

MAYNARD

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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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 blood pressure reading or a vision screening test, a BMI can be a useful tool in identifying possible health risks.

The purpose of the BMI Screening Program is to gain information about your child's weight status and provide ideas for living a healthy life. In Maynard we address our children's health and wellness with a comprehensive approach that includes health screenings (height, weight, postural, vision, and hearing), health and physical education classes, and extracurricular sports.

Massachusetts schools have taken heights and weights of students each year since the 1950's. 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 their BMI.

The school nurse will conduct 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.

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. Your child's doctor or nurse is in the best position to evaluate his or her overall health. 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 our students are healthy. This year, the **BMI screening** will begin in March and may **occur at the same time as their vision and hearing screenings**. All the screening results will be kept with your child's school health record. If you would like the BMI results mailed to you, please contact your school's nurse directly. **You will be notified by mail *only* if your child fails their vision or hearing screening.**

Please feel free to call your child's nurse with any questions you may have about the BMI, vision, hearing, or postural screenings. 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/.

You may waive your child's BMI Screening by submitting a written request to your child's school nurse.

Sincerely,

Health Services Department
Maynard Public Schools