STUDENT HEALTH SCREENINGS

The School Nurse is responsible for insuring compliance of the Code of Virginia 22.1-273 concerning the screening of students in public schools.

These Codes may be found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines and are summarized as:

Vision and hearing screening on grades K, 3, 7 and 10 mandated to be completed within sixty (60) administrative days.

Assistance to complete these screenings may be provided by teachers, aides, and/or trained volunteers or agencies such as the Lions Club.

SCOLIOSIS FACTS FOR PARENTS

In accordance with Virginia State law, parents of students in grades five through ten will receive this yearly information sheet containing important facts about **Scoliosis and Scoliosis screening.**

Scoliosis is an abnormal curvature or turning of the spine. It affects 2-3% of the population or an estimated 600,000 people in the United States. If left untreated, scoliosis can progress to a serious problem, causing back pain and degenerative arthritis of the spine. It may lead to disk disease or sciatica. It can also threaten the psychological well-being of a young adult when there is an obvious deformity.

Although scoliosis may result from an injury, a birth defect, or a crippling disease, 90% of cases are from unknown causes. It may run in families and affects girls seven times more often than boys. It most frequently develops during the growth spurt between ages 10 and 15, but can also develop or progress later in life. Early detection and intervention may prevent further structural deformity and resulting secondary problems.

Scoliosis screening is an observation of the student's spine while standing as well as performing a forward bend. A scoliometer, a device for measuring the amount of abnormal
curvature in the spine, may also be used during screening. Treatment of scoliosis varies between no treatments needed, bracing of the spine, to spinal fusion surgery.

Since the development of scoliosis is gradual and usually painless, scoliosis may develop without the parent or child being aware. It is important for parents to monitor their child's development during these growing years and to have students checked by the family physician routinely. The signs of scoliosis may include uneven shoulders, a shoulder blade that appears more prominent than the other, uneven waistline creases, one hip higher than the other, and/or a leaning to one side.

If you have concerns about your child's spinal health, contact your family health care provider or school nurse for follow up. If you do not have a primary care physician, with your written permission, the school nurse can provide an initial screening. Should further evaluation be necessary she can direct you to other health care resources.