

## Munster Treatment Rooms

Bridge Street, Bantry, Co. Cork  
Phone: 027 56448  
Email: [rob@munstertreatmentrooms.com](mailto:rob@munstertreatmentrooms.com)  
Web: [www.munstertreatmentrooms.com](http://www.munstertreatmentrooms.com)



### Back to School – Back to Bags and Backs!

#### A message for Primary & Secondary Students from September, 2011

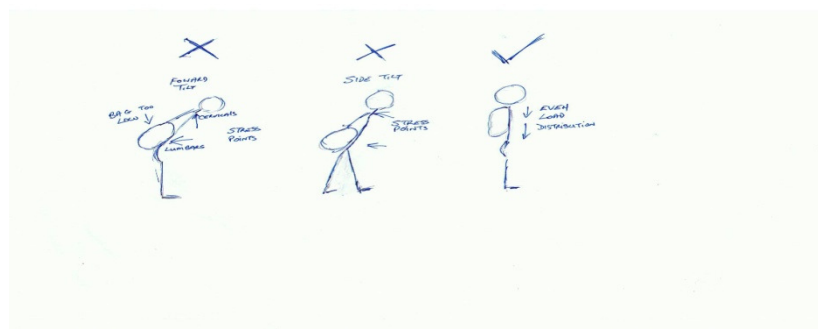
You're only barely back at school and I've already treated some of you for lower back problems!

The media frequently carries stories about the weight of schoolbags and while many schools are being creative in how they are tackling this – iPads and the like – the problem persists. But, while I can't do much about the creative solutions, I can offer you some advice on ways to cope with the heavy weight that you have to carry – this is often up to 10 kgs – or almost half your weight in some cases! And this is topped off by the fact that modern schoolbags seemed to have missed the point with regard to proper design with a bigger interest in following fashion than in protecting young backs!

I've seen kids carrying bags slung over a shoulder or sitting on their pelvises. It's understandable that you get caught up in the excitement of it all and tend to overload your bags because you think you need all your books every night of the week.

These heavy burdens can cause a lot of physical stress on a young growing body as you have to lean forward to stay upright. The stress is increased in Bantry because all but one of the schools is located on a hillside.

The upward journey, the heavy load, increases pressure on the lumbar spine – the lower spine – and on the cervical spine – the base of the neck – as the head leans forward to counterbalance the weight. The diagrams below show the pressure points on the affected area and the correct posture to adopt to limit the damage.



Constant pressure can result in different degrees of pain and some long-term conditions. I've seen cases where such pressure on the back can also affect people's breathing patterns.

Tips and hints for coping with the weight on your back include:

- Ensure you carry your schoolbag properly – in the centre of your back, with the weight evenly distributed
- Try not to overload your schoolbag – be ruthless about what to bring home at night and what to leave at school

## **Munster Treatment Rooms**

**Bridge Street, Bantry, Co. Cork**

**Phone: 027 56448**

**Email: [rob@munstertreatmentrooms.com](mailto:rob@munstertreatmentrooms.com)**

**Web: [www.munstertreatmentrooms.com](http://www.munstertreatmentrooms.com)**



- Adjust your posture to distribute the schoolbag's weight – stand up straight, take your hands from your pockets as this forces your body forward
- Wear proper footwear – good arch support and balance to feet are key. Coláiste Pobail has a good policy around footwear, which may not encourage the latest fashion trends, but certainly helps with posture and good body health

Take one step at a time in tackling your schoolbag problems. Taking on too much, too soon, usually doesn't work.

You might take some time out to remember your parents at this time of the year too. September can be hard and stressful for them. You could mention to your parents that they could take some time out in our state-of-the-art Treatment Rooms at Bank House in Bridge St. (same building as Dr. Dennehy).

So, while you're on your journey in the new school year, and as you continue to carry the weight on your back, and while your folks are minding you and taking care of you, remember to take care of your body, your posture, if not for now, for the future.

Sincerely yours,

Rob McGuinness

**Munster Treatment Rooms**

Bank House

Bridge St.

Bantry

027 56448

