

# A growing back's best bet

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia (CAA) recommends a fitted backpack, worn properly – over both shoulders with the waist band done up – as a growing back's best bet, while wheeled bag options should be treated with caution.

"A wheeled bag with an extendable handle may seem like a good solution for a heavy load but they aren't designed for the routine wear and tear that a trip to school entails," says CAA national spokesperson, Dr Patrick Sim, chiropractor.

"Students may have to pull a bag over rough ground or grassy areas as well as lift it up stairs and on and off public transport."

All of these actions

impact normal posture and could prove problematic in the long run.

To avoid the back to school backache, the CAA recommends:

- \* Backpacks should be no heavier than 10 per cent of a student's weight when packed.

- \* Make sure the backpack is sturdy and appropriately sized – no wider than the student's chest

- \* Put comfort and fit at the top of the priority list, rather than good looks.

- \* Choose a backpack with broad, padded shoulder straps.

- \* Use both shoulder straps – never sling the pack over one shoulder.

- \* Use waist straps attached – they are there for a good reason.

- \* Don't wear the

backpack any lower than the hollow of the lower back.

- \* Don't overload the backpack – use school lockers and plan homework well in advance.

- \* Place all heavy items at the base of the pack, close to the spine, for a better distribution of the weight.

The CAA says there is mounting evidence that heavily laden school bags place unnecessary stress on growing spines and can lead to acute and long-term back problems.

"Lugging an overloaded school bag to and from school is an outdated concept that must be discouraged," Dr Sim said.

"Why treat our kids as pack horses when most of the information

they need at school or for homework could be contained on a tiny memory stick?"

According to Dr Sim, a growing child should limit the weight they carry in a school backpack to no more than 10 per cent of their body weight.

"That's only around 4-5 kilos for a 40-50kg student and it quickly adds up when you throw in a few text books, pencil case, lunch box and water bottle," he said.

A survey by CAA in Victoria into the average bag weights of 1,000 children found that almost half (486 children) carried bags well over the 10 per cent recommendation.



## Taralga Public School

**STRIVING IS OUR AIM**

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Our school was established in 1858 and is set in the rolling hills of Taralga. We offer quality teaching and learning programs that cater for the academic and sporting needs of all of our students.

We are a proud rural school that works closely with its wider community.

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## Goulburn West PS

LOOK, LISTEN, THINK



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Goulburn West PS offers quality education in your local community. Students have many opportunities to take part in excellent programs in literacy, numeracy, environmental education, sport, and creative and performing arts in a positive environment. With 14 classes including an OC class for gifted and talented students, strong community support and positive student welfare programs, Goulburn West is a growing school.