

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
INFORMATIONAL BOARD REPORT**

**REQUEST TO WAIVE, IN PART, APPLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING BOARD
POLICY**

02-0037-000 STUDENT BACKPACK USE

SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

Background Information:

Board policy permits the Board to waive, if special circumstances exist, application of a specific policy. See Board Policy number 22-0019-000, entitled Waivers from Board of Education Policies.

Discussion:

The Superintendent incorporates the contents of the Board Report entitled Request to Delete the Following Board Policy: 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use, as if fully set forth herein.

The Superintendent believes that special circumstances exist to waive the application of the Student Backpack Use policy, insofar as it may pertain to carrying cases and string bags used by students to carry electronic devices used for instructional purposes. The following definitions apply for the purposes of this waiver request.

- A. **String Bag** means a container which is open-netted.
- B. **Carrying Case** means a fitted container used to transport an item.
- C. **Electronic Device** means a laptop computer, Chromebook, I-Pad, or tablet used for instructional purposes.

The Superintendent believes that there will be substantial benefit to permitting students to use string bags and carrying cases to carry electronic devices by virtue of reduced damages to electronic devices and related costs which would result from such a waiver.

The Superintendent further believes that the benefit of waiving the application of the Student Backpack Use Board policy as to string bags and carrying cases will greatly outweigh any possible detrimental effect which might result from granting the waiver.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

Based on the above, the Superintendent recommends that the Board waive, in part, the application of Board Policy 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use by adopting the following resolution:

1. The Board hereby waives the application of Board Policy 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use, insofar as it prohibits the use of string bags and fitted carrying cases by students to carry electronic devices. For the purposes of this waiver, the following definitions shall apply.
 - A. String Bag means a container which is open-netted.
 - B. Carrying Case means a fitted container used to transport an item.
 - C. Electronic Device means a laptop computer, Chromebook, I-Pad, or tablet used for instructional purposes.
2. This waiver shall remain in effect until the Board takes final action regarding the Superintendent's request that Board Policy number 02-0037-000 entitled Student Backpack Use be deleted from the Board Policy Manual.

Attachments:

1. Current Board Policy 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use
2. Current Board Policy 22-0019-000 Waivers from Board of Education Policies.

POLICY TITLE: Student Backpack Use		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 5/20/2002	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED:	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: Students		

Students are permitted to use backpacks or similar items to carry their schoolbooks, materials, or equipment while traveling to and from school. However, because of the importance of maintaining a safe environment in the school, such items must be stored in lockers or designated areas during the school day. The school principal will have the authority to make exceptions based on medical or health conditions, or disability. Harford County Public Schools shall not assume responsibility for the theft, loss, or damage to a student's backpack or similar item, or its contents.

The following conditions shall apply.

1. Bookbags, backpacks, etc. shall be stored in the student's assigned locker or designated area.
2. Musical instrument cases shall be stored in the music room or designated storage area.
3. Athletic bags and gear shall be stored in either the student's locker, assigned physical education locker, or designated storage area, as appropriate.

If any student is determined to be in violation of this policy, the school administrator will take corrective action, including, but not limited to the following:

- Requiring the student to place the item in his/her locker
- Taking reasonable steps to notify the parent
- Initiating progressive disciplinary action for repeated violations or insubordination as appropriate, which may include suspension from school.

The principal or assistant principal may make a reasonable search of a student, including the search of a student's backpack or other belongings, on the school premises if he or she has a reasonable belief that the student is in possession of an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of this State or a rule or policy of the Board of Education. This search shall be made in the presence of a third party.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Patricia L. Skebeck, Secretary and Treasurer
Board of Education of Harford County

Policy Action Dates		
ACTION	DATE	
Adopted	5/20/2002	

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Unknown		JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: Unknown
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:		JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
DESIGNEE NAME: N/A		JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE: N/A
REFERENCE 1 TYPE: Legal	REFERENCE 1 NO. 13A.08.01.14	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION: COMAR
REFERENCE 2 TYPE: Legal	REFERENCE 2 NO. Section 7-308	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION: Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005: Students .07.01.136		

POLICY TITLE: Waivers from Board of Education Policies		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/13/1994	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: 1/21/1998	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED: 5/6/2002
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: School System Governance		

Given special circumstances, the Board of Education shall consider requests to waive policy.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Patricia L. Skebeck, Secretary and Treasurer
Board of Education of Harford County

Policy Action Dates		
ACTION	DATE	
Adopted	6/13/1994	
Amended	1/21/1998	
Reaffirmed	5/6/2002	

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Unknown		JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: Unknown
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:		JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
DESIGNEE NAME: N/A		JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE: N/A
REFERENCE 1 TYPE:	REFERENCE 1 NO.	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 2 TYPE:	REFERENCE 2 NO.	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005: General Administration .02.09.057		