

How to “Pack it Light” for Middle School

Middle Schoolers have a lot more to carry around than they did in elementary school. Without lockers, that means their backpacks will follow them everywhere they go. Our KiMS Backpack Committee would like to share some tips with you on how to keep your backpack weight less than the recommended maximum limit of 10-15% of bodyweight.

Selecting a Pack

- lightweight
- wide shoulder straps
- support straps at chest and waist
- holds all of your mandatory items (without room for lots of extras)
- fits body properly
 - try it on! Is it comfortable? Each pack fits each child differently.
 - straps adjust enough so that pack fits close to the body
 - pack is length of torso and bottom should be 2” below waist
- Brands worth looking at: Northface, LL Bean
- Roller backpacks are OK too, if you can manage them up/down the stairs easily

Backpack Safety



Wrong
Strap on only one shoulder



Correct
Wide, padded straps on both shoulders



Wrong
Load too heavy








Correct
Load no more than 10-15% of body weight

What's typically in the Backpack?

ITEM	TIP
Netbook	This is heaviest item, pack it closest to your back
Binder	Minimize and use light weight plastic folders instead. Avoid Trapper Keepers-they are heavy!
Planner/Notebooks	Tear out used pages & store/recycle when done
Water Bottle	Fill 1/3 and refill during day/use ice as it's lighter
Accessories -calc/pencils/markers/sticky notes/etc	Try to leave what you can in class or home
Lunch	Consider weight when buying a lunchbox
Gym clothes/Instrument	Store in gym locker/music room

***We'd love your help! Join our Backpack Committee by emailing: backpack@kirklandpts.org**

YES please	No thank you
<p>Your Back-to-School Shopping CHEAT SHEET!</p>  <p>Select a backpack that is lightweight and has wide straps and a cross-body clip and a laptop compartment to keep that heavy cargo closest to your back. If you're going to splurge on something, here's where you do it. Make sure your student tries it on for proper fit, it's a personal choice, and everyone's body type is different.</p>	 <p>Basic backpacks are great for basic things. Carrying school cargo around all day is NOT basic. And neither are our students' developing musculoskeletal systems. This doesn't have proper back support or straps to help distribute the weight and encourage better posture and a proper fit.</p>
 <p>Lightweight plastic folders/floppy binders are a great replacement for notebooks and thicker binders. Eliminate carrying around a lot of unused paper and unnecessary weight. Empty old papers and fill with new sheets when needed.</p>	 <p>At first glance these 'Trapper Keepers' are super pretty and multi-functional. But they weigh as much as a small rhinoceros! AVOID! Composition books force kids to carry around a lot of unused paper, keep these to a minimum or store in the classroom.</p>
 <p>Drinking water all day is a great habit! Find a lightweight water bottle and only fill it with halfway w/ice (it's lighter) and a little water in the morning. Refill it at school with our new filtered water stations that are being installed.</p>	 <p>This guy is way too big. You will not get stranded in the desert during the school day. We promise. Water=heavy. Only carry what you need.</p>
 <p>These neoprene bags are lightweight and can change shape to fit in your backpack. These super skinny ice packs are a lighter alternative to keeping your lunch fresh.</p>	 <p>Freezable lunch boxes are a clever concept but are exceptionally heavy (and that's before you even put food in them!)</p>
 <p>You don't need the giant mondo-size packs with every color of the rainbow. But the kids always do, right? This will get the job done. Ask you teacher if supplies like these can be kept in the classroom or at home for when they are needed.</p>	 <p>Budding Picassos, keep these colorful arrays at home so you can work on your magnificent creations there.</p>