**FFMS “No Backpack Policy”: Frequently Asked Questions**

*Why are we moving away from the use of backpacks during the school day?*

The “no backpack” initiative started as a result of concerns raised by parents at our Education Panel in 2015, along with students’ concerns brought up by the Felix Festa Student Advisory in 2016-17. The concerns centered around two items: health and safety. There was, and is, growing concern about the amount of weight from backpacks and the impact on the long term health of our students with regards to neck, back, and knee issues. Second, the backpacks were a safety issue in the hallways. The size of the backpacks created increased hallway congestion and caused a number of student and staff injuries. As a result, building administration, along with assistance from FFMS staff, worked to develop a plan to reduce the amount of materials students carry and move away from the use of backpacks when students travel throughout the building.

*What does “no backpacks” mean?*

“No backpacks” means that students may not use a backpack in the school building throughout the school day.

*Can students still use a backpack?*

Yes. Students can bring backpacks to and from school, but they must be stored in a locker throughout the school day.
**How will students carry items throughout the school day?**

Students may use a string bag to carry items throughout the school day. This could include the following items:

- Lunch
- Personal products
- Calculator
- Reading Book

**What is a string bag?**

![String Bag Image]

**How will students store items throughout the school day?**

Students will be expected to use their hallway lockers to store their items.

**When will locker information be available?**

Locker numbers and combinations will be made available on the parent portal at the end of August. Sixth grade students will practice opening their lockers at orientation on August 29th. All students will practice opening lockers starting the
first day of school and be provided additional time during the first week of school. In addition, the building will be open the week of August 27th. Designated times will be posted for parents and students to visit, and students can practice opening lockers at this time as well.

**What does my child do if they can’t open their locker?**

Students should ask an adult for help or visit their school’s main office for support.

**Where will the students keep their binders?**

Binders may be housed in their hallway locker, their classroom or at home. Individual classroom teachers will provide guidance to students on the first day of class.

**How will students know which materials to bring to each of their classes?**

Individual classroom teachers will provide guidance to students on the materials they will need to bring to their class.

**What does a student do when he/she forgets something in their locker?**

Students will ask their teacher for permission to go to their locker to get the materials needed.

**What supports will students receive to assist them with this change?**
At the start of the school year teachers will work with students to help them develop a locker plan based on their individual schedule. This is designed to help students manage their supplies/ materials throughout the school day and will include helping students understand when they should use their lockers, which items to store in their locker and which items to take with them.

*What if my child still needs additional support?*

Students should ask for help from their teacher, teaching assistant, Counselor, or Assistant Principal. Your child may also visit their school's main office.