Dear Reviewer,

The authors of this manuscript are appreciative of the comments and questions raised that have enabled us to improve the quality of the submission.

We have addressed each comment/questions as indicated below for each reviewer. Each question is followed by the respective response as well as the location in the document where the change has been effected. In the revised manuscript, we have highlighted the changes in red font.

Reviewer 1
1. Reference 12 is not correct. The study by Ntandou pertained to adults.

Response: The error in reference 12 has been corrected. The correct reference is Chaulic et. al., 1998 (see page 3; line 86)

2. The studies by Dabone C et al on school-children's body weight and food habits in urban Burkina Faso are overlooked.

Response: The indicated study (Dabone et al) has been identified and referenced in the discussion (see page 12, line 283)

3. Line 92: The authors should be more specific in stating that the older the overweight child the more his overweight tracks into adulthood.

Response: The introduction has been amended to reflect the risk between childhood and adult-onset overweight (page 4, lines 93-94)

4. Would it not be relevant to list the main hypotheses or research questions?

Response: Research question has been included in the background (see page 4, lines 109-110)

5. The justification for the selected age-range has to be given: why this instead of primary or secondary school age-range?
Response: Justification for selecting 9-15-year olds has been indicated in methods section (see page 5, lines 117-119)

6. Household assets that were included to assess household wealth should be listed.

Response: Information on household assets was presented in the section on socio-demographic data. (see page 7, lines 155-156)

The footnote under Table 1 has also been revised to include a complete list of assets included in the wealth indicator. (see page 20, table 1, as table foot note)

7. Sport activities considered to assess physical activity need to be listed. Whether only school activities were considered should also be mentioned. Similarly, the types of home chores that are referred to should be indicated.

Response: A list of 9 sporting activities were listed from which participants responded to. These were football, ampe (indigenous Ghanaian jumping game), hockey, table tennis, lawn tennis, rope skipping, volleyball, basketball, and swimming. The question on sports participation was generic and was not limited to school.

The only home activity listed was gardening

(see page 7, lines 174-176)
8. How were the 60 listed foods for the FFQ selected? Was the questionnaire pretested and validated against a more exhaustive dietary method? The statistical processing and analysis of dietary data is not described.

There is hardly any discussion on the dietary data.

Response: The process for generating and pretesting the FFQ has been described. (see page 7 lines 164 to 171)

Dietary data analysis was mainly descriptive using summary analysis (page 8; lines 195-196)

Discussion has been revised to include comments on the findings related to diet (see page 13; lines 304-312)

9. One has to assume that the classification of household socioeconomic status factors 1 and 2 is in tertiles, according to table 1.

Response: Yes. The groups are tertiles. This is indicated in the data analysis section (see page 8, lines 194-195)

10. Table 4: control variables should be given in footnotes.

Response: Table 4 has been revised to include additional control variables as a footnote (see page 23).
11. Line 218: What is the logical reason for controlling for individual factors (other than 'type of school'), dietary, physical and household-levels factors when assessing the association of overweight/obesity with type of school? What factors then would explain this association?

Response: The purpose of the analysis reported on page 10 was to identify risk factors of overweight and obesity. Thus individual level factors (eg diet, sex, physical activity) as well as ecological factors (eg type of school) were included in the model.

12. Line 274: The WHO growth reference for children is no longer new and its use should not be regarded as a particular strength of the study.

Response: The section on the WHO growth reference has been modified to address this comment on ‘age’ of the reference curves

(see page 14; lines 314-318)

13. The crude dietary assessment method should be discussed as a major limitation of the study which could explain the absence of significant relationships of food habits with overweight/obesity. Was it not possible to compute some kind of a composite score of index as a measure of healthy/unhealthy eating patterns?

Response: Limitations of the dietary analysis and its implications for interpreting the data has been indicated on page 13, lines 304-312.

14. General comments: The paper addresses a very relevant topic, that of increasing overweight/obesity even among children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. The study was well-done. The sample size and the sampling process confer particular strength to the study. The paper is clear and well-written although more detail on methods and results should be provided.
Response: We acknowledge the commendation with thanks.

15. We would have liked to see the nutrition transition presented in the introduction as a major determinant of increasing overweight and as fueled not only by urbanisation but more broadly globalization and technological advances.

Response: The introduction has been revised to comprehensively describe the role of nutrition transition in the etiology of overweight (see page 3; lines 70-74)

In the discussion, the authors should be cautious not to convey that diet is not involved in increasing overweight while lack of physical activity is, something that Pepsi and Coca Cola would like the population to believe. Although it cannot be significantly correlated with body habitus, diet certainly has a role to play. The difficulty is to accurately assess usual dietary intake. In this study, a rather crude method of dietary assessment was used and this should be mentioned in the discussion as a limitation of the study. absence of significant relationships of food habits with overweight/obesity. Was it not possible to compute some kind of a composite score of index as a measure of healthy/unhealthy eating patterns?

Response: The discussion has been revised with a paragraph that moderates the risk of misinterpreting the dietary findings (see page 13, lines 304-312)

Reviewer 2

1. The title "Prevalence and determinants of overweight and obesity among school-aged children in urban Ghana": 
A determinant is often presented as "cause of causes" in casual relationship. As this study is a cross-sectional study, it cannot infer causal relationship. So it is inappropriate to use "determinant" in this study.

Response: Title has been revised as follows:
"Prevalence and Predictors of overweight and obesity among school-aged children in urban Ghana" (see page 1, line 1)

2. There should be a blank line between paragraphs!

Response: Separation of paragraphs has been included as appropriate, throughout the manuscript

3. Please add approval number in "study population" section (Line 120-121)

Response: Ethics review approval numbers included as follows:
The study was approved by the Ethical Review Boards of McGill University (A09-B21-09A), Canada and the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (004/09-10), University of Ghana, Legon. (See page 5, lines 124-125)

4. As stated in Line 129-138, 57*20+64*36=3444 pupils were contacted. But only 3089 children were recruited. Please give more detailed information about the sample size flow (including exclusion criteria).

Response: Children who were sampled and those who could not be included in the final sample is indicated in the first paragraph under results. (see page 9; lines 212-216)
5. For 57 public schools, they had both primary and junior high school departments. What about the 64 private schools? Are they exclusively primary, or junior high, or both?

Response: The private schools were mix or either primary alone, or combined schools with both primary and junior high levels. This has clarified on (see page 6, line 143)

6. Is there any missing data for each characteristic? Please report the missing data.

Response: Cases with complete data were included in the analyses. Instances of missing values were excluded in the multivariate models (see page 8; line 197)

7. Please unify the "P" value. In Line 186, it was "p", while in other places, it was "P".

Response: Capitalization of ‘p’ in indicated instances of P-value has been corrected (see page 9, lines 201 and 206)

8. Line 256: SES. For those not well-known abbreviations, they should be defined in the text at first use.

Response: SES has been spelled out in full as Socio-economic status. Revisions have been made to address other acronyms not previously spelt out at first time use (see page 8, line 191)
9. Table 4: please add a column for P values.

Response: Column for p-values added in page 23, table 4.