

SC MASS SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Students entering Head Start, Early Childhood Development (PreK), kindergarten, or first grade programs should have a comprehensive health assessment performed by the student's health care practitioner that includes in office vision and hearing risk assessments and/or screenings. Students who do not pass a vision screening should be referred for further examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Students who do not pass a hearing screening should be referred to their primary care practitioner who may refer to a specialist if necessary. Students should also have a comprehensive dental examination by the student's dentist within the 12 months prior to enrollment in school for the first time.

The following school-based *mass screening* intervals are recommended as priority screenings for schools in South Carolina. Other grade levels and/or student groups may be screened based on the school nurse's knowledge of specific concerns for a school population. All students are recommended to have well-child examinations with their medical provider. School nurses should work with families to help those without a medical and dental home to secure one and to understand the importance of routine visits.

In addition to the mass screening recommendations, school nurses should screen students who miss a scheduled mass screening and assess/evaluate students who have been referred for evaluation due to a concern by a parent/guardian or a school team member. Also, certain individual student health-related assessments or evaluations may be required, as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to assess a child in all areas related to a suspected disability. Under IDEA, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities assessments may be required.

School-based Mass Screening Recommendations

Note: Schools should accept documentation of screening results from a licensed practitioner in lieu of the school-based screening. Parents/guardians may request that their child not be screened at school. Such requests should be submitted in writing and maintained as per state and district record retention policy.

Vision:

- All students in Early Childhood Development or Head Start programs preferably within 2 months of enrollment unless the program guidelines specify otherwise
- All students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and *at least once* in grades 9 – 12
- All students who are new to the district and who do not have records of vision screening within the past year, regardless of grade

Hearing:

- All students in Early Childhood Development or Head Start programs preferably within 2 months of enrollment unless the program guidelines specify otherwise
- All students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and *at least once* in grades 9 – 12
- All students who are new to the district and who do not have records of hearing screening within the past year, regardless of grade

Dental:

- All students in Early Childhood Development or Head Start programs preferably within 2 months of enrollment unless the program guidelines specify otherwise
- All students in grades K, 3, 7 and *at least once* in grades 9 – 12
- All students who are new to the district regardless of grade

Grades listed for Dental correspond with SC Code of Laws Section 44-8-10 through 44-8-60.

Blood Pressure:

- *At least once* in grades 9 – 12*

*Current recommendations suggest that asymptomatic children aged 3 and older should get blood pressure checks at their well child visits with their health care provider; mass screenings at school are not currently recommended or disapproved.

Body Mass Index (BMI):

- All students in grades 5, 8, and *at least once* in grades 9 –12

Grades listed for BMI correspond with SC Code of Laws Section 59-10-10. Body composition measures are reported by physical education teachers to a student's parent/guardian as part of the individual student's overall fitness status. BMI is the most commonly used index of overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence. School nurses should not duplicate the efforts of the physical education teachers but may work with physical education teachers to provide resources that students may need.

Postural Screening:

At this time, mass screenings on asymptomatic students are not recommended. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the Scoliosis Research Society, the Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America, and the American Academy of Pediatrics advocate screening for scoliosis in girls at 10 and 12 years and once in male adolescents at 13 or 14 years as part of medical home preventive services, if screening is performed by well-trained screening personnel.

References:

General Information

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Vision

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Hearing

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Postural Screening

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Blood Pressure

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Notes:

There are no changes to recommendations since the 25/26 school year publication. Any changes are grammatical in nature or to update references and/or links.

26/27 Version approved by:

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