



Health Services Highlights

March 2010

The state has a new Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10. According to the new regulation which was passed in April of 2009, schools must now collect height and weight measurements on students in the above grades. These measurements will then be used to calculate each child's BMI and the results will be mailed home to parents or guardians.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students each year since the 1950's. The purpose of the new screening program is to give you additional information about your child's weight status and ideas for living a healthy life.

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 a formula that includes 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.

Your child's screening will be supervised by the school nurse, and your child's privacy will be respected at all times. The results of your child's height, weight, and BMI measurements are strictly confidential- the results will be kept in your child's school health record and mailed directly 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. That is why we encourage you to share the results with your child's health care provider and have them explain to you the results of his or her BMI screening. They are in the best position to evaluate your child's overall health.

If you have questions regarding BMI or other health questions, please contact Cathy Alix at calix@foxbooroughrcs.org.