



January 2025

Dear Parents/Caregivers and Staff:

In 2021, the Vermont legislature passed a law requiring all schools to test for radon (see [Section 12 of Act 72 \(2021\)](#)). Our school is beginning that testing process now. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions about radon testing.

Why is our school being tested for radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in rocks, soil and water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 21,000 people die each year in the United States from lung cancer due to radon exposure. Radon is also the leading cause of lung cancer among people who don't smoke. Because it has no color, smell or taste, testing is the only way to know if radon is in a building. This is why the Health Department and the EPA recommend that all homes and schools be tested for radon.

Homes and schools are the places where people are typically exposed to the most radon. Because students and staff spend a lot of time at school, it's important to make sure we don't have high levels of radon in our school building. Other schools in Vermont have tested for and found high levels of radon. Once they did, they were able to easily fix the problem.

How does radon enter a school building?

Many factors contribute to radon entering a school building. Schools in nearby areas can have significantly different radon levels from one another. Here are some reasons why some schools have elevated radon levels and others do not:

- Concentration of radon in the soil and permeability of the soil under the school building
- Structure and construction of the school building
- Type, operation and maintenance of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system

Why is the testing taking place while school is in session?

Because radon levels can fluctuate throughout the year, radon testing is done during the heating season. Radon levels tend to be the highest during this time since the windows and doors are closed up. The testing period needs to include the time when the school is occupied and operating under normal heating conditions. If we tested when the building is not occupied, we may not be able to determine the actual amount of radon students and staff are exposed to.

Which rooms will be tested?

Every classroom, office, and other commonly used room that is in contact with the ground or above a crawl space or basement will be tested. Storage rooms, locker rooms, kitchens and bathrooms will not be tested. Most rooms will have only one radon detector. Some rooms will have more than one.

Is the radon detector hazardous in any way?

There is nothing hazardous or toxic inside a radon detector. Detectors should not be moved, touched, or otherwise tampered with while the testing is taking place.

When will we know the results?

Once the test is complete, all radon detectors will be collected. Results will be available once the detectors are analyzed. This may take a few weeks. After the results come back, we will send a letter with a summary of the results and any next steps that we will need to take.

What will happen if radon is found in the building?

We will find radon in the building. Radon is everywhere because it is naturally occurring. If we find radon levels of concern, we will create a plan for fixing the problem. For example, confirmation testing might be conducted, or a mitigation system may be installed.

How can I test my home for radon?

Most people receive the largest part of their exposure to radon while at home. In fact, one in seven of the homes in Vermont has high radon levels. Find out how to request a **free** test kit for your home at www.healthvermont.gov/radon.

If you have any questions, please contact Robert Clark (rclark@wsesdvt.org), Director of Facilities.

Sincerely,



Frank Rucker
Business Manager
WSESU