

Circular No. BBPSBV/11-25

Date: 23rd April 2025

Implementation of School Bag Weight Policy (Classes I to V)

Dear Parents,

As per the recommendations of the Ministry of Education (MoE), the weight of school bags for students in Classes I to V should not exceed 10% of the student's body weight. However, studies and surveys have revealed that many children carry bags weighing 20% to 30% of their body weight, leading to immediate discomfort and long-term health implications.

At **Bal Bharati Public School, Brij Vihar**, we have implemented this policy to promote the health and well-being of our young learners. To support this initiative, selected books are retained in school with prior intimation, and class teachers will regularly share "Bag for Next Day" information to help manage what students need to carry.

To ensure adherence to these guidelines, the school will conduct **random monthly checks** on the weight of students' bags.

We are sharing an article from a leading newspaper that reflects upon the health concerns related to heavy school bags.

Week 40: Back Pain | nursesonline.com

Yan's 10-year-old daughter, a Class 1 student, is reading under the backboard of a heavy school bag. The girl is wearing a backpack that she had been carrying as a 3kg school bag. "More than 20% of her body weight," her parents noted in raising her shoulders frequently and difficulty to walk to school. Worried, they took her to the King George's Hospital (KGMH), where doctors confirmed that the heavy bag was straining her back and beyond the safe limit.

Yan's niece is not rare. Many schools in Hong Kong are complaining of orthopedic problems such as back, neck, and shoulder pain, forward head posture, spine scoliosis, and even spinal issues like scoliosis due to heavy school bags. Children may also experience neck stiffness, fatigue, difficulty in walking, and, in severe cases, early signs of premature aging.

The Ministry of Education Policy says that a school bag should not weigh more than 10-15% of a student's body weight.

David Mishra, an 11-year boy, complained chronic lower back pain and found it hard to climb stairs. Doctors diagnosed that his back bag was altering the alignment of his spine. Nine-year-old Sara Gurehki was also complaining of backache. Her complaint of backache was diagnosed as scoliosis. Gurehki's parents worried her bag was too heavy for her neck, forehead, and impacting her body balance.

Many children's backpacks are raising fear and undue urgent attention.

Prof. Ashishkanti Sauti from KGMH's orthopedic department cited a study published in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood* (2010), which examined 1,400 children's backpacks. The study found that 21% of them were carrying bags that weigh 10% or more of their body weight. Students carrying heavy backpacks were more likely to perform poor grades reported than 15 days a year. Girls reported

WEIGHT
6.03 kg

HEAVY LOAD ON TENDER SHOULDERS

SHOULDER STRESS
Heavy loads increase the risk of strain

NECK TENSION
Forward head posture

HIP TROUBLE
Leaning forward to balance a heavy bag strains the hips, causing pain

KNEE TROUBLE
An altered walking posture from carrying a heavy bag can cause knee pain over time

POSTURE
More than 20% of body weight

SPINE
Several weeks diagnosed with spinal scoliosis and muscle inflammation

HEAD
Forward head posture

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BACK-BREAKING SCHOOLS BAGS

There Is Rapid Increase in Cases of Children Suffering From Orthopedic Problems Due To Heavy School Bags. Doctors Warn Of Serious Consequences On A Child's Body If This Is Not Checked In Time

Carrying heavy school bags can lead to serious orthopedic ailments in children

NECK AND UPPER BACK PAIN

Carrying a heavy bag can lead the upper back to bend the head forward, and strain neck and shoulder muscles

BACK PAIN
Backpack weight should not be more than 10-15% of the child's body weight

SMART BACKPACK HABITS

Use Both Straps
"Two-strap bag distributes weight evenly—don't hang it on one side"

Add a Waist Strap
Helps support the lower back, easing pressure on shoulders, spine and hips

Choose Light Bags
Pick backpacks made from lightweight materials—especially those designed for kids

Perfect Fit Matters
Backpack should hug the back closely, the bottom should sit 2 inches below the knee. The length should match the torso

Pack It Right
Use bags with multiple compartments. Place heavier items lower and closer to the back

Don't Overload
Avoid carrying more than 10-15% of a child's body weight

Check Regularly
Inspect bags for wear and tear, and replace if damaged

Encourage Physical Activity
Regular exercise helps strengthen muscles and improve posture

Consult a Professional
If pain persists, consult a doctor or physical therapist

Be a Role Model
Parents should also limit their own screen time and use proper posture

Stay Hydrated
Drink plenty of water to keep muscles and joints healthy

Take Breaks
Encourage children to take regular breaks from schoolwork

Use Proper Posture
Teach children to sit and stand correctly

Limit Screen Time
Reduce time spent on tablets and smartphones

Healthy Diet
Ensure a balanced diet with calcium and vitamin D

Regular Checkups
Schedule regular medical checkups for children

Parental Involvement
Stay involved in your child's school life and backpack habits

Education
Educate children about the importance of a healthy back

SOLUTIONS

15% to 10-15% Rule
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As we strive to safeguard the health and well-being of our children, we kindly seek your continued support in reinforcing mindful practices at home. One simple yet impactful step is to **help your child pack only the necessary materials for each school day.**

By working together — educators, parents, and students — we can significantly reduce the physical burden on our children and foster a healthier, more supportive learning environment.

Let us lighten their load, so they can carry the weight of their dreams instead.



Swapna Nair
Principal