

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Dear parents and staff,

I am writing to inform you of a situation regarding the drinking (potable) water on our main campus. This issue is limited to LOLHS, LOLMS, and Center School. It does not impact either Lyme or Mile Creek Schools.

An oil spill occurred in the LOLMS boiler room on August 1, 2022 as a result of a rupture of a feeder line from the heating oil storage tank to the boiler. The line broke at a flange fitting and released what is estimated to be around 1000 gallons of #2 heating oil. Under the direction of DEEP, cleanup activities were conducted immediately and there was product recovered (around 600 gallons) as well as monitoring wells installed. Results from monitoring wells showed detection of extractable total petroleum hydrocarbons in groundwater in a monitoring well that is in a northwesterly direction (toward Lyme Street and the LOLHS entrance) from the LOLMS boiler room.

The wells that supply our potable water are slightly upgradient and in the opposite direction of the presumed contaminant plume. Our water system is served by four active wells that pump to a holding tank uphill from LOLHS. Since the spill, we have tested our water for VOC's at the entry point on two separate occasions. VOC samples were collected from the entry point on 8/8/22 and 10/14/22 with no detections of oil-related compounds. Late last week, Whitewater (our certified water system administrator) collected a full suite of samples from each of our active potable water wells utilizing additional parameters as recommended by DEEP.

The results of this additional testing showed chemicals in well #7 (located by the baseball field behind LOLHS) at levels exceeding health-based guidelines. As described above, water from well #7 is blended with water from the three other wells before it is delivered to our schools. Contaminants were not detected in the other wells at concentrations exceeding any guidelines or drinking water standards. We have since tested the blended water at the entry point and are awaiting the results. We expect the blended water to be well below the guidelines.

The chemicals detected in Well #7 belong to a class of chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's). PAH's are present naturally in coal, crude oil, and gasoline. They are also formed when organic materials like coal, wood, garbage, and tobacco are burned. It is important to know that there are no enforceable drinking water standards for the PAH's that were detected in Well #7. Even though there are no drinking water standards, we are using the available health-based guidelines to inform our decisions.

Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

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As such, we have immediately taken prudent, health protective actions. We have shut off well #7 and will provide alternative water sources to the schools while we await the additional water test results. We do not expect to have potable water available tomorrow on our main campus until the late morning. Therefore, students and staff may consider coming to school with a potable water source of their own.

We hope to provide you with more information in the coming weeks as we continue to monitor and investigate this situation under the guidance of DEEP. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this situation, please contact me or Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology.

Sincerely,
Ian Neviaser
Superintendent of Schools

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