

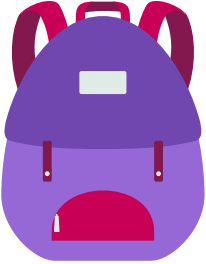
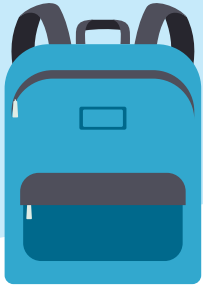


The Weight and Carriage of Schoolbags

1. Reducing bag weight

- Make sure that your child does not take books and/or copybooks to school that do not form part of the daily timetable.
- Unnecessary items such as raincoats (when the weather is fine), extra stationery, games and toys, the latter, applicable in the case of Primary School students, are to be avoided.
- Bulky lunch cases are to be avoided.
- Lightweight water bottles are to be used.
- Checking your child's bag goes a long way in reducing the weight of schoolbags.
- Look for second hand textbooks or textbooks which had been previously bought by their relatives (brothers/sisters/cousins etc.) and/or friends. These can be kept at home. There will be no need for the students to carry heavy books to school since the copy given by the school can be left in class.
- Make sure that in the case of Primary School students, the tablet is carried in its proper case and is not put inside the schoolbag.





2. Choice of Schoolbags

- Backpacks, rather than traditional school bags or sports bags, allow the load to be carried evenly over both shoulders.
- The purchase of well-designed backpacks with well-padded, wide, adjustable shoulder straps helps to prevent back pain.
- Backpack materials can add to the weight, so the most lightweight but durable options need to be considered.
- Bags should be equipped with two straps and worn on both shoulders.
- Double-strap backpacks help in ensuring that spinal posture is not altered even when climbing steps with a load of 10% of body weight.
- Bags with waist belts are particularly useful when bags are heavy.
- Bags with wheels are to be avoided if stairs are present since these would need to be carried.
- A bag that is too big or that has not been adjusted to fit correctly will result in discomfort and a greater feeling of effort.
- Schoolbags with several extra compartments will encourage the students to carry more items with them to school.

3. Carriage of Schoolbags

Help/remind your child that:

- Bags should be worn about 5cm above the waist.
- Correct lifting techniques, through the bending of legs, rather than the bending of the back need to be adopted.
- Care needs to be taken when lifting schoolbags on the back. Swinging the schoolbag onto the back applies a combination of twisting and side bending of the spine which could cause excessive stress or strain on the spine.
- When fitted correctly, the backpack should contour to the child's back and not hang off the shoulders.
- The heaviest items should be placed closest to the back of the learner.
- The backpack's compartments need to be used to pack items securely and minimize the load moving around.
- Students living far from school should avoid walking to school and carrying their schoolbag.
- Provide your son/daughter with adequate footwear to prevent back pain while carrying the schoolbag.

