From Dan Rogerson
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

Thank you for your letter dated 28 January 2015 on the application of the Water Fittings Regulations in school laboratories.

The Water Fittings Regulations protect the public water supply from contamination with substances that would be harmful to human health and protection against backflow of harmful chemicals is an important element of that protection. Whilst water companies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate water fittings are used to protect the water supply, we do expect them to take a risk based approach to determining the fluid categorisation of any premises, including school laboratories.

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) has worked with the water industry and Water UK to produce guidance that promotes consistent interpretation and enforcement of the regulations. This includes recognition that, following risk assessment, school laboratories may be categorised as lower than a fluid category 5 risk. WRAS also encourages water companies to develop and make available their enforcement policies.
I have written to Water UK to highlight that some companies seem to be unaware of the industry’s own guidance and to seek their views on what more they might do to encourage companies to take a truly risk based approach, that recognises where risks are managed down in school laboratories, to ensure they are not faced with unduly precautionary requirements.

DAN ROGERSON MP