

13 September 2023

[Bht.schoolhealth-screening@nhs.net](mailto:Bht.schoolhealth-screening@nhs.net)

Dear Headteacher, Office Team, Senior Leadership Team, Staff in Year R and Year 6

## **Re: Height and weight checks of Reception and Year 6 children as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)**

### **The National Child Measurement Programme**

Across England over 99% (approx. 17,000) of eligible schools take part in the NCMP every year. This provides valuable information which is used to plan for and invest in key services to prevent and manage overweight and obesity in children. Additionally, the programme engages parents by sharing their child's results with them, via a new online Parent Portal. **Your participation in the NCMP is essential for the success of the programme and we thank you in advance for your continued support again this year.**

### **Healthy Schools in Bucks**

In Buckinghamshire children, young people, families, and schools are able to access further resources regarding healthy lifestyles from Be Healthy Bucks who have a range of support available to encourage healthier changes. They have online and face to face sessions to support long term changes within the home whilst covering topics like food label decoding, healthy swaps, physical activity and much more. The sessions are great fun and families really feel the benefits! [www.bhb.maximusuk.co.uk/](http://www.bhb.maximusuk.co.uk/). We will aim to share more details about a range of health topics via the Schools Bulletin on a regular basis too.

### **BHT School Nursing Team and other agencies**

The School Nursing Team has linked up with Bucks Council Public Health Team to contribute to the "School Health Education Unit" SHEU School Health Survey, this will enable us to obtain more information about the health and wellbeing of children in Bucks and we would like to encourage you to sign up for this opportunity to contribute. This year we are also working closely with colleagues in MHST and Family Support Services to improve information sharing about your school, issues and children you wish to refer to our services. We hope that this will make a considerable difference to your workload and ours. This will expand over the year to schools who may not have MHST but with another CAMHS service link.

### **The importance of healthy weight in children**

Growing up healthily and maintaining a healthy weight throughout childhood is important for physical, social and mental wellbeing and readiness to learn. It also lays a foundation for future wellbeing, learning

and employment<sup>1,2</sup>. Children and young people may themselves recognise the benefits of being a healthy weight and some identify they need help to make healthier choices to stay healthy, happy and well<sup>3</sup>. There is a statutory requirement through Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education<sup>4</sup> for schools to teach pupils about the importance of being physically fit and healthy and good nutrition to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. The Ofsted Inspection Framework (2022) includes a judgement on the personal development of learners which includes evaluating the extent to which the curriculum and provider's wider network helps learners to know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.<sup>5,6</sup>

## Maintaining the mental well-being of pupils in the NCMP

The wellbeing of children and families is very important. NCMP measurements are conducted in a sensitive way, in private and away from other children. The weight and height information is shared with the parent or carer via the School Screener Parent Portal. It is a parent's choice if they share the information with their child. If a parent is concerned about their child's growth, weight, body image or eating patterns, NCMP feedback letters provide national and local information to support parents and advise on when to seek further support from a school nurse or General Practitioner.

The psychological and emotional impact of the NCMP has been researched. Studies show that body image, self-esteem, weight-related teasing and restrictive eating behaviours do not change as a result of being measured or receiving feedback<sup>7,8</sup>. Most children (96%) are indifferent or unconcerned about being weighed or measured. The small number of children (4%) that disliked the process were mainly from year six, children aged 10 to 11 years. This reinforces the need for sensitivity when weighing and measuring, particularly for older children.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health England (2014) The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment)

<sup>2</sup> University of London (2011) Childhood obesity and educational attainment: A systematic review: [http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=9KvoPV\\_PSGY%3D&tabid=2956&mid=5535](http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=9KvoPV_PSGY%3D&tabid=2956&mid=5535)

<sup>3</sup> [Voice matters – RCPCH – State of Child Health](#)

<sup>4</sup> Department for Education (2019). Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education. Schools Statutory Guidance: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#safeguarding-children-and-young-people](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#safeguarding-children-and-young-people)

<sup>6</sup> Ofsted. The education inspection framework (2022): [www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework)

<sup>7</sup> Viner RM, Kinra S, Christie D, Cole TJ, Costa S, Croker H, et al. 2020. [Improving the assessment and management of obesity in UK children and adolescents: the PROMISE research programme including a RCT](#). Programme Grants Applied Research.

<sup>8</sup> Grimmett C, Croker H, Carnell S, Wardle J. 2008. [Telling Parents Their Child's Weight Status: Psychological Impact of a Weight-Screening Program](#). Pediatrics.

### **The national ambition**

The Government's second chapter of the Childhood Obesity Plan<sup>9</sup> has set a national ambition to halve childhood obesity and significantly reduce the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. The NCMP programme's data is key to monitoring progress of this ambition.

### **Taking action**

Many schools are taking proactive whole school action to improve health and educational outcomes.<sup>10</sup> This involves teaching pupils about the benefits of being physically active and eating healthily through the curriculum, and making effective provision across the school day to promote healthy food and encourage pupils to be physically active. It also includes school leadership practices that reinforce a healthy school ethos and environment and working effectively in partnership with parents and the wider community, to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing.

More information and resources to encourage healthy eating and physical activity at school are listed at the end of this letter.

### **Support from schools**

The programme is delivered by school nursing team and involves measuring the height and weight of all reception and year 6 children. Delivery has been most successful in areas where schools have helped, and we would be grateful for your cooperation as we undertake the programme over the coming months by:

- providing class lists for all children in reception and year 6, including any new starters [bht.schoolhealth-screening@nhs.net](mailto:bht.schoolhealth-screening@nhs.net) - please password protect
- identifying any children who are unable to participate because they are unable to stand unaided, have a disability, medical condition or other reason for not being able to participate
- letting us know that there are children with Down's syndrome in reception or year 6. Children with Down's syndrome should be included in the NCMP activity on measurement day as appropriate. However, specialist growth charts will need to be available and parents provided with an adapted result letter
- sending pre-measurement letters to parents/carers to inform them about the programme and how they may withdraw their child from being measured. This ensures that the information provided to parents on the processing of their children's height and weight data meets the requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). We will provide you with a letter to give to parents
- identifying a room or area where measurements can be taken privately
- arranging for staff to help bring children to and from the measurement area

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<sup>9</sup> HM Government. [Childhood obesity: a plan for action](#). August 2016.

<sup>10</sup>WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement (Review). [www.cochrane.org/CD008958/BEHAV\\_the-who-health-promoting-school-framework-for-improving-the-health-and-well-being-of-students-and-their-academic-achievement](http://www.cochrane.org/CD008958/BEHAV_the-who-health-promoting-school-framework-for-improving-the-health-and-well-being-of-students-and-their-academic-achievement)

**NCMP and the General Data Protection Regulation /Data Protection Act 2018: advice for schools**

All local authorities in England are required to collect information on the height and weight of reception and year 6 school children. It is a legal duty. Providing parents with an opportunity to withdraw their children fulfils the legislation. Parental consent is not needed for schools to lawfully use and share children's personal information for the NCMP under the GDPR and DPA 2018. Schools can lawfully provide class lists to school nursing teams and other providers undertaking the measurements on behalf of the local authority.

**Infection control and the NCMP**

We remain committed to carrying out the NCMP this year. The School Nursing Team who will carry out the measurements at your school are following government advice that aligns with national and local guidance for schools and infection control.

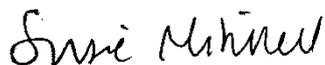
The staff members who visit your school have clear guidance on hand hygiene, cleaning the NCMP measurement equipment and the allocated measurement room(s) and areas where children wait. The school nursing team will consider use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate. We will be in contact to discuss arrangements for the measurements to take place at your school and will work with you to comply with your risk assessment for visitors.

Further information about the programme, is available in the [NCMP Information for Schools](#) document.

A report<sup>11</sup> on last year's NCMP results for England is also available.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the school nursing team via the details at the top of the letter, there are further details on the parent information letter on how they can contact the team.

Yours sincerely,



Susie Mitchell

Service Lead for School and Learning Disability Nursing

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<sup>11</sup> [NHS Digital. National Child Measurement Programme, annual reports. 2022.](#)

## Resources to encourage healthy eating and physical activity

- [School Zone](#). Curriculum linked healthy teaching resources are available on the School Zone. These include resources for: head teachers, Reception and Year 6 teachers to help them teach their pupils about healthy lifestyles. Includes ideas for whole school activities to encourage eating well and moving more, as well as suggestions for engaging parents. Teachers can subscribe to the School Zone to keep up-to-date with new mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyle materials.

## Resources to encourage healthy eating

- [NHS Food Scanner app](#). An app to help pupils explore what is in their food and drink and swap unhealthy foods that are high in saturated fat, sugar and salt, to healthier choices. The app is free to download
- [Healthy Steps – guidance for schools](#): Guidance for schools to support delivering a whole-school approach to healthy eating and supporting families
- [Creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating](#). Supporting pupils to gain knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and making informed choices about healthy eating and fitness
- [The Eatwell Guide](#). A tool used to define government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet. [The Eatwell Guide image](#) and [Eatwell Guide booklet](#) are included in the list of [resources](#)
- [Let's Get Cooking: Learning Network](#). A hub of information about providing healthy children's food offering 15 training courses for schools and caterers related to improving food for children
- Research on the [impact of Universal Infant free school meals \(UFSM\) policy in England](#) found evidence that by the end of the school year, those exposed to UFSM have significantly better bodyweight outcomes than they otherwise would, and are more likely to be healthy weight, less likely to be obese, and have a lower BMI

## Resources to encourage physical activity

- [What works in schools to increase levels of physical activity in children and young people](#). A resource for head teachers, college principals, staff working in education settings, school nurses, directors of public health, county sports partnerships and wider partners
- [Active mile briefings](#). A guidance document that provides information about the evidence on active mile initiatives, ideas for how to implement them and examples of practice
- [School Sport and Activity Action Plan](#). A cross-government action plan to provide pupils with greater opportunity to access 60 minutes of sport and physical activity every day
- [Active School Planner](#). A free-to-use interactive tool for schools to review and improve the physical activity offer to their pupils
- [School Games](#). Inspiring millions of young people across the country to take part in appropriate competitive school sport

- [PE and sport premium for primary schools](#). How to invest in sport premium funding to increase physical activity levels.
- Chief Medical Officer's [physical activity guidelines](#) fact sheet for 5 to 18-year-olds
- Chief Medical Officer's [physical activity in disabled children and disabled young people evidence review and infographic](#)
- [The Daily Mile](#). A simple and free initiative to encourage children to run/walk/jog for 15 minutes every day

### Resources to encourage emotional health and wellbeing

- DfE Guidance on the eight principles for [promoting mental health and wellbeing](#) in schools
- [DfE guidance on Teaching about mental wellbeing](#)
- Resource library including lesson plans and assessment tools to help develop the [PSHE curriculum](#).
- [Better Health School Zone](#) offers lesson plans for Year 6 and Key Stages 3 and 4 to support the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum and enable teachers to support the wellbeing of students
- [MindEd](#). A free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults

### Health protection resources to help ensure that NCMP measurements are carried out safely at your school

The following links advise on the necessary adjustments required to help enable the safe delivery of the NCMP from an emergency planning and health protection perspective.

- [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings](#)
- [Health protection in education and childcare settings](#)