

Heights and Weights Check for Children



Every year, throughout the country, children in Reception (aged 4 - 5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10 -11years) have their height and weight measured at school.

This is called the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). It's part of a national campaign to help children maintain a healthy weight.



Parents/carers in Somerset can request a feedback letter informing them which weight category their child falls into. This information will be available around 3 weeks after a child has been measured.

FAQ

Heights and Weights Checks



In Somerset we want to provide families with as much support and information as possible so that they feel happy for their children to take part in the measurement programme.

To help with this, we have provided parents/carers with answers to some frequently asked questions.



“Why should my child take part?”



By participating in the measurement programme, we are able to monitor the growth and health of children and then offer support and guidance where it is needed.

It can be difficult for parents/carers to tell, just by looking, that their child is overweight because both their height and weight are changing as they grow. Also, because more children are becoming heavier at a younger age, we've become used to seeing bigger children.



“Why do you measure children? Isn't it obvious which children are underweight or overweight?”

“How will you work out my child's weight?”



Children's weight is measured using the body mass index . BMI is calculated by dividing their weight (expressed in kilograms) by the square of their height (expressed in metres). We also factor in their age and sex. Each child's weight category is then identified as underweight, healthy weight, overweight or very overweight.



“Why does weight matter?”



Weight can be a factor in a variety of illnesses in childhood and later life but physical health is not the only issue. Children that are underweight or overweight can also be affected by:

- Bullying.
- Anxiety or depression.
- Not wanting to take part in physical activity or sport.

Everyone in the class is weighed and children do not get told their results. Parents/carers will receive a letter giving them the opportunity to opt their child out of the measuring programme.



However, if your child is overweight, we can offer you some solutions to help them lose the excess weight.

“I’ve had a letter saying my child is overweight - What should I do?”



If you have received a letter that your child is outside the range of a healthy weight, the information provided will give you an opportunity, as a family, to work together and make some lifestyle changes. Here are some suggestions

of what you can do now to help your child:

- Track your food and activity levels. This might help you to notice any areas where you think you can make changes.
- Find support and information online.
- Speak to your school nurse.

BMI measures total body weight which includes muscle, fat, bone and the water in our bodies. Children that have a lot of muscle may have a high BMI but low levels of fat. This doesn’t mean they are unhealthy it just means they have a high BMI.



“What if my child has a lot of muscle?”

“What other help and support is available?”

There are a variety of different ways to help your child achieve a healthy weight:

- You can go online for practical advice about increasing physical activity and healthy eating at www.nhs.uk/healthier-families
- You will also be given contact details for your local school nurse who will be able to offer advice and support
- You may also like to explore <https://healthysomerset.co.uk/> where you will find out about local activity clubs and get further support for the whole family.



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