



Dr. Matthew Crowley
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Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to inform you of the Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program that will be conducted at your child's school. A Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a measure that is used to show a person's "weight for height for age." It is calculated using an individual's height and weight. Just like a blood pressure reading or an eye screening test, a BMI can be a useful tool in identifying possible health risks.

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. Your child's doctor is in the best position to evaluate your child's overall health and can explain his or her BMI, therefore, we encourage you to have yearly physical exams with your child's health care provider. They can also talk with you about whether there are steps you can take to encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students each year since the 1950's. According to the state's BMI screening regulation which passed in April 2009, schools must collect the heights and weights of students in grades 1,4,7, and 10. Each child's height and weight will then be used to calculate their BMI. On October 16, 2013 the Public Health Council voted to adopt new regulations for BMI screening. As a result, the requirement for schools to mail the parent/guardian a report of each student's BMI report has been eliminated. Changes were made in order to provide increased confidentiality of personal health information and prevent any unintended consequences.

Your child's privacy is respected at all times, and the results of your child's height, weight, and BMI measurements are kept strictly confidential in your child's school health record. A parent may request, in writing to the School Nurse, their child's BMI results.

We are very interested in making sure that all our students are healthy. All children in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 will have their height and weight measured and will have their Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated. Parents may request, in writing to the School Nurse, that their child NOT participate in this screening program.

Please feel free to call me with any questions you may have about the BMI screening. Additional information about children's wellness and fitness is available upon request or you may access the state's resources at www.mass.gov/massinmotion/.

Sincerely,

School Nurse