

Written Case Study Handout
(Optional)

HANDOUT

Part 1

Johnny Upton, a student in your class, has always been overweight and less active than other students in the class. However lately you have noticed he has rapidly gained weight. During recess and lunch he doesn't play with the other students much anymore. Johnny often seems tired in class and has difficulty concentrating on his work. He is falling behind in his learning and he is not interacting with his friends much anymore.

You have noticed that he has excessive amounts of food for recess and lunch and spends the whole time eating. It is all heavy food – potato cakes, pizzas, pies and pastries.

You are part of the Learning Support Team and the team has been looking at Johnny this year and becoming increasingly concerned. Rather than being just overweight, they are worried that Johnny has now become really obese. They are concerned this is a real risk to his health and wellbeing and now feel it is an issue that should be raised with the principal.

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Part 3

Two weeks and then the school holidays go by, and you observe that not much seems to have changed for Johnny. In fact he now sometimes falls asleep in the classroom in the afternoon and the other students laugh at him.

You did follow up with Johnny's parents before the holidays and Mrs Upton said that they had gone to the dietician at the local Family Care Centre and Johnny had a diet plan but his school lunch box shows that she isn't following it. You are not sure what the Principal or the school can do now to follow up on this. His mother seems so nice and she is concerned about Johnny.

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Part 2

You raise concerns with the Principal and he calls Mr and Mrs Upton and arranges a meeting. You, as Johnny's teacher, attend as well.

The parents seem like nice people, well dressed, and they love their son. They enquire if Johnny is doing okay in class or misbehaving. You say Johnny is a great student and you enjoy having him in your class. You comment that lately you have some concerns about how his weight is impacting on him at school. It seems to be stopping him from joining in on activities and socialising with the other kids. He seems to be always tired in class and can't concentrate on his work.

The principal asks if Johnny is getting enough sleep or could there be another reason for this tiredness.

Johnny's parents say they are unaware of anything that could be causing the tiredness, other than his weight. His father is flippant, saying that they will sign Johnny up for some diet shakes.

Mrs Upton seems to take it more seriously. She says he is their only child and she can't say no to him when he asks for his favourite food. She tells you that he is not that active at home either –he spends a lot of time watching TV and eating.

The principal comments that Johnny's weight and lack of activity could be having a serious impact on his health and wellbeing. He then strongly suggests that Johnny should have a checkup with his doctor to see if everything is okay. The principal also suggests that Johnny also see a dietician to get advice about his food intake. Mrs Upton agrees to take Johnny to see his doctor for a health check and to a dietician.

The principal says that would be great. He also says that he will check in with them in two weeks' time to see how the appointments have gone, as he likes to make sure that the school also follows anything that is recommended.

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Part 4

You share your concerns with the Principal who decides to ring the Child Wellbeing Unit as Johnny's mother is not effectively using the dietician's services to reduce the risk of harm to Johnny's health and wellbeing.

The Principal speaks to an assessment officer in the Child Wellbeing Unit. The assessment officer checks the WellNet database and tells the Principal that no previous child protection concerns have been reported. However, the assessment officer agrees that there could be serious concerns about Johnny's wellbeing and suggests the school contact the dietician for more information, which is allowable under child protection legislation.

The Principal contacts the dietician who confirms that she has seen Johnny and his mother. She also says that his mother did not show up for her second appointment.

The dietician is concerned as she recommended that Johnny's mother take him to his doctor for a medical assessment as soon as possible.

The mother disclosed at the meeting that Johnny was very demanding and threw tantrums if he did not get what he wanted. The dietician felt that the mother was not capable of following through any diet that Johnny didn't like. The dietician also said that Johnny's father did not see any problems with Johnny's weight and could not see any reason to take him to a doctor.

The Principal now feels that the situation is very concerning and that he and Johnny's teacher should meet again with Johnny's parents to encourage them to take Johnny to a doctor as soon as possible.

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