

National Child Measurement Programme

Live Life
BETTER
DERBYSHIRE

A parent and carers' guide to the next steps.





**Live Life
BETTER
DERBYSHIRE**

What is the National Child Measurement Programme?

Keeping children healthy and well is a key priority in Derbyshire. One of the ways that we can do this is to ensure children and young people are a healthy weight.

That's where the National Child Measurement Programme comes in.

Derbyshire County Council is required to collect data on Reception and Year 6 children's height and weight from schools within their area, as part of a national programme.

A team of specially trained advisors have visited all state maintained schools in Derbyshire, to weigh and measure all pupils in Reception and Year 6.



The results have been collected and we are now getting in contact with parents and carers whose children have been identified as being above, or below, the healthy weight for their age.



How did you work out whether my child was a healthy weight or not?

The method of working out if your child is a healthy weight differs slightly to the way we would work it out for an adult. The recognised method is the body mass index, also known as BMI. This uses your height and weight to work out if your weight is healthy.

For children and young people aged two to 18, a BMI calculator takes into account age and gender as well as height and weight. A child's BMI is expressed as a 'centile' to show how their BMI compares with children who took part in national surveys.

For example, a girl on the 75th centile is heavier than 75 out of 100 other girls her age.

All of this information helps us to work out if your child is classed as under, over or a healthy weight.

I've heard that using Body Mass Index (BMI) to assess weight is not that accurate, particularly in children. So why is it used?

BMI is an 'indirect' measure of body fat. It's been tested against more direct measures of body fat, such as MRI scanning and has been found to be the most accurate method currently available for assessing weight in children.

BMI is an inexpensive and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend the use of BMI centiles as a tool to assess weight in children.



You've told me my child is either underweight or overweight but I don't agree. What should I do?

As a parent, your opinion about your child is important. You know your child and how healthy their lifestyle is.

There are some limitations to using BMI centiles to assess weight in children, however, in most cases the result is accurate.

If the BMI centile suggests your child is overweight or underweight and you disagree with this assessment or have any concerns about your child's weight, then we would suggest that you speak to a Live Life Better Derbyshire advisor or your school nurse.

They can review the measurements and advise you accordingly.



If the BMI centile suggests your child is overweight or underweight and you disagree then we would suggest that you speak to a Live Life advisor or your school nurse

What support is on offer?

There are a variety of programmes available in Derbyshire to help families improve their health and wellbeing.

We are also currently developing a Live Life Better Derbyshire family programme. Further details will be available soon.

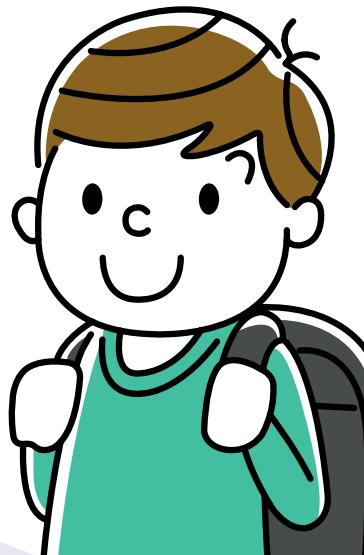
If you would like to hear more about the programme when it is available, email llbd.info@derbyshire.gov.uk or give us a call on **0800 085 2299** and we'll let you know nearer the time.

Support and advice can also be found on the following websites:

- www.nhs.uk/change4life
- www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/healthychild

If you are concerned about money and being able to eat healthily you can find support at

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/makinghealthfairer



How can I find out what the healthy weight range is for my child?

We don't provide a healthy weight range in the results letter, as this would be incorrect as soon as your child grows.

If you want to monitor your child's weight, you can put their height and weight into a BMI calculator for children such as www.nhs.uk/bmi



My child is very tall or small for their age. Isn't their weight just in proportion with their height?

Using BMI centiles takes both height and weight into account and is still an accurate indicator that a child is under or over weight.

This still applies even for tall or small children.



Doesn't this process risk causing eating disorders or poor emotional health in children?

The NCMP has been carefully monitored since it began and there is no evidence that it has resulted in an increase in eating disorders in young people.

Feedback from parents and schools is used to continually improve the way the programme is delivered. Your child's weight is not revealed during the measurement process.

The risk of causing anxiety about weight has to be balanced against the health risk to our children of being an unhealthy weight.

Find out more about emotional support for your child at www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/healthychild

We understand weight can be a sensitive issue, and every effort is made to carry out the process sensitively

Telling me my child is overweight makes me feel like I am a bad parent.

Being told your child is overweight can be upsetting but it does not mean that your parenting is at fault or that you are to blame. Recent figures show that **1 in 5** reception age children and **1 in 3** Year 6 children are now classed as overweight or very overweight, so many families are finding themselves in the same position as yours.

As a parent, it can sometimes be difficult to tell that your child is overweight. A child may not look particularly heavy but can be overweight.

As more children are becoming heavier at a younger age, we have become used to seeing bigger children.

Modern life makes it difficult to stick to a healthy weight, or even to know what a healthy weight should look like. There are more fast food takeaways, ever increasing portion sizes, more advertising aimed at children, plus concerns about safety mean that children do not play outside as much as they used to.

However, this doesn't mean there is nothing we can do. We think it's important to share your child's result with you so you can act on the information if necessary. We can also provide help and support where this is needed.

There are five key ways you can help your child achieve a healthy weight:

Be a good role model - remember that children imitate adults

Encourage at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day

Keep to child sized portions

Eat healthy meals, drinks and snacks

Less screen time and more sleep

Support and advice can also be found on our web page at www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/healthychild

Making changes to your family's lifestyle can make a real difference to your child's weight



Should I put my child on a diet?

We do not advise that you put your child on a diet.

Instead we would recommend that you try and maintain your child's weight as they grow, so that their weight moves into a healthy range.

A few top tips for family healthy eating include:

Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day

Base meals on higher fibre starchy foods like wholegrain bread, rice, pasta or potatoes

Have some dairy or dairy alternatives

Eat some beans, fish, eggs, meat and other protein

Choose unsaturated oils or spreads and eat in small amounts

Drink plenty of water and other fluids, but avoid sugary drinks

We can offer help and support with a new Live Life Better Derbyshire family programme that is coming soon.

If you would like to hear more about the programme when it is available, email llbd.info@derbyshire.gov.uk or give us a call on **0800 085 2299**.



Getting the whole family active

As well as getting what we eat right, getting active is a great way for families to work together towards a healthier future. Children and young people aged five to 18 should:

Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day

Take part in a variety of different types of physical activity to develop movement skills, muscles and bones

Reduce the time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity

What is classed as moderate activity?

Moderate intensity activities will raise your heart rate, and make you breathe faster and feel warmer. They include:

Walking to school

Skateboarding

Walking the dog

Cycling

Riding a scooter

Playground activities

What can help develop muscles and bones?

Running

Basketball

Skipping with a rope

Football

Dance

Gymnastics



**Get more advice on activities for the whole family here:
www.nhs.uk/change4life**

My underweight child will only eat a few foods. What can I do to help them become a healthier weight?

All children are growing and need the energy (calories) and nutrients that come from a varied and balanced diet.

If your child is underweight, it may be tempting to fill them up with high-calorie but unhealthy foods, such as sweets, cake, chocolate, sugary and fatty foods and drinks. However, it's important that your child gains weight in a healthy way, and this means eating a balanced diet.

If you are concerned there is a medical reason your child is underweight, please see your GP or school nurse.

Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day

Base meals on higher fibre starchy foods like wholegrain bread, rice, pasta or potatoes

Have some dairy or dairy alternatives

Eat some beans, fish, eggs, meat and other protein

Choose unsaturated oils or spreads and eat in small amounts

Drink plenty of water and other fluids, but avoid sugary drinks

Be a good role model. If they see you eating a healthy balanced diet, they are more likely to do so too

To help your child gain weight, try increasing their portion sizes at mealtimes, especially for starchy foods such as; bread, rice, pasta and potatoes

You can also add some healthy snacks such as:

Small sandwiches with a protein filling, such as cheese or eggs, cheese and crackers or cheese on wholemeal or brown bread, yoghurt (which contains protein and calcium) breadsticks and vegetable-based dips, such as hummus.



Should my underweight child be less active?

Even if your child is underweight, it's still important that they're physically active.

Physical activity helps them develop strong, healthy bones and muscles. It's an important part of how they learn about themselves and the world. And, best of all, it's great fun.

Should I talk to my child about their result?

This is a decision that only you can make. However, automatically sharing your child's result with them might not be the best thing to do, which is why the result comes directly to you rather than via your child.

Older children, who may be more involved in any changes you are thinking about making, may already know there is an issue with their weight and might actually feel relieved to be able to have a discussion with you about it.

Alternatively, you may feel your child is already sensitive about their weight and sharing their result could end up being more negative than positive. Younger children may be less able to understand and it might be easier to make lifestyle changes without a direct discussion with them.

Weight Concern provides more in depth advice about talking to your child about their weight at www.weightconcern.org.uk



Younger children
may be less able to
understand and it
might be easier to
make lifestyle changes
without a direct
discussion with them



What do you do with the data you collect?

The data that we collect during the measurement process is given to NHS Digital to be collated and validated.

NHS Digital uses this information to produce National Statistics Reports, that show trends at national level, differences between groups of pupils and the latest local authority level data.

The data is also shared with Public Health England. All the information is anonymised and no child can be identified.

What support is on offer?

We can offer help and support with a new Live Life Better Derbyshire family programme that is coming soon.

If you would like to hear more about the programme when it is available, email llbd.info@derbyshire.gov.uk or give us a call on **0800 085 2299**.

**Live Life
BETTER
DERBYSHIRE**



**Live Life
BETTER
DERBYSHIRE**

More information

You can find out more about the National Child Measurement Programme on the NHS webpages here
digital.nhs.uk/services/national-child-measurement-programme

You can check your child's BMI on the NHS website at
www.nhs.uk/bmi

www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk

