

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service
8th floor, Seax House
Victoria Road South
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

t: 0300 247 0014

26th March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Summer Term 2021 - Height, weight and vision checks for children in Reception & Year 1
Vision Catch Up's from 2019 - 20**

Measuring the height and weight of children in Reception is part of Public Health England's National Child Measurement Programme. Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) is contracted by Essex County Council, on behalf of Public Health England, to undertake these checks in your child's school. During the pandemic this has been suspended but with the opening of schools on March 8th we are looking to reintroduce the screening programme in the Summer term.

We employ Healthy Family Support Assistants who will be visiting your child's school between now and the end of the Summer term to undertake firstly vision checks and for some schools', growth measurements will also be taken. As we have two terms to catch up on it is unlikely that all children will be offered growth checks but if you have a concern about your child's height and weight then please do let us know. Children are measured fully clothed, except for their coats and shoes. All our staff have undergone Safeguarding Children training and are Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) cleared. All staff will be wearing full PPE whilst measuring children. After every child has been screened all equipment will be cleaned and staff will wash their hands regularly.

If your child's measurements are within the expected parameters you will not hear from us. If your child is outside the expected parameters, we will contact you to discuss services available in your local area. Once screening has been completed, you are very welcome to request a copy of your child's height and weight measurements, if these have been taken, for your own records.

Healthy eyes and vision are a critical part of children's overall development, including how they learn, play and to communicate in the world around them. Children's eyes continue to develop until they reach the age of seven, meaning problems such as amblyopia (Lazy eye), if detected, corrective treatment can be offered. We take this opportunity to screen your child's vision. If your child passes the vision test you will not hear from us. If your child fails the vision test we will contact you directly to discuss the results and offer an onward referral if the vision test indicates the need for further investigation. Please note that the vision test that we complete is a basic vision test and will not highlight stigmatism. This would be something a trained Ophthalmologists would have to screen for. Alongside our screening it is very important to take your child for annual appointments at your local opticians and dentists.

Due to Covid-19 we had to cut our screening short last year. With this in mind we would also like to offer any child in Year 1 that missed their vision screening last year the opportunity to have their vision tested at their schools this academic year.

All information we capture is treated confidentially and is held securely by us. It will not be shared with your child's school or with other children.

The information collected by us includes your child's height and weight, if taken, together with their name, date of birth, gender, home address, postcode, NHS Number and ethnicity. We store your child's information on their pre-existing local electronic health record, which is shared with their GP, Child Health Information Services and NHS Digital. NHS Digital is responsible for collecting all information relating to all the national public health programmes to help understand more about the health of the nation and how the NHS and Social Care services can improve care provided to people across England.

Please be assured that the information collected about your child will be shared by NHS Digital with Public Health England in a de-personalised form only. This means Public Health England will not be able to identify your child. Public Health England is responsible for working to protect and improve the nation's health.

Both NHS Digital and Public Health England will use the information from the National Child Measurement Programme to better understand numbers and trends in child weight and body mass index (BMI). This helps with the planning of services to support healthy lifestyles in your area. No information will ever be published by NHS Digital or Public Health England that identifies your child.

If your child was previously measured for the National Child Measurement Programme, NHS Digital may link your child's current and previous height and weight measurements. It may also link their measurements with other information it holds about your child such as their dental survey results or the reasons for any visits they may have made to hospital. Linking your child's information in this way helps better understand how and why the weight status of children is changing.

De-personalised information from the National Child Measurement Programme may also be shared by NHS Digital with other organisations, such as universities. This is to help improve health, care and services through research and planning. This information cannot be used to identify your child, and NHS Digital only ever shares information for research with the approval of an independent group of experts.

Withdrawing your child from the National Child Measurement Programme

If you are happy for your child to be measured in **Reception Year** you do not need to do anything.

If you do not want your child to take part in **Reception Year**, or if you have any questions, please contact us within the next seven days on the above number. Children will not be made to take part if they do not want to.

If you are happy for your child to have their vision test completed in **Reception/ Year 1** you are not required to do anything.

If you would not like your child to have a basic vision test completed in **Reception/Year 1** please contact us on the above number to opt out.

If for any reason the child cannot make the initial appointment, another will be arranged at a later date.

Feedback

We have included our website address: www.virgincare.co.uk/feedback which will take you directly to our Friends and Family feedback website where you will be able to feedback your thoughts and comments on our service, please use service code E0003.

Yours sincerely,

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

Further information, which you might find useful

1. Further information about the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service can be found at:
<https://www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/>
2. Further information about the National Child Measurement Programme can be found at
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/national-child-measurement-programme>
3. Information and fun ideas to help your kids stay healthy can be found at
<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>
4. Information about how NHS Digital and Public Health England collect and use information can be found at
<https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/keeping-patient-data-safe/how-we-look-after-your-health-and-care-information> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/about/personal-information-charter>

Information about the organisations NHS Digital has shared information from the National Child Measurement Programme can be found at <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-child-measurement-programme>