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Beyond Syllabus, Teachers Pick Lessons That Matter

TEACHERS' DAY
Special

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New Delhi: Schools teach children equations, grammar, history and science. But ask teachers what they wish if they had more time and space to teach, and the answers often go far beyond the syllabus. From learning how to handle failure and disagreements to understanding money, relationships, empathy and the responsibilities that come with the digital world, educators say some of the most important lessons children need cannot always be fitted neatly into a textbook or examination. This Teachers' Day, educators tell us about the one lesson they believe every child should learn in school, but which classrooms do not always formally teach

Handling failure

How to lose, make mistakes and try again

Money matters

Saving, budgeting and understanding everyday finances

Emotional skills

Recognising emotions and dealing with stress and disappointment

Communication

Listening, speaking clearly and resolving disagreements

Empathy

Understanding people with different experiences and viewpoints

Digital judgement

Knowing what to trust online and using AI and social media responsibly

Respect & relationships

Understanding boundaries, consent and healthy relationships

Everyday independence

Making decisions, solving practical problems and asking for help

Schools teach children how to clear exams, but not always how to clear life's hurdles. Students need to learn how to handle failure, stress and disappointment, build resilience and manage everyday life independently, from money and household tasks to communication and social skills. Packed curriculums leave little room for these lessons, but life skills are essential to becoming self-reliant adults

— **JAS ELANJIKAL** | Principal, St Michael's Senior Secondary School, Pusa Road

Children need to learn how to communicate, negotiate, handle failure and solve everyday problems, while building healthy relationships and emotional resilience. Schools should also teach financial literacy, gender equality, age-appropriate sex education, practical life skills and dignity of labour. Above all, children must understand that marks do not define their lives or determine their future

— **SUNITA** | Principal, Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Bawana

Children learn formulas, grammar, and dates. But we wish we could officially teach our children how to handle failure without breaking, how to say sorry without ego, how to be kind in a world that rewards being clever, and how to stay honest when cheating is easier. We want to teach them that marks will get them a job, but character will keep them human

— **ROOMA PATHAK** | Principal, MM Public School, Pitampura

I wish children were taught how to deal with failure without seeing it as a stigma, and how to find a way forward when things don't go as planned. They should learn that it is okay to ask for help, how to manage difficult emotions and frustration, and how to navigate embarrassing or uncomfortable situations with confidence

— **JOGINDER KUMAR** | Principal, Govt Co-Ed Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Rohini



Decision-making is an important skill that helps us choose wisely and solve problems effectively. Understanding the value of money teaches us to spend carefully, save regularly, and avoid unnecessary expenses. Together, these skills encourage responsibility, independence, and financial discipline, helping us make better choices and build a secure future

— **TANIA JOSHI** | Principal, The Indian School



If I could teach one lesson beyond the curriculum, it would be to make a life, not merely a living. Education's most exalted province lies in cultivating discernment, moral imagination and an inviolable inner compass. Children should learn to distinguish achievement from meaning, ambition from greed and applause from self-worth, and pursue excellence without forfeiting their humanity

— **DEBJANI DAS** | Head of department - English, Amity International School, Saket

