

**WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**

BMI Pre-Screening Notice to Parents and Guardians

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to let you know about the Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program that will be happening soon 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.

The purpose of the BMI Screening Program is to give you information about your child's weight status and ideas for living a healthy life. In WPS, we address our children's health and wellness with a comprehensive approach that includes health screenings, health education, healthy nutrition, and encouragement of physical activity. Please refer to your individual school site for information on other health promotion activities offered.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students each year since the 1950's. According to the state's new BMI screening regulation which passed in April 2009, schools must now 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. The results will be mailed home or directly communicated in writing to you upon request.

The school nurse will supervise your child's screening and will make sure your child's privacy is 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.

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

Please feel free to call me at [insert phone number] 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/.

If you do not want your child to participate in the BMI screening, check the box below. Sign the form and return the form to the school by [insert date].

I do not give permission for my child _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Sincerely,

BMI Pre-screening Parent Letter 10/28/14