

***TAZEWELL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Backpack Procedure

1. Purpose

To enhance campus safety and improve the efficiency of school security procedures, Tazewell County Public Schools (TCPS) requires students to use clear backpacks when bringing personal items into school buildings.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all TCPS students in grades PK-12 attending school or school-sponsored events where backpacks are permitted. It is effective during regular school hours and at any other time students are entering school buildings with bags or backpacks.

3. Policy Requirements

A. Backpack Guidelines

1. **All student backpacks must be clear and transparent.** The main compartment and any additional pockets must be see-through to allow for visual inspection of contents.
2. **Only clear backpacks made of plastic or PVC material** are permitted. Mesh, tinted, solid-colored, or partially covered backpacks are **not allowed**.
3. **Lunch boxes, insulated lunch bags, and other food containers** used by students must be clear and transparent and meet the same requirements as student backpacks under this procedure.
4. Students must use clear backpacks to carry items such as:
 - o Textbooks and notebooks
 - o School-issued devices (e.g., Chromebooks, tablets)
 - o Personal items (e.g., phones, chargers, keys)
 - o School-related supplies (e.g., pencils, calculators, folders)

B. Small Non-Clear Bags

1. Students may carry a **small non-clear pouch** inside their clear backpack for personal hygiene items (e.g., feminine products, deodorant) or small valuables.
2. These pouches must be **no larger than 5" x 8"** and are subject to inspection if necessary.

C. Athletic and Extracurricular Equipment

1. Sports bags, band instrument cases, or other specialized equipment bags may be carried **only under the supervision of a coach or sponsor** and should be stored in designated areas (e.g., locker rooms, music rooms) immediately upon arrival.
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4. Enforcement

- School personnel and security staff will check for compliance as students enter buildings.
 - Students found in violation of this policy will be required to return non-compliant backpacks to their vehicle or have a parent/guardian retrieve them.
 - Repeated violations may result in progressive disciplinary action in accordance with the **TCPS Student Code of Conduct**.
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5. Exceptions

- Students with documented medical needs that require the use of a non-clear backpack or medical bag must submit appropriate documentation to the school nurse or administration for review and approval.
 - Exceptions may also be granted in cases where students have an approved 504 Plan or IEP that specifies alternate requirements.
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6. Review and Amendments

This policy shall be reviewed annually by TCPS administration and safety personnel and updated as needed to reflect evolving safety standards and community needs.

Procedure approved by the School Board on August 11, 2025, for implementation beginning in August 2026. The provisions regarding lunch boxes, insulated lunch bags, and other food containers were approved by the School Board on May 11, 2026.