



# Backpack Safety

Due to increased public concern regarding the health risks of improper backpack selection and use among students, the school district would like to offer the following guidelines to assist parents in helping their children prevent muscle strain and joint injuries. The safety tips\* below are designed to help you in choosing a backpack and in helping your child learn to use it safely.

## Backpack Selection

- **Lightweight-** the weight of the backpack should not add to the load.
- **Wide padded shoulder straps** which do not dig into shoulders.
- **Padded back** to protect against sharp edges of objects inside the pack.
- **Rolling backpack for heavy loads.** (Note that they must still be carried when going up stairs.)
- **Waist strap** to distribute the weight evenly.

## Safe Use of a Backpack

- **Always use both shoulder straps** to distribute the weight of the backpack evenly.
- **Firmly tighten the straps** to hold the backpack two inches above the waist.
- **Pack light.** Do not carry a backpack load that is more than 10-20 per cent of one's total body weight.
- **Organize the load** with the heaviest items closest to the center of the back.
- **Make frequent trips to the school locker** between classes to replace books.
- **Use correct lifting techniques** by bending both knees when picking up a heavy load.
- **Do not store backpack with handle extended** to avoid causing people to trip.

\*Taken from recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatricians and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.