



Auburn High School

"Home of the Rockets"

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to let you know about 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 low 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 Auburn, we address our children's health and wellness with a comprehensive approach that includes health screenings.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students each year since the 1950s. 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 his/her BMI. There was a recent change in the regulation in 2013 regarding notification of results. In the past we sent results home by mail to all families of children who had a BMI calculated. As a district we have decided to mail results home for just those students whose BMI fell out of the healthy weight parameters. As with other screenings we conduct, i.e. vision and hearing and postural screenings, we will notify parents/guardians if their child's results fall below or above the healthy range. Again this is a change from past notification when we sent all results home by mail. Those students with BMI percentages below 5% and above 85% will receive a letter in the mail.

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 and given to you directly by mail or in person, not via your child.

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.

We are very interested in making sure that all of 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. If you would like to have your child's pediatrician perform this screening you can submit, in writing, this request to me and we will, therefore, not conduct this screening at school.

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,


Casey J. Handfield, Principal


Jo Truong RN, B.S.N


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