



South Tyneside Council

21 December 2022

Dear Head Teacher

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. **Your participation in the NCMP is essential for the success of the programme and has ensured South Tyneside has an exceptional participation rate year on year. We thank you in advance for your continued support again this year.**

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 is 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 importance of healthy weight in children

A child's weight status affects their health and wellbeing. Growing healthily and maintaining a healthy weight is important not only for a child's physical, social and mental wellbeing but also for their capacity to do well at school.^{1,2} Maintained schools have a statutory duty to promote the wellbeing of pupils in carrying out their functions.³ The new statutory health education curriculum⁴ can support schools with teaching pupils on how to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing.^{5,6}

Maintaining the mental well-being of pupils in the NCMP

The wellbeing of children and families is very important. Measurements are conducted in a sensitive way, in private and away from other children. The weight and height information is

¹ Public Health England. [The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment](#). 2014.

² University of London. [Childhood obesity and educational attainment: A systematic review](#). 2011.

³ [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

⁴ Department for Education. [Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#). 2019

⁵ Department for Education. [Schools Statutory Guidance](#). 2017.



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shared with the parent or carer in a feedback letter. *It is a parent/carer's choice if they share the information with their child.* If a parent/carer 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^{6,7}. 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 older children.

The national ambition

The Government's second chapter of the Childhood Obesity Plan⁸ 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

Action taken at a whole school level is an effective way to support all children to grow healthily.⁹ Many schools are taking proactive steps to encourage whole school action, including through the curriculum, via school leadership practices, by improving the school ethos and environment and through working in partnership with parents and the wider community.

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 South Tyneside School Nursing team and involves measuring the height and weight of all Reception and Year 6 children. Delivery has been

⁶ 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.

⁷ Grimmett C, Croker H, Carnell S, Wardle J. 2008. [Telling Parents Their Child's Weight Status: Psychological Impact of a Weight-Screening Program](#). Pediatrics.

⁸ HM Government. [Childhood obesity: a plan for action](#). August 2016.

⁹ World Health Organization. [Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement \(Review\)](#). April 2014.



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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:

- 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 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 have provided you with a letter to give to parents. The national guidance recommends that the letter be sent to parents electronically via parent app or email. If this is not possible for your school, please get in touch to let us know.
- collating names of any children who have been withdrawn from the programme by their 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

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.

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



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A report¹⁰ on last year's NCMP results for England is also available.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Armstrong, Public Health Practitioner for South Tyneside Council via karen.armstrong@southtyneside.gov.uk.
If parents have any questions, please ask them to contact South Tyneside School Nursing Service on 0191 2832189.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula'.

Paula Phillips
Public Health Service Lead
South Tyneside Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BJS'.

Beverley Scanlon
Head of Learning and Early Help
South Tyneside Council

¹⁰ [NHS Digital. National Child Measurement Programme, annual reports. 2021.](#)



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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](#)

Resources to encourage healthy eating and physical activity

- ['Our Healthy Year'](#) resources to help encourage healthy habits during a child's first year at school and to help older kids build on the habits they need for secondary school and for life.
- [School Zone offers](#) curriculum-linked resources and inspiration to help teach children about healthy eating and being active.
- [School Zone English and Maths teaching resources](#) and [whole-school materials](#) that support teachers to educate pupils about how much sugar is in their everyday food and drink, to support them and their families to make healthier choices.

Resources to encourage healthy eating

- [School Food Plan training resource](#) to help all school staff understand the importance of a good school food culture
- [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 \(UIFSM\) policy in England](#) found evidence that by the end of the school year, those exposed to UIFSM 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.



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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
- [Change4Life Sports Clubs.](#) Can help contribute to all children getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity in every school day
- [School Games.](#) Inspiring millions of young people across the country to take part in appropriate competitive school sport
- How to invest in [sport premium](#) funding to increase physical activity levels
- Guidance on direct allocations of the [Healthy Pupils Capital Fund](#) to local authorities and multi-academy trusts.
- 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



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- DfE guidance on [Teaching about mental wellbeing](#)
- [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
- PSHE Association resource library including lesson plans and assessment tools to help develop the [RSHE curriculum](#)
- [MindEd](#). A free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults