

**Government of Odisha**  
**Department of School & Mass Education**

**SME-MSSA-MSSA1-0100-2018**

No 5707 date 8-3-19

**NOTIFICATION**

The Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras in its judgement dtd.29.5.2018 in M.Purushothaman Vs. Union of India and Others in W.P 25680 of 2018 has directed the Union of India to direct the State Governments and Government of Union Territories forthwith to formulate "Children School Bag Policy" reducing the weight of the school bags in the line of guidelines issued by either State of Telengana or State of Maharastra.

Government of India issued direction to frame School Bag Policy vide MHRD D.O. No.1-4/2018-IS-3 dated 05.10.2018. Accordingly, the following policy on school bag has been framed in line with the guidelines issued by the State of Telengana.

It is observed that students carry overweight bags for which they face acute problems like backache, joint pain, muscle ache, spinal cord problems, neck ache, reduction in the efficiency of lungs, fatigue, mental strain and other related problems. Moreover, in the schools which are functioning in multi-stored buildings, the children have to climb the steps with heavy school bags, which further aggravates the problem and health consequences.

This heavy load is caused by the fact that the children bring text books, guides, homework note books, rough work note books etc to the class room every day. Hence, the following instructions are issued to reduce the load of school bags and reduction of home work and assignments to ensure that the school bag of the child does not weigh more than 10% of his/ her body weight. The schools and parents should ensure that the weight of the school bag is less than 10% of the weight of the child.

## **I. General guidelines to reduce the weight of school bags for the students of Classes from I- X**

**1.1** All the schools following the State Curriculum have to follow the text books prescribed by SCERT, Odisha for classes I to VIII and by the Board of Secondary Education, Odisha for classes IX to X. The number of textbooks in different classes should not exceed the number prescribed by the SCERT/ BSE for the corresponding class.

**1.2** Schools should focus on making the children understand concepts rather than just memorizing the concepts. Freedom should be given to the children to read, comprehend and express themselves.

**1.3** Schools should avoid repeated copying from the text books during and after the school hours.

**1.4** Reading library books and participation in Games, Sports, Art & Culture and other creative, co-curricular activities for holistic development of the children must be encouraged.

**1.5** Feedback on the assessment and the performance of the children is a must to improve the performance of the students and also the teachers. The use of Guides and Guide type study materials should be avoided strictly and children should be made to think, imagine and construct their own answers. Children are expected to write answers to the questions and other tasks given in the text books on their own to be corrected by the teachers.

**1.6** Strict adherence of the Academic Calendar in terms of the school timings, examination schedule, nature of assessments, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation etc. is required.

**1.7** Focus on the foundational skills of the students i.e. basic competencies of reading, writing and numerical ability should be emphasized for preparing the children for self learning.

**1.8** Class interaction must be encouraged. There should be dialogue and discussion and the children engaged with challenging learning tasks such as projects, experiments, field visits, book reviews, discussion on social and contemporary issues etc.

**1.9** Games and Sports in the evenings must be encouraged rather than engaging them in home works and tuitions only. Recreation and

physical activity is essential for a growing child and it is the right of the children.

## **II. Guidelines for Primary Schools.**

**2.1** Two text books have been prescribed for Classes I & II having chapters from Mother Tongue , English, Mathematics and four textbooks have been prescribed for Classes III to V i.e., Mother Tongue, English, Mathematics and Environmental Studies by the SCERT which should only be followed.

**2.2** There should be one note book for each subject for undertaking Formative Assessment items such as textbook exercises, projects, slip tests etc. All these the children need not bring every day to the school. Two subjects per week i.e., @ 3 days per subject shall be prescribed along with prescribed note books for improving the handwriting.

**2.3** The schools should provide safe drinking water to avoid children getting drinking water bottles from their houses.

**2.4** There shall not be any homework for students of Classes I and II. All the works pertaining to exercises given at the end of each unit/ lesson in the text books should be done during the school hours under the supervision of the teachers. Separate periods should be allocated for undertaking exercise part in the class itself after completion of the teaching of the particular unit/ lesson. Enough time for this practice should be made available in the school time table itself.

**2.5** The weight of the School Bag has been calculated as per the above Guidelines and found that by including the textbooks and notebooks and the weight of the empty School Bag for Classes I and II should not exceed 1.5 Kg and with regard to Classes III to V it should be within 2 to 3 Kg.

## **III. Upper Primary and Secondary Schools - Classes VI to VIII and IX & X.**

**3.1** The text books prescribed by SCERT should only be used and only the books required as per time-table should be brought by the children.

**3.2** There shall be one note book for each subject for under taking Formative Assessment items such as textbook exercises, projects, slip

tests, experiments etc. This too the children need not bring every day to the school. There shall be one note book as rough note book for all the subjects to be brought every day to the school and used for class work. The thickness of the note books should be reduced.

**3.2** All the work pertaining to exercises given at the end of the lesson in the text books should be performed during the school hours under the supervision of the teachers. Separate periods should be allocated for undertaking exercise part in the class itself after completion of the teaching of the particular subject. Enough time for this practice should be made available in the school time table itself. Children should be encouraged to think and act, try performing these exercises and tasks on their own, with the assistance of the teachers, wherever necessary.

**3.3** The school should plan for the homework to the Classes VI to X by allocating particular days for the homework for specific subjects. The issue of allotment of homework for various subjects during a week /a month may be discussed and finalized by discussing in the Staff Meetings by the Head Master/Head Mistress concerned. For instance for Classes VI to VIII, language subjects can be taught for the first three days of the week i.e., from Monday to Wednesday and non-language subjects from Thursday to Saturday. Similarly, for the Classes IX and X, the non-language subjects can be taught from Monday to Wednesday and language subjects can be taught from Thursday to Saturday.

**3.4** The weight of the School Bag has been calculated as per the above Guidelines and found that by including the textbooks and notebooks and the weight of the empty School Bag, for Classes VI & VII it should not exceed 4 Kg and with regard to Classes VIII & IX, it should not be more than 4.5 Kg and in the case of Class X, it should not be more than 5 Kg.

**IV.** Every school i.e. Primary, Upper Primary, High School shall take the following steps and inform the students and parents accordingly and also supervise the implementation of these steps in order to reduce the load of the School Bags:-

**4.1** Inform the students in advance about the books and notebooks to be brought to the school on a particular day.

**4.2** Inform the students and parents regarding appropriate kind of School Bags i.e. which have broad padded straps for symmetrical distribution of weight.

**4.3** The students should always use both straps for carrying the School Bag and should not sling the Bag over one shoulder.

**4.4** The students should keep the Bag down while waiting for the school conveyance or in the school assembly/ prayer.

**4.5** The schools must ensure that students carry books only according to the timetable.

**4.6** School Heads should counsel the parents and teachers about the health issues arising out of the children carrying heavy School Bags to school.

**4.7** Schools should not prescribe additional and supplementary textbooks that are voluminous, costly and designed in a pedagogically unsound manner other than by SCERT/BSE.

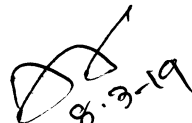
**4.8** Students should be encouraged to repack their bags on daily basis and avoid carrying unnecessary articles, textbooks and workbooks that are not needed.

**4.9** The schools must frequently check the School Bags to ensure that the students are not carrying heavy Bags with unnecessary materials.

**V.** These guidelines shall be applicable to all the Government, Aided, and Un-Aided private schools in the State having classes I to X for reduction of the load of school bags for children. It shall come to effect immediately from the current academic year of 2018-19.

**Order : Ordered that this notification shall be published in the Odisha Gazette.**

By the order of Governor



Special Secretary to Government

Memo No 5708 Date 8-3-19

Copy forwarded to Gazette Cell In-Charge, Odisha Gazette Cell, Commerce & Transport (Commerce) Department for information and necessary action. It is requested to publish the notification in the next issue of the Odisha Gazette and furnish 100 copies of the Gazette to this Department for circulation of the same to all concerned.

*R. Balakrishna 3/3/19*  
Additional Secretary to Government

Memo No 5709 Date 8-3-19

Copy forwarded to Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Govt., ST & SC Development Department for information and necessary action.

*R. Balakrishna 3/3/19*  
Additional Secretary to Government

Memo No 5710 Date 8-3-19

Copy forwarded to all the Directors of S&ME Department / All Collectors/ All District Education Officers/ All District Project Officers, SSA/ All BEOs/ All Sections of S&ME Deptt./ Computer Cell for information and necessary action.

*R. Balakrishna 3/3/19*  
Additional Secretary to Government

Memo No 5711 Date 8-3-19

Copy forwarded to the Senior Standing Counsel, S&ME Cell, Cuttack for information and necessary action.

*R. Balakrishna 8/2/19*  
Additional Secretary to Government