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For Some, Schools Still As Good As Closed

Parents In A Fix As Many Institutes Yet To Provide Transport

Shradha.Chettri
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Sameer Sinha has two children studying in a private school in central Delhi. Both he and his wife have now started going to work. The Saket residents want to send their two children, one a Class VII student, the other a Class III pupil, to school but are unable to do so because there's no school transport.

Though schools have reopened, most private institutions are yet to run their buses. "I really want them to go to school but I myself cannot take them there," said Sinha. "I could book a cab for them in the morning, but how will they return home in the afternoon? In my locality, school vans are not running and there are very few children attending the same school as my children."

While Singh wonders how to cope with the problem, another parent, who lives on Delhi University's North Campus but sends his children to school on Pusa Road, has been spending a lot of money to hire taxis for his kids. "We cannot keep the children at home any longer, but the school is not saying anything



Photo for representation

LEFT TO OWN DEVICES

about buses," the parent said. "This means a lot of problems for us. Both my wife and I go to work, so dropping and picking them up is not an option for us."

For their part, the schools plead that resuming transport service after a lull of two years is a big task and requires preparations. Jyoti Arora, principal of Mount Abu Public School, Rohini, assured resumption of buses by next week. "We are getting the consent of

cing, we have to run two buses on the same route and making such arrangements takes time. Getting fitness certificates for the vehicles is another thing," said Arora.

MM Public School, Pitampura, which daily ran 10 buses in pre-Covid days, hopes to restart student transport soon. "We have not received the consent of all the parents, but 70% said they would avail school bus services. We could not run the buses immediately because the attendance was quite poor. Now that it is picking up, we can consider operating the bus services," said principal Rooma Pathak.

The schools have suddenly confronted the reality of having to pay big amounts as penalties for outstanding road taxes and to get the fitness certificates for the buses. At Pathak's school, the penal charges for each bus is around Rs.10,000.

School had requested exemption from the late fees, but as Arora said, "We haven't heard anything on this from the government." A government official assured that the school's plea was being considered by the state transport department.

A PARENT SAYS

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parents and depending on that, we have to decide the bus route. Because of the Covid protocols on physical distan-