Ongoing Data Monitoring: Establishing a Strong Practice for Success

Cloud-based access to near real time data gives you the ability to monitor your water usage as frequently as you need. As you get started on your water monitoring journey, we recommend you interact with the portal in two ways:

1. Set up a regular monitoring schedule to log in to the portal and nominate someone to champion this effort. This is important for understanding how your school regularly consumes water. This schedule can be as frequently as daily or instead once a week or fortnight.
   a. One suggestion is to take 3 minutes at the same time each day to check the portal looking at the previous day’s use to see if there are any unexpected spikes or unusual patterns.
   b. Couple this with a once a week review of total use and pretty soon you will build up the ability to spot any anomalies that might require further investigation.

2. Set up alert notifications to automatically inform you of unusual water usage events, such as a leak, burst or just a tap left on overnight. Alerts can be configured to arrive to a school email address, via SMS text message, or both!
   a. Some common alerts which can be set include:
      High volume: when more water than expected has been used in a given time period
      No zero flow: where the water usages on the meter never goes to zero, suggesting that there is a leak on a piece of equipment / pipe on the premises.
      Base flow: when unexpected water usage is recorded during hours the school is unoccupied
   b. Help setting the correct alert thresholds will be provided during training sessions throughout the program.

The beauty of the portal is that you can monitor your use to a level that suits your needs and the data will always be there for you to refer back to if needed. Better understanding of how your school uses water combined with well-set alert thresholds will give you peace of mind against unexpected water usage and enable you to ultimately reduce your water use.
Typical Water Use Patterns in Schools

Schools usually have fairly uniform water use patterns over a rolling weekly cycle.

School Days

The Monday to Friday daily pattern should look similar, with visible water usage starting in the early morning when cleaning and other staff commence. Usage will increase with the arrival of students for the school day with minor peaks occurring at or around the designated breaks, before use drops off again as the school day closes mid-afternoon. There is likely to be low water usage into the late afternoon and early evening as the last of the teaching, cleaning & maintenance staff leave for the day.

Nights, Weekends and Holidays

On the weekends there should be little to no activity apart from water usage associated with cleaning or irrigation. Of course, if your school hosts community events evenings or weekends this will affect the daily pattern.

All schools should have periods, generally out of school hours (most commonly overnight and on weekends) where the baseline water use returns to zero. Water use when the school is unoccupied and there is not expected water usage is referred to as "base flow." For help using the base flow function in the portal or setting an alert in the portal please contact the program team.

Figure 1: 7 day water use, showing little to no water use on the weekend.
Scheduled Water Use

The only change to that daily pattern should be when known water use events occur, such as irrigation. This can be identified by a large, regular use of water, usually starting/finishing and using a similar volume of water each time. Irrigation is generally scheduled for overnight or early mornings.

Figure 2: 5 day water use, showing scheduled irrigation events with high water usage overnight on two separate evenings.