



# Scoliosis Screening Guidelines For Schools 2018

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# Acknowledgements



# Foreword

*Scoliosis Screening Guidelines* provide schools with a framework for establishing the scoliosis screening program required under New York State Education Law section 905 and the regulations promulgated thereunder, specifically 8 NYCRR Part 136. These regulations were amended in 2017 effective July 1, 2018. These guidelines will assist schools with understanding the purpose of scoliosis screening in schools and developing an effective scoliosis screening program including planning, implementation, and follow-up procedures. This document is intended for use by administrators and school health personnel. Every attempt has been made to ensure that the information and resources contained in this document reflect best practice in the field of school health. School districts should review these guidelines with their counsel, as necessary to incorporate the guidance with district policy.

## Purpose of a School Scoliosis Screening Program

The purpose of a scoliosis screening program is to identify students with spinal curvatures that will require further follow up evaluation by a healthcare provider. Scoliosis, a lateral and/or rotational curvature of the spine that may include vertebral rotation, is the most common spine deformity in the pediatric population. The development of this curvature occurs most often between the ages of 10-18 years. The skeletons of youth in this age group grow rapidly, and therefore there is a chance that a curve may worsen as the spine continues to grow. Curve progression occurs at rates 7-8 times higher in girls than boys. Identifying curves as early as possible and before further growth occurs, increases treatment options if needed.

Other less common curvatures of the spine that may be noted during screening include lordosis and kyphosis. Lordosis is an accentuated forward curvature of the lower spine. Kyphosis is an accentuated rounding of the upper spine. Findings indicative of either of these curvatures also warrant an evaluation by a healthcare provider.

## Legislative and Regulatory Background

Education Law §902 requires school districts to employ a duly licensed qualified physician, or a nurse practitioner to perform the duties of the director of school health services. The director of school health services is commonly referred to as the medical director.

Education Law §905, requires the director of school health services of public schools to conduct screening examinations of vision, hearing, and scoliosis of all students as defined in C[ { { ã•ã } ^!ç Regulations. The results of a screening for scoliosis that is positive must be provided to the parent/guardian in writing within 90 days of the date of the screening. A district may receive a waiver from performing scoliosis screenings from the Commissioner for financial costs, after a public hearing is held in the district regarding such waiver.

Ô[ { { ã•ã } ^!ç ÁÜ^\*~ |æã } Á§136.3(e)(1)(i) requires that scoliosis screenings are conducted in school if results of scoliosis screening are not provided to the school on the •č å^} ç Áhealth certificate (the physical exam completed by a private healthcare provider)

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation §136.3(2)(f), scoliosis screening is not required where a student or the parent or person in parental relation to such student objects thereto on the grounds that such examinations conflict with their genuine and sincere religious beliefs. A written and signed statement from the student, parent or person in parental relation to the student that they hold such beliefs must be submitted to the principal or the § 87(2)(b) designee in which case the principal or § 87(2)(b) designee may require supporting documents.





screened at school should be notified in writing, ideally preceded by a telephone call, that the screening was not on the health certificate or health appraisal and that it cannot be completed at school. The parent/guardian should be instructed to follow up with their provider.

## Education and Communication

A few weeks or days before the screening exams are to be conducted, school health personnel should instruct students on what the screening exam is for, what an exam for scoliosis entails, and when it will be conducted. Students are to be instructed on what they can wear during the screening. This can be accomplished during a class, small group, assembly, webinar or other multimedia presentation.

Written information on the upcoming scoliosis screening should be posted on the school website, in a newsletter, or in a written notice provided to parents/guardians. This should inform parents/guardians that a screening is performed when the information is not included on the physical exam form submitted to the school, or the physical examination was completed at school. Information should include when screenings will be completed.

## Equipment and Location

School health personnel will need to ensure they have the necessary equipment to conduct a scoliosis screening. Recommended equipment includes but is not limited to:

- ◁ Privacy screens

examiner may need a desk and chair to use to conduct the exam and document results

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## **Conducting the Screening**

Best practice would be that another adult is with the examiner. Schools are encouraged to check with their insurance carrier to see if the presence of two adults is required.

<b><i>Normal Findings</i></b>	<b><i>Findings Indicating a Curvature</i></b>
The head is centered over the mid buttocks (gluteal cleft)	Head not centered directly above the mid buttocks (gluteal cleft)
The shoulders are level	One shoulder higher than the other
The shoulder blades are level and equally prominent	One shoulder blade higher or more prominent than the other
Ribs are symmetrical	One side of ribs more prominent than the other
Arms are equally distant from the body	Space between arms and body greater on one side
Spine appears straight and midline	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> appear to rotate to one side, or student

Any findings indicating a curvature require that the parent/guardian is informed in writing and that they should follow up with their private healthcare provider

the health professional conducting the exam § 136.3(e)(iii)(2).

The results of the screening are recorded on a cumulative health record

## Resources

[American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics- Statement of Endorsement Screening for Idiopathic Scoliosis in Adolescents](#)

[New York State Center for School Health](#)