



SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

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Saint Francis of Assisi Mission Statement: We are a Catholic community of faith striving to follow Jesus, pledging each day to do our best by imitating Saint Francis of Assisi as "instruments of peace." Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment and to be academically prepared for this technological age.



Date: October 28,2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to let you know about the Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program that is happening at St. Francis of Assisi School. 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 an eye screening test, a BMI can be a useful tool in identifying possible health risks.

The purpose of the BMI Screening Program is to give you information about your child's weight status and ideas for living a healthy life. In St. Francis of Assisi School, we address our children's health and wellness with a comprehensive approach that includes health screenings.

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 results will be mailed home or directly communicated to you in writing.

The school nurse will supervise 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 health record and given directly to you by letter, through the mail.

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. That is why we encourage you to share the results with your child's health care provider. Your child's doctor or nurse is in the best position to evaluate his or her overall health and can explain the results of his or her BMI screening. 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 took place in October. All children in grades 1, 4 and 7 had their height and weight measured and will have their Body Mass Index (BMI) calculated. If you choose not to receive the BMI results, please notify me as soon as possible, as I will be mailing the results in early November. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. 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/.

Sincerely,

Laura Cavicchi, RN
School Nurse