

# Safety Matters!

## FAMILY EDITION

October 2019



## Your Child's Backpack

When backpacks were invented in the early 1900s, they were intended to carry books. However, the modern backpack is equipped with many compartments and several deep pockets, including a padded one for a laptop computer. So what happens? Your child loads it up with items such as a laptop, textbooks, notebooks, the almost-finished library book, lunch box, water bottle, umbrella, and other items which may also include the dirty P.E. suit at the bottom of the bag! What's the result? A heavy backpack.

Of course as the parent, you decide what type of backpack your child should use to carry everything. Some students use a backpack on wheels, so they can easily roll from place to place. Using this type of backpack prevents the weight



of the actual bag and all of its contents from being carried on the child's back.

If your child is carrying the weight of the backpack and its contents on his or her back, then you may want to consider the following because current recommendations state that the backpack weight should be at a maximum weight limit of 10% to 20% of your child's body weight:

1. Clean out the backpack frequently.
2. Replace binders with folders if possible.
3. Carry lunchbox in hands.

How your child wears a backpack is often just as important as its overall weight. Consider using a backpack that has two wide straps so weight is evenly distributed. Heavier items such as books and laptop should be packed so they are carried closest to your child's body to minimize additional strain. You may want to discourage your child from slinging it over one shoulder because this could cause muscular pain. So, parents, it may be time to intervene, pick up your child's backpack, and decide what changes may need to be made.

## HCPS Threat Assessment Process

The Office of School Safety and Emergency Management has created a robust threat assessment process for schools to use when a threat is made. A threat is any expression of intent to do harm or cause damage to property, whether it is spoken, written, gestured, communicated electronically or preliminarily being carried out (or in progress). Not all threats are

***In September, a full threat assessment was done as a result of an Anonymous Alerts tip.***

imminent, and most pose a low or no risk of being carried out.

Anyone can report a threat, and we now have Anonymous Alerts for reporters to use if they don't want to talk directly to school staff. Once a threat is reported, the school's Threat

Assessment Team (TAT), uses a prescribed process to determine if the threat poses a risk of violence. The core responsibility of any TAT is to review and investigate reported information by assessing if the named individual poses a continuing threat of violence. The goal is to get the person who poses a threat off the pathway to violence through monitored interventions.

*Safety Matters! Family Edition* is a newsletter created by the Office of School Safety & Emergency Management. We would like to hear from you about topics that you would find interesting. Please contact us at 652-3511 or by email.

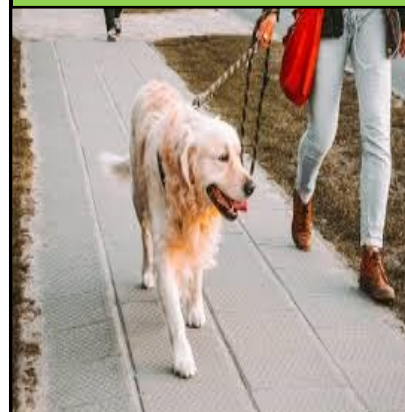
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## Animals on School Property

Animals are not permitted on school property unless approved by your school's principal because they enhance the educational program, or when allowed by law (e.g., service animals and law enforcement animals). Animals permitted on school property must be immunized against diseases common to the specific type of animal, and proof of immunization must be provided upon request. Please know that when making decisions regarding animals and the educational program, principals must take into consideration the type of animal, whether any students or staff have allergies, and the safety of the students with the animal in the classroom.



Please understand that this applies to citizens walking dogs on school property and parents who are walking to drop off or pick up children and have dogs with them. Again, animals are not permitted on school property.