

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Winston Salem Forsyth County School system, in partnership with the Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center, has launched an initiative to improve the health of our school children. As we informed you in last month's letter, we have calculated s your child's body mass index.

Body mass index (BMI) is used to indicate whether body weight is appropriate for height, given age and gender. If an individual's BMI is too high or too low, it may be indicative of increased health risks. Determining BMI is a health screening test. Screening tests are used to find problems early. Early detection of health problems may help prevent the development of serious conditions.

Once your child's BMI was determined, it was matched with his/her age and gender which placed him/her in a given percentile. Your child's BMI placed him/her at or above the 85th percentile for his/her gender and age. This is a health screen, not a diagnostic test. This may mean that your child is at risk for overweight as well as the health risks that accompany an unhealthy weight.

If a child is overweight, the risk of developing a serious illness is higher than that of a child at a healthy weight. Pediatricians are now diagnosing children with diseases traditionally found in adults such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. All of these risk factors may place your child at higher risk of heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

Since your child's BMI suggests that he/she may be at risk, we suggest that you visit your child's pediatrician for further information. Your child's pediatrician can assess his/her risk and offer suggestions on how you can improve your child's health.

The habits you learn as a child are often the habits you carry for life. Please help your child and your family adopt healthy lifelong habits by making healthy food choices and being active every day! Look in your child's weekly folder for the "Healthnotes" newsletter for more tips on healthy living.

Healthy habits start early and we appreciate your dedication to your child's well being.

Sincerely,

School Logo