## Appendix 2: Specimen letter to Headteacher and board of governors

*This letter should be sent out to headteachers in advance of starting the NCMP for the 2007–08 academic year.*

#### Measuring height and weight in children in Reception and Year 6

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH) have a shared programme of work to improve children’s health and wellbeing. Promoting healthy weight in children is an important part of this programme. As part of this programme, the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) requires all children in Reception and Year 6 to be weighed and measured.

Many thanks to those of you whose schools participated in the NCMP last academic year. A national report on last year’s findings will be available on the DH website at [www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving](http://www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving) in early 2008. Your regional Public Health Observatory will undertake further local-level analysis.

The NCMP is essential to gather population-level surveillance data to allow analysis of trends in obesity, overweight and underweight in children and to inform local planning and delivery of services. The programme can also help to increase public and professional understanding of weight issues in children and be a useful vehicle for engaging with children and families about healthy lifestyles and weight issues.

Children will be measured with sensitivity and ensuring respect for their privacy and dignity. Health professionals from your PCT will oversee the measurements. Children will be asked to remove their shoes and any heavy outdoor clothing. They will be weighed in normal, light, indoor clothing.

No information about individual children’s weights or heights will be disclosed to school staff, neither will such information be disclosed to pupils or parents, unless a parent specifically requests their child’s information within a month of measurement. All data collected will be stored securely and will be anonymised before being shared confidentially within the NHS.

The NCMP is a priority programme for the DCSF and the DH and we are very keen that all schools support it. The weighing and measuring process will involve minimum disruption and very little extra work for school staff. To enable us to conduct this programme, we ask headteachers to assist us in the following areas:

**A Sending of letters to parents to inform them about the NCMP**

An example letter is enclosed, which should be sent to all parents of children in the relevant years. The letter explains the process and includes two forms:

* Form 1: to be sent to the PCT if parents want to receive feedback of their child’s height and weight
* Form 2: to complete and return if parents do not want their child to take part.

**B Provide lists of relevant year-group**

We ask you to provide the PCT staff undertaking the NCMP with a list of children in Reception and Year 6, showing every pupil’s:

* Name (first name and last name);
* sex;
* date of birth;
* home postcode;
* ethnicity (if available from school information management systems or from school health systems).

These lists should identify the total number of children in each class and the number whose parents have withdrawn them from the programme, but should not give the names or personal details of children excluded in this way.

You will also need to provide the DCSF Unique Reference Number for the school.

NB: when the data are transferred from the PCT to the Department of Health, pupil names will not be sent, postcode will be converted to lower super output area (average population 1500) and date of birth converted to age in months, to increase confidentiality of the data.

**C Identify a room or area where measurements can be taken privately**

**D Designate staff to help to bring children to and from the measurement area**

**E Provide of an information leaflet entitled *Why your child’s weight matters* to parents who request it, or, where appropriate, signposting parents to it online**

I would be most grateful for your support and co-operation as we undertake the measurement programme over the coming months. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Director of Public Health, XXX PCT Director of Children Services, XXX