



2 September 2024

National Child Measurement Programme Reception & Year 6

Thank you for participating in the NCMP. Your school's average results from the past three years along with a summary of resources to support you, your senior leadership team and school governors 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. We are grateful for your school's continued commitment, which is essential for the success of the programme and improving the health and wellbeing of all children.

Taking school level action to promote children's health

Many schools are taking proactive whole school action to improve health and educational outcomes.¹ This involves teaching pupils about the benefits of being physically active, eating healthily and having good oral health through the curriculum and making effective provision across the school day to promote healthy eating, and encourage pupils to be physically active. Whole school action 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 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, good oral health and promoting health and wellbeing at school are listed at the end of this letter.

The importance of healthy growth 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.^{2,3} Oral health is also an important part of a child's general health and wellbeing and contributes to the development of a healthy child as well as school readiness. Children who have tooth decay may have pain, infections, difficulties with eating, sleeping and socialising and may require time off school for dental treatment.⁴ Diets lower in sugar can prevent both tooth decay and obesity. Children and young people may themselves recognise the benefits of being a healthy weight and having healthy teeth with some already identifying that they need help to make healthier choices to stay healthy, happy and well.⁵

Schools teach pupils about the importance of good nutrition and being physically fit and healthy to maintain their mental health and wellbeing as well as the benefits of having healthy teeth and gums, this is a statutory requirement through relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education⁶. The Ofsted Inspection Framework (2023) includes a judgement on the personal development of learners which includes evaluating the extent to which the curriculum and the provider's wider network helps learners to know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.^{7,8}

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. The programme also engages parents by sharing their child's measurements with them and promoting healthy lifestyle advice and support.

The NCMP data shows us that the prevalence of obesity in children in reception (aged 4 to 5) and year 6 (age 10 to 11) is unacceptably high. The place where children live matters. We know that for children in the most deprived areas in both age groups, the chances of being an unhealthy weight is more than double that of those in the least deprived areas.⁹ As the school year consists of 190 'pupil' days, this gap can be improved through the provision of healthy food and the opportunities for physical activity in schools. Child healthy weight, food and physical activity strategies aim to improve the health of all children and support those with the greatest need. Data from the NCMP is key to implementing national, local and school level action and helps to monitor the trends and progress.

We welcome discussions with you about how your school with our support can improve the health of all children, 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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National resources to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, good oral health and wellbeing

Curriculum linked teaching resources are available on the [School Zone](#). These include resources for head teachers, and reception and year 6 teachers to help them teach their pupils about healthy lifestyles. It includes ideas for whole school activities to encourage eating well and moving more, as well as suggestions for keeping teeth and gums healthy and for engaging parents. Teachers can subscribe to the School Zone to keep up to date with new mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyle materials. The School Zone 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.

National resources to encourage healthy eating

- [NHS Food Scanner app schools materials](#): teaching resources 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 as part of wider lessons on healthy eating. The app is free to download from the App Store and Google Play
- [Healthy Steps – guidance for schools](#): guidance for schools to support delivering a whole school approach to healthy eating and supporting families
- [Standards for school food in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#): guidance on the standards for planning and providing food in schools
- [School food standards: resources for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#): resources to help schools plan and provide healthy food in 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
- [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
- [The Eatwell Guide](#): a visual tool which summarises government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet. The [Eatwell Guide image](#) and [Eatwell Guide booklet](#) are included in the list of resources
- [Let's Get Cooking](#): a hub of information about providing healthy children's food offering 15 training courses for schools and caterers related to improving food for children
- [School Food Policy | Connects-food](#): a resource to support primary schools develop their whole school approach to food

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
- [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
- [School Games](#): inspiring millions of young people across the country to take part in appropriate competitive school sport
- [Physical activity guidelines for 5 to 18 year olds](#): Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines infographic for 5 to 18 year olds
- [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
- [The Daily Mile](#): a simple and free initiative to encourage children to run, walk or jog for 15 minutes every day

National resources to encourage emotional health and wellbeing

- [Guidance on promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#): guidance on the eight principles of a whole school or college approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing
- [Teaching about mental wellbeing](#): practical materials for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff about teaching mental wellbeing.
- [PSHE resource library](#), including lesson plans and assessment tools to help develop the PSHE curriculum
- [Better Health School Zone](#): offers teaching resources for key stages 1,2,3 and 4 to support the relationships, sex and health education curriculum and enable teachers to support the wellbeing of students
- [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 for education staff to support and promote children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

National resources to promote oral health

- [School Zone dental resources](#): developed for Better Health, the new KS1 and KS2 dental lesson plans are the first in a series of Better Health school resources to help pupils and their families learn about healthier eating habits
- [Improving oral health: supervised tooth brushing programme toolkit](#) - A toolkit to support commissioning of supervised tooth brushing programmes in schools
- [e-Bug lesson plans](#) on oral hygiene for key stage 1
- [e-Bug lesson plans](#) on oral hygiene for key stage 2

Implications of COVID-19 on NCMP data

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 programme caused by COVID-19 in the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 collection years, there is a small number of cases where data is not available for all 3 years. Where only one or two years of data is included, this is noted on the relevant feedback letters.

Classification of overweight and obesity

For population monitoring purposes, a child's 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.

References

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- ¹ [WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement \(Review\)](#)
 - ² Public Health England (2014). [The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment](#)
 - ³ University of London (2011). [Childhood obesity and educational attainment: systematic review](#)
 - ⁴ Public Health England (2021) [School-aged years high impact area 3: Supporting healthy lifestyles.](#)
 - ⁵ [Voice matters – RCPCH – State of Child Health](#)
 - ⁶ Department for Education (2021). [Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#)
 - ⁷ Department for Education. [Statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities](#)
 - ⁸ Ofsted (2023). [The Education Inspection Framework](#)
 - ⁹ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2022-23-school-year>

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