

BMI Information for Parents and Students

The Pennsylvania Public School Code requires certain school health services for all children of school age, regardless of the school setting.

28 Pa. Code, Chapter 23, Section 23.7 - School Health Regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health implement the Public School Code. These regulations require annual height and weight measurements and that effort be made to determine the growth pattern of each child.

Grades to be screened: K-12 annually

In early 2003, the Department of Health unveiled the Pennsylvania Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases. One of the goals of this plan is to increase parent/guardian awareness of the BMI-for-Age measure as a screening tool to assess growth patterns in children and youth.

Growth screening enables school health professionals to:

- Monitor growth and development patterns of students
- Identify students who may be at nutritional risk or who may have a common nutritional problem
- Notify parents/guardians of screening results with a recommendation to share findings with the student's health care provider for further evaluation and intervention, if necessary.

NOTE: BMI should be considered a screening tool and not a definitive measure of overweight and obesity as the indicator does have limitations. For example, athletes, dancers and other physically active students may have a high BMI due to their increased muscle mass, which weighs more than fat mass.

Additional Resources for Parents and Students

Healthy weight – It's not a diet - It's a lifestyle – Below are some great resources for parents and students.

For information about the consequences of childhood obesity, its contributing factors and more, see Tips for Parents – Ideas and Tips to Help Prevent Childhood Obesity.

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/tools/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/index.html>

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_bmi/about_childrens_bmi.html

References

Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *Mandated School Health Program*. Retrieved from [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/schools/14130/mandated_school_health_program_\(exams_screens\)/556692](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/schools/14130/mandated_school_health_program_(exams_screens)/556692)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). *Body Mass Index*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/index.html>