

HANOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HEALTH SERVICES
HANOVER, MA 02339

February 13, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to inform you of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10. According to the regulation that was passed in April of 2009, schools must collect height and weight measurements on students in the above grades. These measurements will then be used to calculate each child's BMI.

Massachusetts's 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 along with 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. You have the right to request that your child not participate in this screening. To do so, you must inform the school nurse in writing by March 16, 2015.

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.

As always if you should have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maura Dowling RN', written in a cursive style.

Maura Dowling RN
Cedar School Nurse
781-982-4037