



29th November 2023

Dear parent / carer

## **Height and weight checks for children in Foundation 2 and Year 6**

Each year in England, school children in Foundation 2 and Year 6 have their height and weight checked at school as part of the National Child Measurement Programme. Height and weight measurements are used to calculate weight percentile. We collect this information because it is in the public interest to understand how many children are overweight, a healthy weight or underweight. Your child's class will take part in this year's programme.

The checks are carried out by trained health care providers. Children are measured fully clothed, except for their coats and shoes, in a private space away from other pupils.

Once completed, we will send you your child's measurements together with information about healthy eating, being active and related activities available in your area

### **Maintaining the wellbeing of children in the NCMP**

The wellbeing of children and families is very important. Measurements are conducted in a sensitive way, and away from other children. Individual results are not shared with your child or their school.

The height and weight information is shared only with you in the parent or carer feedback letter. It is your choice if you share the information with your child.

The emotional impact of the NCMP has been researched and studies show that body image, self-esteem, weight-related teasing, and restrictive eating behaviors do not change as a result of being measured or receiving feedback. If you are concerned about your child's growth, weight, body image or eating patterns, seek further support from a school nurse or General Practitioner.

If you are happy for your child to be measured, you do not need to do anything. Your address is required to send you your child's feedback letter. This will include your child's measurements together with information about healthy eating, being active and related activities available in your area.

**No individual measurements will be given to school staff or other children, and all information will be treated confidentially.**

## Withdrawing your child from the National Child Measurement Programme

If you do not want your child's height and weight to be checked, please let us know by contacting the 0-19 health and wellbeing service on 0151 514 2510 within 10 working days. (Please note if you wish to withdraw from the programme at both Foundation 2 and year 6, a withdrawal of consent is required at both time points)

**Children will not be made to take part on the day if they do not want to.**

Further information about the National Child Measurement Programme can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/national-child-measurement-programme>

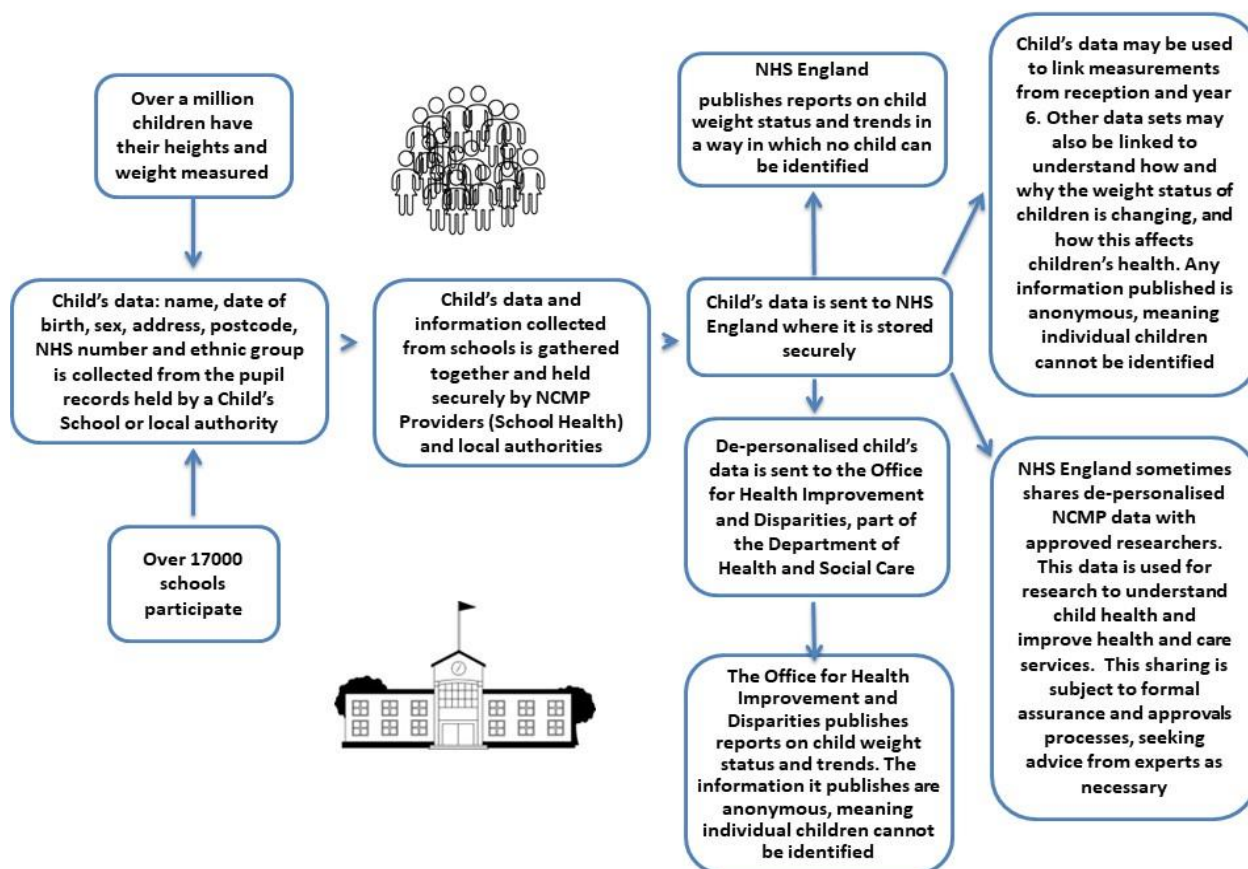
Information and fun ideas to help your kids stay healthy can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

Another way to help maintain a balanced diet and physical activity for your family is the **NHS Healthy Steps** email programme. Sign up for the 8-week Healthy Steps emails and you will be sent lots of low-cost easy tips, fun games, healthy swaps, and tasty recipes on a budget.

Scan the QR code or visit [healthysteps.uk](https://healthysteps.uk) to sign up.



**The diagram below displays what happens to your child's data as part of the NCMP.**



Your child's ethnicity and address are used to help understand some of the reasons for the difference and changes in child weight across England.

**All the data collected is also used for improving health, care and services through research and planning.**

**All this information is treated confidentially and held securely. No individual measurements will be given to school staff or other children.**

**How your child's data is collected and processed as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)**

Local authorities have a legal duty to collect the NCMP data. They do this by following guidance from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities part of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Local authorities are responsible for making decisions on how the data is collected and for making sure it is protected. Local NCMP service providers are contracted to carry this out; this might be through the school nursing team working in schools or a local healthcare provider. The team collecting the data enter it into the NCMP IT system, which is provided by NHS England. The data may also be entered into a local child health information system. Your local authority is responsible for sending the data to NHS England. NHS England and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities are jointly responsible for the data held at a national level. Your local authority is responsible for the data held locally.

Information about how NHS England and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities collect and use information can be found at <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/keeping-patient-data-safe/how-we-look-after-your-health-and-care-information> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care/about/personal-information-charter>

Information about the organisations NHS England has shared information from the National Child Measurement Programme can be found at <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-child-measurement-programme>

Yours sincerely

Nicola Birkby  
Team Leader, 0 - 19 Health and Wellbeing Service

# School height and weight measurements

Every year, throughout England, more than a million children in Reception and Year 6 have their height and weight measured at school as part of the National Child Measurement Programme

## PARENTS ARE NOTIFIED



Parents receive a letter about measurement day at their child's school. The letter tells parents how children are measured, what data is collected, and why.

## SCHOOL HEIGHT & WEIGHT CHECKS



Measurements are carried out by trained staff e.g. school nurse assistant. Children take off their coat and shoes for a more accurate measurement.

## PARENTS' FEEDBACK LETTER



Most areas send parents a confidential letter about their child's weight status within 6 weeks of measurement.

## PARENTS' ACTION

A parent can speak to their school nurse or GP for further advice and support about their child's weight and growth.



Parents can visit the **children's weight** page at Better Health - Families for tips on healthier changes.

Parents can monitor their child's weight by visiting the **NHS healthy weight calculator**.

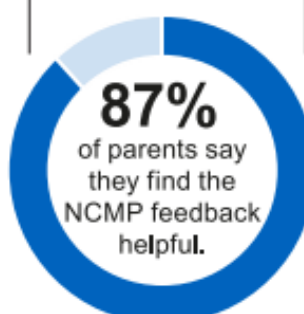
## DATA USE

The data is held by the local authority and sent to NHS Digital and Department of Health and Social Care, where it is stored securely and used for analysis.

It builds a picture of how children are growing to help plan better health and leisure services for families.



Every year in England, over a million children in Reception (aged 4-5) and Year 6 (aged 10-11) have their height and weight measured to calculate their weight status.



### What we know from the data collected so far

- Most children in Reception and Year 6 are a healthy weight.
- Around one in ten children in Reception is very overweight. This doubles to one in five children by year 6.
- The number of very overweight children in Year 6 is increasing year on year
- Most children who are overweight in Reception will remain so or become even more overweight for their age by year 6 without action to achieve a healthier weight.

Because many children are overweight, we are all becoming used to seeing heavier children as the norm. It means we cannot always tell when a child is overweight. That is why many parents find it helpful to have an objective measurement of how their child is growing. More than 8 in 10 parents say this information is helpful and they can then make decisions about their child's lifestyle and wellbeing to make changes, or seek support if necessary.

### Why achieving a healthy growth is important

When children are a healthy weight, they feel better about themselves. They find it easier to play and learn. And they are more likely to grow up healthy too. Helping them to be a healthier weight when they are a child can set up their health and wellbeing for life.

You can encourage the whole family to enjoy eating healthily and being active which will help your child achieve and maintain a healthier weight. Children who see their parents, grandparents and carers following a healthy and active lifestyle tend to join in and learn by example. These habits become a normal part of everyday life for the whole family.



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of Health &  
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For more information on helping your family lead a healthy life, please turn over.



# Better Health families is here to help your family be healthy and happy

## Be Sugar Smart

Kids are having over double the amount of sugar than they should. Too much sugar is bad for teeth and can lead to weight gain. But don't worry, we have some simple swaps to help you be sugar smart and cut back.



Sugary drinks are bad for teeth and lead to decay. Swap fizzy drinks, juice drinks and flavoured milks for water, lower-fat milks and no added sugar drinks. Limit fruit juice to no more than 150ml a day and stick to meal times.



Eating breakfast every day is important, but some breakfast choices have much more sugar than you think. Opt for plain porridge, shredded wholegrain or plain wholewheat biscuit cereals. Help your kids towards their 5 a Day by adding in chopped fruit.



Sugary snacks can all add up! Fruit and vegetables are always the best snack. But when choosing packaged snacks, stick to two a day max.

## See what's really inside your food and drink



Download the FREE NHS Food Scanner app to see how much sugar, salt and saturated fat are in your favourite food and drinks, and to find healthier swaps.



## Better Health families is here to help

Search Better Health Families and sign up for loads of healthy eating tips, tasty recipes, easy lunchbox ideas, fun activities and much more!

