

# Education Department Policy

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Title	<b>Child Growth Measurement Review</b> Guidance for Teachers
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## 1 WHAT IS THE GROWTH MEASUREMENT REVIEW?

The measurement of children's height and weight on school entry is a well-established practice in Jersey and is supported by all schools. It aims to record the height and weight of all children in Reception year and Year 6. It helps the Public Health Department understand the prevalence of child obesity in Jersey and helps inform local planning and delivery of services for children.

School nurses and assistants from Family Nursing and Home Care are responsible for the measurement and carry out most of the work but we need schools to support the programme by:

- Explaining the measurement to pupils and, where necessary, parents
- Providing class lists to the Child Health Department with names, sex, date of birth and home address to the school nurse
- Identifying a suitable location in which the measurements are taken

## 2 WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

This guidance is for primary school teachers and teaching assistants who are responsible for children in Reception and Year 6. It:

- Explains the background and purpose of the measurement process
- Explains plans for some changes to the way the results are given to parents
- Sets out what schools should do to support the measurement
- Provides some additional information, which might be helpful for explaining the measurements to children and parents.

## 3 BACKGROUND TO THE MEASUREMENT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY WEIGHT

The primary purpose of the height and weight measurement is to:

- help local areas to understand the prevalence of child obesity in their area, and help inform local planning and delivery of services for children;
- gather population-level surveillance data to allow analysis of trends and growth patterns and obesity;
- increase public and professional understanding of weight issues, through the provision of the results and additional information to parents.

A healthy diet and regular physical activity contribute to general health and wellbeing. Children who have a poor diet or are not physically active enough or both might become overweight or underweight – either of which can have a substantial effect on childhood and in later life. Children who are overweight are more likely to develop illnesses in childhood and in later life, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular problems, respiratory illnesses, joint and movement problems.

Health is not the only issue; overweight children could also be affected by:

- Teasing or bullying
- Behavioural problems stemming from anxiety or depression
- Avoidance of active play or learning opportunities in school sport and PE
- Missing school for medical appointments or treatment.

Schools have long recognised that they have a crucial role in supporting the wider development of children and young people.

### **Changes to the programme**

From September 2011, Year 6 have been included in the child growth review, in keeping with the National Child Measurement Programme. We will send out an accompanying letter with the results to help parents interpret their child's measurement. Parents will also receive information on how they can help their child maintain a healthy lifestyle and who they can contact for further information if they have any concerns.

## **4 PREPARING FOR THE GROWTH REVIEW IN SCHOOLS**

### **Visit arrangements**

Parents are contacted about the measurement at the beginning of the school term. The school secretary will have received consent forms from parents. The School Nurse team will contact the school to arrange a date and time which is convenient for the school and pupils. Ideally, this will take place at the same time as the growth review in Reception. The School Nurse team will endeavour to cause minimal disruption and work as efficiently as possible. It is anticipated that the entire measurement process will take no longer than 40 minutes to 1 hour for the class.

### **Explaining the measurement to children**

Some pupils may be worried about being weighed and measured. It is important that these anxieties are managed and that pupils understand what will be involved and that their teachers or classmates will not see or be told their height and weight. This may be particularly the case in Year 6.

As many schools will have achieved, or will be working towards achieving, National Healthy Schools status, it might be useful to include discussion of the measurement within wider health education or PSHE work. Alternatively, schools might want to explain the process to pupils before the measurement session and link this to the importance of health, nutrition and physical activity in maintaining a healthy weight.

In particular, it will be important to explain:

- why their year group is being weighed and measured
- that the results are confidential and will only be sent to their parents
- that they will be weighed and measured in a way that ensures their classmates won't be able to see or hear
- that they will remain fully clothed and will only be asked to remove their shoes and coats.

Local research with parents told us that they want the measurement process to be treated as routine as possible and not give any cause for children to worry about being measured. It may be that you choose not to inform your class until the day the school nurses visit so they are not anxious about it.

### **Suitable location**

It is important that each child be weighed and measured in privacy, without being seen or heard by other pupils. Schools will, therefore, need to identify a private area in which measurements can be taken. If a separate room is not available, a screened-off area should be provided.

### **Weighing and measuring**

The exercise will be conducted in a discreet and sensitive way, maintaining pupils' privacy to prevent possible stigmatisation. The programme will be overseen by a trained healthcare professional, and those undertaking the weighing and measuring will be trained and have Criminal Record Bureau clearance. The school nurse team will bring all the necessary equipment for weighing and measuring; an approved set of weighing scales and an approved portable height measure.

**The data**

All the data gathered will be treated confidentially. Pupils will not be informed of the results and the results must not be given to school staff.

**5 WHAT TO DO IF A PARENT HAS A CONCERN ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S WEIGHT OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD'S WEIGHT**

The School Nurse Team can arrange to discuss any weight issues with the parent. Each school has an appointed school nurse. Advise your school's appointed nurse and they will contact the parents directly.

**VERSION CONTROL**

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