"What is Scoliosis?"

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We provide information regarding scoliosis to the parents of all students in 5th through 10th grades.

Scoliosis is a condition in which the spine curves abnormally from side to side rather than being straight. Anyone can get scoliosis. However, the most common type usually occurs in children age 11 and older. Girls are more likely than boys to have this type of scoliosis. Children are more likely to have scoliosis if a parent or sibling have been diagnosed with the condition. Most of the time mild scoliosis causes no pain and is not obvious until the curvature is moderate to severe.

Some early signs that parents may observe are:

1. One shoulder may appear higher than the other.
2. One hip may appear higher than the other.
3. One shoulder blade may stick out more than the other one.
4. The waistline may look uneven.
5. The child's ribs may look higher on one side.
6. Clothing may not fit right or hems may hang unevenly.

If your child has an uneven curvature of his/her spine, observation or treatment may be recommended. Sometimes treatment may involve bracing or even surgery. If you are unsure, you may ask your child's school nurse to screen your child. The procedure for screening is simple. The school nurse looks at your child's back while he/she is standing or in the forward bending position and then places a small instrument called a scoliometer on his/her back. This instrument measures the degree of curvature. The nurse will then inform you if you need to follow up with your child's physician. When the condition is detected early and is appropriately treated, progressive deformity of the spine can be prevented and the child can be protected from years of emotional and physical pain that may accompany this deformity.

You may have your child examined for scoliosis at any time by your child's physician or by the school nurse. Please feel free to call the nurse at your child's school if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Courtney Bolling, RN
School Nurse Coordinator
Scott County Public Schools

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