

Suggestions for Selecting the BEST bookbag for your student in 6th grade:

- Why do students carry bookbags around to every class instead of using lockers?
 - o TCMS chose to do without lockers many years ago due to the space it requires in hallways, as well as other issues they cause for students.

Finding the BEST and Safe Pack

Despite their potential problems, backpacks are great when used properly. Before you buy one, though, consider a backpack's construction. Look for the following to choose the right backpack:

- **a lightweight pack:** get one that doesn't add a lot of weight to your child's load (under 3 pounds); for example, leather packs look cool, but they weigh more than canvas backpacks. Camping backpacks are too bulky and much heavier.
 - **Suggestion:** <https://www.ebags.com/buyingguides/iconicschoolpacks>
- **two wide, padded shoulder straps:** straps that are too narrow can dig into shoulders
- **a padded back:** it not only provides increased comfort, but also protects kids from being poked by sharp objects or edges (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack
- **a waist belt:** this helps to distribute the weight more evenly across the body
- **multiple compartments:** to help distribute the weight throughout the pack and possibly a pouch for a plastic bottle of water.
- **Purchase 2-3** Carabiner clips to safely attach lunches and P.E. cinch bags to a book bag without clips.

**Although packs on wheels (which look like small, overhead luggage bags) may be good options for students who have to lug around really heavy loads, they're too large in the classrooms and hallways. TCMS does NOT Allow rolling backpacks (except for documented medical needs) because they are also a tripping hazard in the hallways.

Using Backpacks Wisely

To help kids prevent injury when using a backpack:

- **Lighten the load.** No matter how well-designed the backpack, **less weight is always better.** Use the bathroom scale to check that a pack isn't over 10% to 15% of your child's body weight (for example, the backpack of a child who weighs 80 pounds shouldn't weigh more than 8 to 12 pounds). Tell kids to ONLY bring what they NEED: Sounds easy, right? Well consider this...
 - Backpack weight (empty) averages: 2.5 – 3.5 pounds
 - Basic, daily class supplies/notebooks/misc.: 5 pounds
 - Water bottle (1 plastic, 16 ounce bottle) not even a thermos: 1 pound
 - If a student attaches their lunch box: 3 pounds
 - If a student includes their P.E. clothes in their cinch bag: 1.5 pounds
 - If a student chooses to bring an electronic device for reading a novel, such as a tablet: 1.5 pounds

Total: **14.5 – 15.5 pounds**....Adds up quickly