

WHAT'S BEING DONE:

- Health and physical education classes educate students on the effects of backpack weight on their bodies through videos and demonstrations.
- Teacher teams coordinate homework assignments, projects, and tests to stagger the need for textbooks.
- Teachers work together to limit the number of textbooks needed for homework each night to two.
- Teacher teams discuss ideas and alternatives to using textbooks for homework.
- Teachers daily reinforce good decision-making regarding the need to use textbooks for homework.
- Extra time is provided at the end of each school day for students to assess their need for textbooks for homework assignments.
- Student orientations provide awareness of backpack guidelines and safety.
- Teachers and school administrators annually develop a comprehensive list of necessary supplies that is mailed to parents during the summer.

Backpack Safety

produced and printed by the
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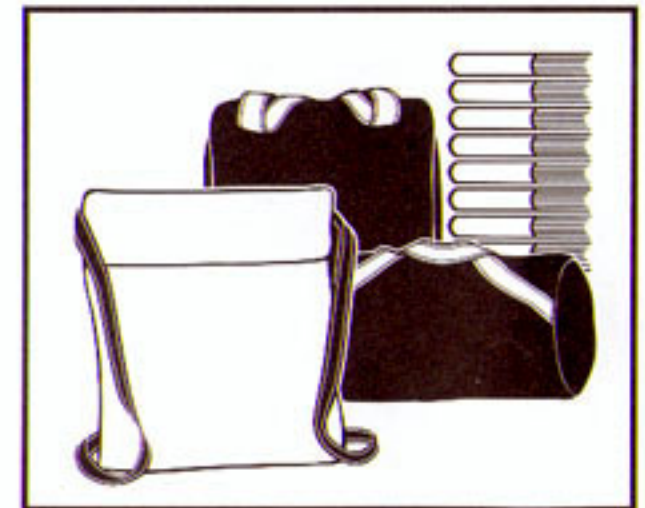
www.wcasd.net

**For more information,
contact your child's school.**



**West Chester Area
School District**

Backpack Safety



**Choose Right
Pack Right
Lift Right
Wear Right**

WATCH THOSE BACKPACK WEIGHTS!

In recent years, there have been increasing reports of damage to students' backs through the use of heavy backpacks. In response to these reports, the West Chester Area School Board appointed a Backpack Study Committee.

The committee issued a number of recommendations for the upper elementary (fourth and fifth) and middle school grades. These recommendations involve a cooperative effort from both staff and parents.

The purpose of this brochure is to educate parents and students on backpack safety. We also want to advise parents and students of measures the district is taking to reduce backpack weights. The district will be monitoring the results of these efforts, and parents and staff may be surveyed during the school year.

By working together, we hope to achieve the district's goal of limiting our students' backpacks to no more than 15 pounds.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP...

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BACKPACK:

Choose a backpack with wide, padded, adjustable shoulder straps. Look for backpacks with waist belts, which help keep weight evenly distributed. Backpacks with separate compartments also allow the even distribution of weight.



LOADING THE BACKPACK:

Put heaviest items in first, closest to your back and distribute items evenly throughout the backpack compartments. Don't overload the backpack. Carry only what is needed.

LIFTING THE BACKPACK:

Face the backpack. Bend at the knees when picking up the backpack. Lifting this way protects your back. Put on one strap at a time.

WEARING THE BACKPACK:

Wear backpack snugly (not tight) over BOTH shoulders. The backpack should rest on the middle of the back. If it hangs too low, the upper back and shoulders carry all the weight. Don't forget to use the waist belt to help distribute weight.

UNLOADING THE BACKPACK:

When unloading the backpack, remember to take out all unnecessary items. Parents should "spot check" backpacks regularly for extra items. Backpacks should not contain CDs, CD players, etc. as they add unnecessary weight.

