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May 10, 2023

At the School Board Meeting on May 9, 2023, School Board Members voted to approve the policy requiring students K-12 to use clear backpacks at school, starting in the 2023-2024 school year. ***The policy and FAQ are included below to assist families in planning for the next school year.***

In order to support implementation of this policy, for the 2023-2024 school year, all students will be provided with one clear backpack on the first day of school. Families are also welcome to purchase clear backpacks of their choice that align to the policy below.

The clear backpack policy is one of several additional safety measures in our schools. Over the past year, the Decatur Township School Police Force has been increased to seven officers. The use of metal detector wands and random canine searches are also implemented district-wide. We understand that clear backpacks are not the “only” solution to school safety, but is one additional measure to support our district mission. The purpose of all of these practices outlined above is to deter anyone from bringing unsafe and unnecessary items into our schools.

Thank you for your continued support to prioritize safety of all students and staff.

Dr. Prusiecki
Superintendent
MSD of Decatur Township





MSD Decatur Township: Clear Bag Policy

Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, all backpacks carried by students in grades K-12 during the school day must be clear plastic without any color. Clear backpacks are optional for Pre-Kindergarten students.

- MSD Decatur Township will provide each student with one clear (non-colored) backpack at the beginning of the school year.
- Students participating in an extracurricular activity are permitted to carry non-transparent bags to store items pertaining to their particular activity (i.e. band, athletics, etc.).
- Upon entry into the school, all non-transparent extracurricular activity bags must be stored in designated areas determined by each school.
- All bags are subject to search.
- The maximum size for non-transparent bags that students will be permitted to carry during the school day, such as pencil bags and purses, will be 9 inches by 6 inches.
- Non-transparent lunch bags/boxes no larger than approximately 10 inches x 7 inches x 4 inches are permitted to be carried.
- Students are only permitted to carry two non-transparent bags that fit the above specifications.
- Clear totes, clear purses, clear pencil pouches/boxes and transparent plastic bags are allowed.
- Mesh backpacks are not allowed.
- Large visual design obstructions are not allowed. However, one logo no larger than 3 inches x 3 inches is permitted.
- No fabric, wallpaper, stripes, cardboard, etc., or any material used to conceal the contents of the backpack, is permitted.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: When will the clear backpacks be distributed?

A: Each school will designate and communicate a distribution date, such as Back to School Night or the 1st Day of School.

Q: What are the size specifications for the clear backpack?

A: There are no size specifications for the clear backpack.

Q: Are mesh backpacks allowed?

A: No. Mesh backpacks are not allowed. Students are permitted to only use clear bags.

Q: Can the backpacks have mesh pockets?

A: Yes. Mesh side pockets are allowed on the backpack.

Q: Can the front pocket of the backpacks have a mesh organizer?

A: Yes. A mesh organizer inside the front pocket is allowed.

Q: Will backpacks with padded backs be accepted?

A: No. Backpacks must have clear visibility through all dimensions excluding the bookbag bottom.

Q: Are backpacks that are not clear plastic allowed?

A: No. Backpacks with plastic of any shade of color are not allowed. Only fully clear backpacks are permitted.

Q: Are stripes allowed on the backpacks?

A: No. Stripes in any location are not allowed on the bookbag.

Q: Can the backpack straps have color?

A: Yes, the backpack may have straps with color.

Q: Are leather reinforcements on the corners of the backpacks allowed?

A: Yes. Leather reinforcements on the corners are permitted.

Q: Are company or trademark logos allowed on the front of the backpack?

A: Yes. Small company and school logos are allowed, but large logos, monograms, or other visual design obstructions are not.

Q: Will athletic/spirit bags and instrument cases, which are not clear, be allowed on campus?

A: Yes, however, these bags must be stored as soon as the student arrives at school. They must be placed in fine arts designated areas or athletic designated areas as assigned by school instructors.

Q: Are lunch bags/boxes permitted?

A: Yes. Non-transparent lunch bags/boxes no larger than approximately 10 inches x 7 inches x 4 inches are permitted to be carried.

Q: Can multiple 6 inch x 9 inch bags be carried in schools?

A: Yes. Students must limit non-transparent 6" x 9" bags (lunch boxes, purses, pouches) to two bags, regardless of whether they are carried inside or outside of the backpack.

Q: Are clear totes, clear purses and transparent plastic bags allowed?

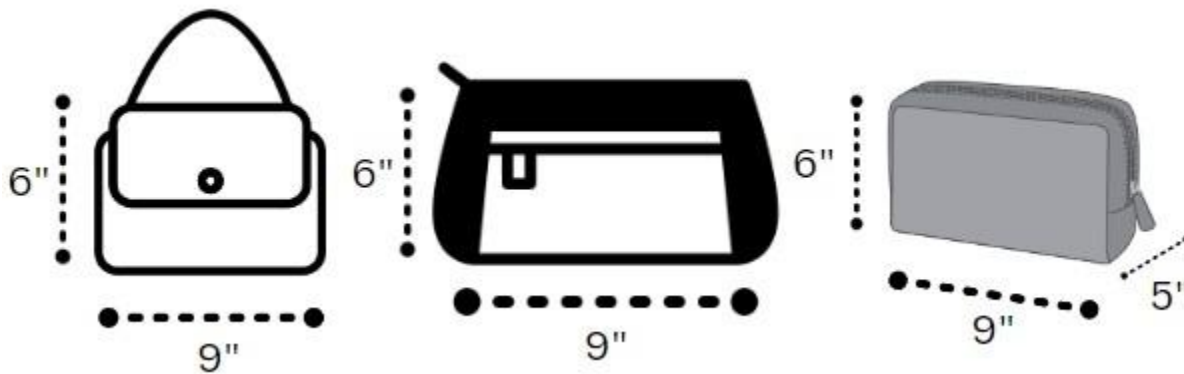
A: Yes. Clear totes, purses and bags are allowed.

Q: Can I line the inside of the backpack?

A: No. Fabric, wallpaper, cardboard, or any other material that conceals the contents of the backpack is not permitted.

Q: Where do I purchase a clear backpack?

A: MSD Decatur will provide one clear backpack to each student at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. Replacements will be the responsibility of each parent/guardian. All clear backpacks individually purchased for a replacement must be within the specifications outlined in these FAQs.

Examples of 6"x 9" non-transparent bags:**Examples of 10" x 7" x 4" or smaller lunch bags/boxes:**