

Medway Public Schools School Nurse Health Services

January 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to let you know that Body Mass Index (BMI) screening for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 will take place in February and March. A Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a measurement that is used to show a person's "weight for height for age." It is calculated using an individual's height and weight. It is another useful tool in identifying possible health risks.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students for several years. According to the state's new BMI screening regulation which passed in April 2009, schools must now collect the height and weight of students in the above mentioned grades. These measurements will be used to calculate each child's body mass index (BMI). The results will be sent home to you.

A BMI does not tell the whole story about your child's health status. BMI does not distinguish between fat and muscle. For example, if a child is very athletic and has a lot of muscle, his or her BMI may be high even though he or she is not overweight. Conversely, an underweight BMI may signal the need for further evaluation.

We encourage you to share the BMI results with your child's health care provider during the annual well visit. Your child's doctor or nurse is in the best position to evaluate his or her overall health and can explain the results of the BMI screening. They can also talk to you about whether there are steps you can take to encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

We are vested in making sure that all our students are healthy, stay healthy and learn about healthy living. The school health section on the school web site has resources and reference material listed for additional information.

Please feel free to call your school nurse or me with any questions you may have about the BMI screening.

Sincerely,
Penny McKay, RN
School Nurse Coordinator