

Blue water in taps at Buchanan High School

November 2018

What's happened?

Staff reported incidents of blue water from a tap at Buchanan High School in Coatbridge.

What did the North Lanarkshire Council do?

The council regularly monitors the quality of water in all its buildings, but we carried out further tests on Buchanan which have found higher levels of copper in the water.

What do you think has caused this?

It's likely to be caused due to corrosion of copper plumbing creating a copper solution.

This has little impact on the quality of the water, although there is discoloration, which understandably, can appear alarming.

Is this hazardous?

Copper is an essential nutrient but consumption of very high levels can cause stomach upsets.

The taps affected are for handwashing only and pupils and staff have been advised of this. There are separate water fountains for drinking, which have a filter system in place. In addition, we have provided bottled water for the school to use as they see fit.

What is the council going to do?

We have quickly taken a number of measures to resolve the situation, including: replacement filters, daily flushing of the entire system until the taps run clear and replacing piping with plastic pipes in parts of the section.

We are now looking at a longer term solution including replacing much or all of the copper piping, which extends to around 300m.

Bottled water has also been made available to reassure pupils and staff.