



Clear Backpack Guidelines: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated 5/28/26

Why is the district implementing a clear backpack policy?

The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. This guideline supports the district-wide implementation of weapons detection systems across all campuses and helps prevent prohibited items from entering our schools. It also allows our teachers and staff to more easily monitor campus safety while helping students move through entry points quickly and efficiently each morning, minimizing delays and ensuring a smooth start to the school day.

When will this policy go into effect?

The clear backpack guidelines will begin in the 2026-27 school year.

What type of backpacks are allowed?

Students must use fully transparent backpacks that allow contents to be clearly visible at all times.

- Small manufacturer logos are acceptable.
- Colored straps and piping are allowed.
- Large (oversized) decals, stickers, monogramming, name labels, or designs that obstruct visibility are not permitted. Specifically, these items can be no larger than the size of allowable privacy bags, which are 6.5" x 4.5".
- Small graphics and patterns that span an area larger than 6.5" x 4.5" are not allowed.

Are mesh backpacks allowed?

Yes. Mesh backpacks are allowed for middle and high school students.

- Mesh must be a solid color.
- Patterns or designs that make the contents difficult to see are not allowed.
- There are no color restrictions for mesh backpacks.

Are any backpacks not allowed?

Yes. The following are not permitted:

- Colored, tinted, or iridescent backpacks
- Backpacks with large logos, patches, or stickers that block visibility
- Any bag that prevents staff from clearly seeing the contents inside

Can students bring lunch boxes?

Yes. Insulated, non-transparent lunch boxes are allowed.

- However, if a lunch box triggers the weapons detection system, it will be subject to search.

Can students bring cell phones?

Student cell phones are allowed on our campuses, but they must be powered down and stowed away during the academic day.

What about water bottles?

Only transparent water bottles with no color tint will be allowed.

- During pilot testing, non-transparent bottles slowed entry because they required inspection.
- We also found that items could be hidden inside bottles, creating safety concerns.
- Clear bottles help keep lines moving quickly and safely.
- For safety reasons, glass bottles are not allowed, as they could break and injure students.
- Please note that all campuses have bottle-filling stations installed at water fountains.

Are small personal bags allowed?

Yes. Students may carry a small hand-held clutch or privacy bag for personal items.

- These will not be searched unless they trigger the weapons detection system.

What about athletic bags or band instrument cases?

These are allowed.

- Non-transparent, sport-specific athletic bags and instrument cases will be searched daily as part of safety procedures.

Are rolling backpacks allowed?

Rolling backpacks will be allowed for students with a documented medical need.

Will every bag be searched?

No, except for instrument cases and non-transparent athletic bags. The goal is to minimize unnecessary searches.

- The weapons detection system will identify items that require additional screening.
- Bags that trigger the system will be searched.

How does this help with morning entry?

Clear backpacks reduce the need for manual bag checks and help students move more quickly through entry points. This allows us to maintain strong safety measures while minimizing delays.

Will these FAQs and guidelines be adjusted over time?

Yes. We will continue to evaluate the process and make adjustments as needed to ensure safety while maintaining a positive school experience.

Where do I send my questions and feedback?

Please send your questions and feedback to Superintendent@apsb.org.