

The Back Pack Project– What do we do now?

Thank you very much for your interest in getting involved in sending backpacks to some of the world's poorest children. This is how the project works!

Getting the info to pupils

The Back Pack Leaflet is designed so that the inside page can be photocopied by teachers and given to each pupil – it has a list of the items we know are useful for school children in Africa. A cover letter by a teacher or head teacher can often be added to explain the school's deadline or involvement. If you need another leaflet please call us on 0800 698 1212.

We try to keep costs to a minimum, and so we try to encourage pupils to make their own posters. You will find pictures of backpacks arriving in Malawi by looking at our schools page via www.marysmeals.org, or call us on 0800 698 1212 for a disk of photos.

How are the backpacks to be collected?

The project is ongoing and so we have no deadline to keep – we send containers of backpacks as soon as they are ready. This means that whenever you want to run the project (e.g. for your Harvest festival, Christmas, Easter, for enterprise initiative work) we are happy to accept the packs. We hope it will fit into any number of school aims over the year.

When you have set a deadline for your own purposes, call us on 0800 698 1212 at least two weeks before finishing your collection so we can arrange getting the packs to us. In some areas of the country we are able to collect packs in our van, in other areas a volunteer may collect them, but in some new areas we would welcome any help you can offer with the transportation of the backpacks to the local collection point. For many schools a courier will be used to deliver the backpacks to our warehouse.

How should they be made up?

Some pupils try to collect a full pack, while some schools prefer to ask pupils to collect separate items and assemble the packs in class. The backpacks can be made up using mostly secondhand materials, such as a good quality used school bag, towel, tshirt, tennis ball etc, mostly things that are at the bottom of someone's cupboard or in their garage.

New items (e.g. bar of soap, toothpaste) can often be found as buyonegetonefree items in supermarkets. We want this to be as open, cheap and accessible as possible. If there is any money raised we recommend it goes towards feeding the children through our Mary's Meals school feeding programme that is more efficient than buying a lot of new things. Any extra items can simply be boxed and marked 'Spare Backpack Items' and they are sent with the packs to provide spares in Malawi.

Resources for your School Appeal

Our We would like to make running a Backpack Appeal an enjoyable and educational experience for the whole school, helping pupils to learn enterprise and citizenship skills, as well as learning about life in poor countries. Wherever possible we would try to visit the school to talk to the pupils.

In areas where this is not possible however, we have an Information Pack, containing a DVD about Mary's Meals and the Backpack Appeal, a newsletter about the charity, and suggestions and resources for incorporating an appeal into classroom activities. Our DVD is intended to give teachers and pupils an idea of how important the project is to children in countries like Malawi, where even a daily meal, let alone school materials, cannot be assured. The Information Pack should tell you everything you need to know in order to run a successful appeal.

To see if you are in an area where a speaker can be provided, or to request an Information Pack, please contact schools@marysmeals.org

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meals

a simple solution
to world hunger