



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Schools Say It Supplements PTA Meetings | Ideal For Working Mothers

Track your kids' progress through school's portal

Garima Prasher | TNN

Bangalore: Pratima Mohan (name changed), a gynaecologist running a bustling clinic in the heart of the city, is assured her son is in good hands. Even if she's busy with surgeries, she can keep track of 13-year-old Aryan. With her iPhone, she logs into school portal and goes to Aryan's performance page. She can check if her son has completed his project work in time, homework has been done neatly, won the day's quiz competition or if there are any problems.

"It takes me only a couple of minutes. Neither do I have to go to school nor do I have to call his class teacher. A click of a button keeps me updated," she said.

It's ideal for working moms on packed schedules. With 24/7 access to their child's records, they can track key information. Many city schools have come up with portals or a webpage for parents to keep a tab on their kids.

Gigi Mathews, who works in an MNC, uses the school portal regularly, from planning kids' studies to keeping track of their nutrition. "I can look at the study portions while I'm in office and plan their studies once I'm back home. I also watch what my kids are having for lunch in school. If the school provides chicken on a particular day, I give them something

else for dinner," says Gigi.

It works well for schools too. "More than 80% of mothers are at work. They have no time to visit schools regularly and that's why we decided to have a portal. Every student is given an ID and password during enrollment.

Parents also use it for correspondence," says Indraani Sudarshan, education head, Ebenezer International School.

School heads say the online system hasn't replaced the traditional Parent Teacher Association but supplemented it. "Parents, before walking into PTA meetings, are aware of what the child has been doing. We also have a feedback mechanism for parents," says Deepa Sridhar, principal, Sri Kumaran Home for Children.

Some schools are getting into the online mode now. "The portal will be up in a month's time. Attendance, assignments, homeworks, details of cultural programmes, extra-curricular activities, as-



Illustration: Prakash Babu

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essment results and even report cards will be uploaded," says Archana Vishwanath, Jain Heritage School.

The system is a big hit among outstation parents. "Parents living out of the country visit us only once or twice a year. The online system comes very handy for them," says Indraani. "Although we live here, going often to the school is not a viable option. PTA meets happen once every term. So for the rest of the time, the portal is handy," says Tanuja Balaji, a parent.

According to Graham Cooper, head, product strategy, SIMS, a school information management system, these portals also help in behaviour management. "We're currently working with three schools in Bangalore — Inventure Academy, Whitefield Global and Canadian International School. The software helps monitor behaviour and achievements of students. No student is left out of the system," says Graham. SIMS is a UK-based company with its presence in over 20,000 schools worldwide, and recently entered India by signing up with select schools, including Doon School.

TIMES VIEW

Between numerous meetings, office deadlines and frequent travelling, today's parents have little or no time to make it to the parent-teacher meeting to keep a tab on their child's academic performance. Having the report card at hand and monitoring performance on the move is truly a boon. On the downside, technology tracking leaves no human interaction between teachers and parents. But perhaps, it's better to be updated constantly and put in place corrective action at the earliest rather than regret not having done anything when it's too late.

Schoolspeak



We organize medical camps for kids. Camps conduct full physical and dental checkups and the reports are uploaded on every child's webpage. Parents can access them and know their kids' health status too, apart from tracking their academic growth.

Rohini Krishnan | DIRECTOR, KENSRI SCHOOL