

# Indian state sets schoolbag weight limit

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Children struggling under the weight of an oversized schoolbag is a common sight the world over, but now one Indian state has ordered parents to ensure kids lighten their load.

The government of Maharashtra, in the west of India, has passed a resolution saying no child must carry to school a backpack that exceeds 10 percent of their [body weight](#).

Five-year-olds in grade one are being asked to pop their satchels on weighing scales when they arrive for class so teachers can check they don't exceed 2.5 kilograms (5.5 lbs).

Grade eight pupils aged 12 are limited to carrying 4.2 kilograms, all in a bid to prevent lasting injury, the state government said in a resolution passed earlier this week.

"As a rule of thumb the bags must be ten percent of the child's body weight," local education secretary Mr Nand Kumar wrote in the executive order.

"But we have found bags that weigh 20 to 30 percent due to thick notebooks, textbooks, unrequired stationery and even cosmetics.

"This is harmful. It causes spine and joint problems as well as stress and fatigue. They adversely affect the well being of the child," he added.

Given the intense competition for higher education places in India,

children often feel under immense pressure to perform well at school, with materials for extra tuition in the evening often adding to the weight of their bag.

The government ruling said teachers should stagger homework and timetables so children don't need to carry several textbooks to school every day. It also asked parents to ensure children do not pack unnecessary items.

The order did not mention any punishment for violating the weight restriction.

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