

Letter to parents allowing them to opt-out of receiving information on their child's height, weight and BMI.

EAST PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

800 Pine St.
Emmaus, PA 18049
610-966-8300

Dear Parent /Guardian,

In an effort to address the wellness/fitness needs of students in the East Penn School District, a program has been developed to address a priority health issue in our nation - the nutritional and fitness status of our children with its associated health concerns. The district's goal is to approach the issue from all aspects including health screening, physical activity programs, nutrition, and education.

This letter addresses our screening program. Children enrolled in the district will have their height/weight measured as mandated by the state. This will occur under the supervision of the school nurse to ensure accuracy and confidentiality. Based on these measurements the child's BMI (Body Mass Index) will be calculated. The American Academy of Pediatrics in its policy statement entitled "*Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity*" (2003), proposes the use of BMI to identify excessive weight gain at an early stage. They go on to recommend that BMI be calculated and plotted once a year for all children and adolescents.

Body Mass Index is a screening tool. It provides a guideline based on the ratio of weight to height to determine overweight and underweight. BMI is not diagnostic and like all screening tools can produce some false positives or false negatives. For example, a student may have an artificially high BMI due to a high level of lean body tissue or muscle as may be found in a well-conditioned athlete.

Studies have shown that BMI in children and adolescents compares well to laboratory measurements of body fat and also correlates with known health risks associated with being overweight. These risk factors include abnormal lipid levels, high blood pressure and insulin resistance, a precursor to diabetes

The child's BMI is given a percentile ranking based on the child's gender and age. The Centers for Disease Control have established percentile ranges that identify which children may be at risk for specific health problems. Parents will be able to track their child's BMI percentile as he/she progresses through their developmental years. Parents are encouraged to share the information with their health care provider. Your health care provider is in the best position to evaluate your child's overall health. Please be advised that this information will not be discussed with your child and is strictly confidential. These notifications will take place by mail.

In an effort to meet the needs of all our students, parents may choose on a yearly basis NOT to be notified of their child's height /weight/ BMI. The measurement will still be performed as mandated by Pennsylvania School Law and recorded on your child's health record.

If you choose NOT to be notified of your child's height/weight/ BMI please sign the form below and return it to your child's school within the next two weeks.

If you chose not to be notified last year and do not want to be notified again this year you must submit the attached form.

You do not need to do anything if you wish to receive the results of the school screening.

You are encouraged to call your child's school nurse with any questions you may have. Materials are available on wellness/fitness from the nurse upon request.

Please detach and return to School Nurse within the next two weeks if you choose NOT to be notified for the current school year.

Student Name: _____

School: _____

Grade / Homeroom: _____

I, as parent / guardian of the above named student choose **NOT** to be notified of my child's height / weight / BMI for the current school year. I understand that my child will still be measured as required by state law in a confidential manner and that these results will be recorded on the health record.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____