

THE TIMES OF INDIA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025

Disruptions now a routine, schools tired and tested

Meghna Dhulia
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The frequency with which the various stages under the Graded Response Action Plan is changing has left parents, students and teachers in city schools muddled and unsettled. Such disruptions have occurred several times in quick succession in recent times, creating disorder for families and educators as they grapple with the challenge of adapting to an ever-changing routine.

For parents, these frequent changes are more than just an inconvenience. The uncertainty about whether to send their children to school each morning is a daily ordeal. Dolly, a working mother with two children enrolled at Amity International School, said, "My primary school daughter attends online classes, but my Class VIII son has to go to school. Last night, we waited until 10pm for the school's directions. Over the past two months, my kids missed 25 school days for various reasons. GRAP has thrown our household into disarray. Besides, we have to give my daughter our laptop, which hampers our work."

The uncertainty also extends to extracurricular activities. Entrepreneur Saurabh Jain, 44, recounted an incident involving a drawing competition in school. "My daughter was excited about it, but with GRAP we were unsure if it would happen," he said. "We decided not to send her to school, but at 9am the school's WhatsApp group announced that those who hadn't attended would need to complete the activity later."

Jain added, "The hybrid mode creates confusion not just for parents but also for teachers and students. My son is in hybrid mode too, and it's chaotic. We're constantly second-guessing whether lessons will be in person or online. It's draining for everyone involved."

Educators, too, find themselves in a predicament. Tania Joshi, principal, Indian School, said, "I completely empathise with the parents, but unfortunately, we have to abide by the system's directives. Teaching



File photo

SCHOOLS ARE NO KID'S PLAY

and learning are suffering. In hybrid mode, some children are in the classroom while others are online. It's humanly impossible for educators to give equal attention to both groups. On top of this, students have grown overly reliant on computers and have become adept at circumventing the learning process."

Is there an alternative? DK Bedi, principal, Apeejay School, Panchsheel Park, suggested, "Ideally, the best scenario is a world without pollution. However, given the circumstances, adopting a hybrid mode seems to be the most practical approach. While physical classroom teaching remains the most effective and preferred option, the hybrid model is a necessary second choice."

The illogical restrictions also chafe educators. Rooma Pathak, principal, MM Public School, pointed out, "Kids are allowed to roam freely in malls, parks and public places but restricted from attending school. GRAP notifications often arrive late at night, disrupting routines and leaving everyone confused the next day. The hybrid model is not helping—it's been nearly two months of ineffective learning. Either schools should remain closed for the entire duration or we must address the root cause of pollution."

The collective sentiment is clear: a more practical approach is needed. Whether it's through better communication, more structured policies or addressing the underlying environmental issues, the stakeholders are calling for solutions that prioritise the stability and well-being of the city's students.