg/L is equivalent to 1 part per billion. The CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics advise that anything over 1 part per billion is unsafe. The State's action level is currently 15 parts per billion. Please take action to address the dangerous lead levels in the water at our school.

**If they ask:** Why is lead in drinking water so dangerous?

**You could say:** According to the EPA, "[e]ven low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in: behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia. In rare cases, ingestion of lead can cause seizures, coma and even death." Those are not symptoms I want my child, or any child, to have to endure.

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**If your school has NOT conducted testing, and you want to demand they test immediately:**

### Sample email

Dear [administrator],

My name is \_\_\_\_ and my child(ren) attend(s) [name of school]. I am writing because I checked the Department of Environmental Services' data for lead contamination in school water, and I found that the [name of school] has not yet tested the school drinking water.

You are required by law to test for lead, and, as a parent, I would like to know what's in the water my child drinks at school. According to the EPA, "[e]ven low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in: behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia. In rare cases, ingestion of lead can cause seizures, coma and even death."

Those are not symptoms I want my child, or any child, to have to endure. Please test the school faucets so that we can learn if there is lead in the school drinking water. If you do find any lead contamination, please address it immediately so that our children can be safe at school.

Sincerely,  
[Your name]

### Sample Phone Talking Points

Hi [administrator],

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my child(ren) attend(s) [name of school]. I checked the Department of Environmental Services' data for lead contamination in school water and I found that [name of school] has not yet tested its drinking water. You are required by law to do so, and it would be a great comfort to me, as a parent, to know what's in the water my child drinks at school. Do you have a plan to test your water?

**If they say:** We have plans to test our water but have not gotten to it yet.

**You could say:** I'm glad you have plans to test your water, but this is a matter that really cannot wait. When do you plan to test?

**If they say:** We tested our water, but

- I don't know why the testing results aren't on the Department of Environmental Services' website, or
- we didn't know we had to report the results.

**You could say:** Thank you for testing the water. It sounds like the laboratory that did the testing has not sent the results to the Department of Environmental Services. Can you please contact the laboratory and ask them to do so? I know I would like to see the testing results, and I believe others would want to know as well.

**If they say:** I am not aware of this data. Where can I find it?

**You could say:** It is on this DES page, under the link titled "SB247 Lead in DW Data Received to Date." You can search for [*name of school*] and look at the results column to find the lead levels. 0.001 mg/L is equivalent to 1 part per billion. The CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics advise that anything over 1 part per billion is unsafe. 46% of the samples tested so far came back positive for lead, so it is critical to know if there is lead in our school drinking water. Please perform the necessary tests so that you can address any contamination, protect our kids, and put parents such as myself at ease.

**If they ask:** Why is lead in drinking water so dangerous?

**You could say:** According to the EPA, "[e]ven low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in: behavior and learning problems, lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and anemia. In rare cases, ingestion of lead can cause seizures, coma and even death." Those are not symptoms I want my child, or any child, to have to endure.

**Thank you for taking action. You can stay up to date on CLF's work to end lead poisoning in New Hampshire and across New England at**

[clf.org/lead](https://clf.org/lead)