



MT. VERNON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Backpack Policy Information

The policy below was created by staff members who know the students, safety and security measures best at MVTHS. Our School Resource Officer was consulted. In addition, a Southern Illinois educator who is a nationally recognized expert and leader in school safety was consulted. The MVTHS Board of Education formally approved the policy at the July board meeting. The policy was developed in order to continue to be proactive and not reactive to threats and certainly not because of any current threat against our students or staff.

Beginning with the 22-23 school year, students are strongly encouraged not to bring backpacks or bags to school. However, those who choose to do so must place the backpack/bag in the student assigned locker upon arrival. The backpack/bag must remain there throughout the instructional day.

A student may carry a small bag or purse for essential personal items. Bags and purses may not exceed 10x8x10.

Administration reserves the right to inspect any backpack, bag or purse.

Though this policy may not seem convenient, it was created with the safety of MVTHS students and staff in mind. It is one more layer of security that we are adding to our already extensive list of safety measures we follow on a daily basis at MVTHS. A few of our currently existing security measures at MVTHS include:

- Full-time School Resource Officer
- Classroom and exterior doors locked
- Secure access to the building through a front vestibule
- Protective film on exterior doors and windows
- Random screening through metal detectors
- Comprehensive threat assessment plan
- Safety audits with local law enforcement
- Three full-time social workers on staff
- Community mental health supports

We understand that there are questions that exist as we approach the start of the school year. The following Q and A addresses many of the questions that have been asked about this policy.

1. **May I bring a backpack to school?** *Yes; however it must be placed in your school assigned locker upon arrival and remain there throughout the day.*
2. **May I carry a clear backpack during the day?** *No, all backpacks must be stored in lockers.*
3. **How will I safely carry my Chromebook?** *All students will be issued a protective carrying case.*
4. **How will I carry my personal items?** *The policy allows students to carry a small (10x8x10) bag, crossbody purse, waist pack, etc. for personal items such as calculators, hygiene products, pens, pencils, snacks, and water.*

If a student needs a bag that fits the size dimensions, one will be provided by the District. Please come down to the District Office to get one.

5. **May I bring a binder folder (Trapper Keeper) for my notebook paper and handouts from teachers?** *Yes - this is a school supply item that you may carry.*
6. **What if I have a medical bag that I have to carry?** *Approved medical bags of essential supplies are allowed. Students with crutches will continue to be assigned a helper between class periods.*
7. **What if I have a large bag for an extra-curricular activity that won't fit in my locker?** *Extra-curricular bags may be placed in an approved designated area, such as the Coaches' Office near the gym (Mr. English will let students into this room). The District Office has a conference room where bags may be stored as well.*
8. **I bring my lunch to school. What do I do with my lunch?** *It should be stored in your locker until lunch.*
9. **Will I be able to go to my locker after every class?** *Probably not, but you really shouldn't need to do so. Since MVTHS is a one-to-one device school, the majority of assignments are completed on Chromebooks. In addition, most teachers have classroom sets of textbooks as opposed to issuing them individually to students. Chances are most of your classes won't have a textbook to carry around.*
10. **What if I can't get into my locker or it jams?** *Please come down to one of the offices in A Building - someone will assist you.*
11. **May I share a locker with a friend?** *No - lockers are designed for one student only.*
12. **May I come to the school before August 15 to find my locker and work the combination?** *Absolutely - we encourage students to do this! Please see the next page for a quick "how to" on opening your locker.*