



Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

1st September 2023

National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) – 2023 school feedback letter

Thank you for participating in the NCMP. Your school's average results¹ from the past three years along with a summary of resources to support you can be requested from your local authority Public Health Team via publichealth@northumberland.gov.uk

For schools where three years of data is not available the results will show one or two years of data only.

The National Child Measurement Programme

Across England, over 99% (17,000) of eligible schools take part in the NCMP each year. This provides valuable information which is used to plan for and invest in key services to ensure all children have the opportunity to be healthy. Additionally, the programme engages parents by sharing their child's measurements with them.

Implications of Covid-19

School feedback letters, designed to inform action at a whole school level, give prevalence levels of children above a healthy weight including overweight and obesity based on a combined number of up to 3 years. This helps to ensure that the sample size is large enough to provide a reliable picture of the weight status of the school population, and to prevent individual children from being identifiable. Due to the interruptions to the program caused by COVID in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 collection years, there is a small number of cases where data is not available for all three years. Where only one or two years of data is included, this is noted on the relevant feedback letters. This is the first time that letters have been produced since they were last published in February 2020.

The national ambition

The Government^{2,3} has set a national ambition to halve childhood obesity and significantly reduce the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. Data from the NCMP is key to monitoring progress of this ambition. We are grateful for your school's continued commitment, which is essential for the success of the programme.

The importance of healthy weight in children

Growing healthily and maintaining a healthy weight throughout childhood is important for physical, social and mental wellbeing and readiness to learn. It also lays a foundation for future wellbeing, learning and employment.^{4,5} Children and young people may themselves recognise the benefits of being a healthy weight and some identify they need help to make healthy choices to stay healthy, happy and well⁶. There is a statutory requirement through Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education⁷ for schools to teach pupils about the importance of being physically fit and healthy and good nutrition to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. The Ofsted Inspection Framework (2022) includes a judgement on the personal development of learners which includes evaluating the extent to which the curriculum and provider's wider network helps learners to know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.^{8,9}

Taking school level action

Many schools are taking proactive whole school action to improve health and educational outcomes.¹⁰ This involves teaching pupils about the benefits of being physically active and eating healthily through the curriculum, and making effective provision across the school day to promote healthy food and encourage

pupils to be physically active. It also includes school leadership practices that reinforce a healthy school ethos and environment and working effectively in partnership with parents and the wider community, to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing.

Primary schools adopting an active mile initiative as set out in the second chapter of the Government's Childhood Obesity Plan is one example of taking whole school action to increase physical activity of all pupils. More information and resources on how to encourage healthy eating, physical activity and promoting health and wellbeing at school are listed at the end of this letter.

We welcome discussions with you about how your school can further support healthy weight among your pupil population, such as being part of local healthy schools initiatives and engagement with family healthy lifestyle programmes.

Please contact the local authority public health team on: publichealth@northumberland.gov.uk if you have any questions on your NCMP school feedback letter or would like to discuss further support we can offer.

Yours sincerely,

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Classification of overweight and obesity

- For population monitoring purposes, a child's body mass index (BMI) is classed as overweight or obese where it is on or above the 85th centile or 95th centile, respectively, based on the British 1990 (UK90) growth reference data. The population monitoring cut offs for overweight and obesity are lower than the clinical cut offs (91st and 98th centiles for overweight and obesity) used to assess individual children; this is to capture children in the population in the clinical overweight or obesity BMI categories and those who are at high risk of moving into the clinical overweight or clinical obesity categories. This helps ensure that adequate services are planned and delivered for the whole population.

National resources to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and wellbeing

- **School Zone:** curriculum linked healthy teaching resources are available on the School Zone. These include resources for: head teachers, Reception and Year 6 teachers to help them teach their pupils about healthy lifestyles. Includes ideas for whole school activities to encourage eating well and moving more, as well as suggestions for engaging parents. Teachers can subscribe to the School Zone to keep up-to-date with new mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyle materials. It also offers lesson plans for year 6 and key stages 3 and 4 to support the relationships, sex and health education curriculum and enable teachers to support the wellbeing of students: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

National resources to encourage healthy eating

- **NHS Food Scanner app:** an app to help pupils explore what is in their food and drink and swap unhealthy foods that are high in saturated fat, sugar and salt, to healthier choices. The app is free to download: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/food-scanner-app>
- **Healthy Steps – guidance for schools:** Guidance for schools to support delivering a whole-school approach to healthy eating and supporting families: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/resources/healthy-steps-guidance-for-schools>
- **Creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating:** supporting pupils to gain knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and making informed choices about healthy eating and fitness: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/creating-a-culture-and-ethos-of-healthy-eating>
- **Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities:** Guidance for schools and local authorities about providing school meals including information on free school meal eligibility: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>
- **The Eatwell Guide:** a tool which defines government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>
The **Eatwell Guide image** and **Eatwell Guide booklet** are included in the list of resources.
- **Let's Get Cooking: Learning Network:** a hub of information about providing healthy children's food offering 15 training courses for schools and caterers related to improving food for children: <https://letsgetcooking.org.uk/>

National resources to encourage physical activity

- **What works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity:** a resource for head teachers, college principals, staff working in education settings, school nurses, directors of public health, county sports partnerships and wider partners. An overview of the evidence and local examples about what works in schools and colleges to increase levels of physical activity in children and young people: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-in-schools-to-increase-physical-activity-briefing>
- **Active Mile Briefings:** provides information about the evidence on active mile initiatives, ideas for how to implement them and examples of practice. It recommends that schools deliver at least 30 minutes of the recommended daily 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity for children: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-mile-briefings>
- **School sport and activity action plan:** a cross-government action plan to provide pupils with greater opportunity to access 60 minutes of sport and physical activity every day: <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-sport-and-activity-action-plan>
- **Active School Planner:** a free-to-use interactive tool for schools to review and improve the physical activity offer to their pupils: <http://www.activeschoolplanner.org/>
- **School Games:** inspiring millions of young people across the country to take part in appropriate competitive school sport: <https://www.yourschoolgames.com/>
- **PE and sport premium for primary schools:** how to invest in sport premium funding to increase physical activity levels: [PE and sport premium for primary schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools)
- **Physical activity guidelines for 5 to 18-year-olds:** Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines infographic for 5 to 18-year-olds: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people-5-to-18-years>
- **Physical activity in disabled children and disabled young people evidence review and physical activity infographic:** Chief Medical Officer's guidelines on physical activity for disabled children and young people: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-in-disabled-children-and-disabled-young-people-evidence-review> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-disabled-children-and-disabled-young-people>
- **The Daily Mile:** a simple and free initiative to encourage children to run, walk, jog for 15 minutes every day: <http://www.thedailymile.co.uk/>

National resources to encourage emotional health and wellbeing

- **Guidance** on the eight principles for promoting emotional health and wellbeing in schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>
- **Resource library** including lesson plans and assessment tools to help develop the **PSHE curriculum**: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/resources-landing>
- **Quality-assured information, advice and resources** to help primary schools understand and promote children's mental health and wellbeing: www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk.

- **Better Health School Zone offers** lesson plans for year 6 and key stages 3 and 4 to support the relationships, sex and health education curriculum and enable teachers to support the wellbeing of students: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>
- **MindEd** is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults. It includes content curated specifically for school settings including content designed to help schools promote wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic [Wellbeing for Education Return: https://www.minded.org.uk/](https://www.minded.org.uk/)

Further reading

¹ Overweight and obesity figures use the population monitoring thresholds of the British 1990 growth reference (UK90) to categorise child body mass index

² HM Government. Childhood obesity: a plan for action, Chapter 2. June 2018.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action-chapter-2

³ [Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives) July 2020

⁴ Public Health England (2014) The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment

⁵ University of London (2011) Childhood obesity and educational attainment: A systematic review:
http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=9KvoPV_PSGY%3D&tabid=2956&mid=5535

⁶ [Voice matters – RCPCH – State of Child Health](https://www.rcpch.co.uk/voice-matters)

⁷ Department for Education (2019). Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education: www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

⁸ Department for Education. Schools Statutory Guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#safeguarding-children-and-young-people

⁹ Ofsted. The education inspection framework (2022): www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework

¹⁰ WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement (Review). www.cochrane.org/CD008958/BEHAV_the-who-health-promoting-school-framework-for-improving-the-health-and-well-being-of-students-and-their-academic-achievement