

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

To promote the safety and security of students and staff, Harford County Public Schools has established policy for the use and storage of backpacks, bags, and similar items (collectively, “bags”) during the school day. These bags are defined as an item no larger than 4.5 inches x 8.5 inches which is used to carry student belongings in accord with this policy. Students are permitted to use bags to carry their schoolbooks, materials, or equipment while traveling to and from school. However, to maintain a safe environment within the school, backpacks must be stored in lockers or designated areas during the school day. The superintendent or their designee has the authority to make exceptions for medical, health, or disability reasons, or other qualifying factors, such as a lack of lockers, special events, or extracurricular activities. Harford County Public Schools assumes no responsibility for the theft, loss, or damage to a student’s backpack or its contents.

Elementary School Policy:

- Elementary school students are permitted to carry bags to and from their classrooms at the beginning and end of the school day. However, bags must be stored in designated spots within the classroom during the day. Students are not allowed to carry bags in the hallways throughout the school day, except when arriving or departing from school. Music instrument cases must be stored in the music room or another designated area.

Middle and High School Policy:

1. Students may bring bags into school but must store them in their assigned lockers or designated storage areas after arriving. Students may carry 4.5 x 8.5 inch nontransparent bags with them for personal hygiene purposes.
2. **Musical Instruments:** Musical instrument cases must be stored in the music room or another designated area.
3. **Athletic Gear:** Athletic bags and gear should be stored in the student’s locker, physical education locker, or designated storage areas and should not be carried during the day.

Exceptions:

- Students with medical, health, or disability-related needs, or those in buildings without lockers, may apply for permission to carry bags throughout the day. Additionally, special circumstances such as:
 - **Special Events** (e.g., field trips, off-campus events),
 - **Extracurricular Activities** (e.g., sports, music, academic competitions),
 - **Emergency Situations** (e.g., weather-related events, lockdown drills), or
 - **Transportation Constraints** (e.g., reliance on public transportation or special buses), may also qualify for an exemption.

Transparent Bag Requirement: If any student is granted an exception to carry a bag throughout the day due to medical, health, disability, or other qualifying circumstances, the bag **must be transparent backpack**. Only a non-transparent pouch which is no larger than 4.5 inches x 8.5 inches will be permitted for personal hygiene items.

Search Policy: The principal or assistant principal may conduct a reasonable search of a student, including the search of a student's bag or other belongings, in accord with the Board's policy on Search and Seizure.

Enforcement and Disciplinary Measures: If a student violates the bag policy, the school shall follow the administrative procedure.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent
Harford County Schools

Policy Action Dates					
ACTION DATE		ACTION DATE		ACTION DATE	
Adopted		5/20/2002			

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References			
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