

Backpacks

Nearly all students carry a backpack at some point in their school career. Here are some guidelines for optimal use of backpacks for children.

- Should not exceed 15% of the child’s weight.
 - For example: the backpack of an 80-pound child should not exceed 12 pounds
 - Keep unnecessary items out of the backpack
 - Thin out binders periodically
 - Empty and re-pack every day to be sure the child is not carrying things s/he doesn’t need that day
 - Put the heaviest items closest to the body
- Should not protrude above shoulder level
- Always use **BOTH shoulder straps**
 - Backpacks should not be slung over one shoulder!
- Should rest in the middle of the back in the contour of the lower back, not over the buttocks.
- Should be snug against the body – **use the waist straps**
 - The forces on the spine are greater when the backpack is carried farther from the body
- Padded straps help with the pressure on the shoulders
- Lift by squatting to the level of the backpack, hold it close to the body and use the legs to lift
- Child should not have to lean to the side or bend forward to balance the backpack
- The back should not be arched when carrying the backpack