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**Rationale**

In January of 2017, the Inspector for Independent Schools for the Ministry of Education School required that all independent schools develop by the end of the school year a drinking water testing policy in accordance with the *BC Drinking Water Protection Act* and to routinely test for harmful substances to ensure that students have access to potable water at school.

Student health and safety is a concern shared by all parties in the K-12 education system. This policy provides minimum requirements for testing lead content in drinking water of school facilities, reporting of the results, and mitigation strategies to eliminate or reduce any risks to students and staff.

**Policy**

Island Catholic Schools will test at least once every three years for lead content in drinking water in the school facilities to ensure it meets provincial requirements established by the Ministry of Health, such as the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* for lead.

Schools will report findings to the appropriate authorities when required.

Each school should take reasonable and prompt steps to resolve elevated lead levels that are outside established guidelines on any drinking water quality test results.

**Regulations**

Island Catholic Schools, through the Diocesan Office, will contract a company to test water in all schools.

While this policy specifically addresses lead content in drinking water, the Ministry of Education expects that schools will work with appropriate health authorities to address other issues that affect the quality of water as prescribed under applicable provincial and federal legislation.

If sample results reveal lead levels exceed concentration of 0.005 mg/L (5 ug/L) (based on maximum allowable concentration-- *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* by Health Canada), the school, in consultation with the



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appropriate Health Authority, should undertake mitigation strategies which may include:

1. Flushing regimes
2. Deactivation of water sources and supplemental signage
3. Installation of filtration systems
4. Plumbing upgrades
5. Or other steps that result in reducing the exposure to lead to acceptable levels

#### Communication and Reporting Requirements

In the event that testing finds drinking water concentrations of lead at or above the maximum acceptable level, the Independent School Authority must:

- a. immediately inform the Independent Schools Branch of the issue. Ongoing compliance with this policy will be confirmed during monitoring visits and external evaluations.
- b. work collaboratively with the appropriate Health Authority to communicate the results of testing lead content in drinking water to parents, students and staff by describing the following;
  - o rationale for testing lead in drinking water,
  - o identify partnership with the Health Authority to work toward a solution,
  - o state results of sampling,
  - o identify mitigation strategies implemented or being consider by the authority, and
  - o provide contact information for the authority and the Regional Health Authority for parents, students and staff to request further information.



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TESTING LEAD CONTENT IN  
DRINKING WATER

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<p>Reference:</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/programs/consultation-lead-drinking-water/document.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/programs/consultation-lead-drinking-water/document.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/laws-related-to-health-in-bc/drinking-water-protection-act">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/laws-related-to-health-in-bc/drinking-water-protection-act</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/water-quality/drinking-water/canadian-drinking-water-guidelines.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/water-quality/drinking-water/canadian-drinking-water-guidelines.html</a></p>	<p>Approved: Board of Directors</p> <hr/> <p>Date Approved: June 6, 2017</p> <p>Amended: September 29, 2020</p>
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