

# Post Ryan, jittery parents bank on gadgets to monitor kids

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**Kolkata:** The brutal murder of an eight-year-old at the Bhondsi branch of Ryan International School has triggered panic among parents, 1,460km away, in Kolkata.

An increasing number of anxious parents are now scampering for apps and trackers — even unobtrusive gadgets — that can be downloaded or slipped into the children's uniforms or bags to help them monitor their kids' activities in schools and on social networking platforms. The concern is also resonating in social group chatter of parents.

Ujjaini Sinha, an entrepreneur, has a daughter studying in Class V of Shri Shikshayatan School. Being a parent, she is part of several parents' chat groups that have members not only from school but also from tuition classes.

"We have already started discussing ways to keep tabs on children. Social networking sites have become a menace. I have heard about an app called 'Mama-Bear' through which I can get updates about my daughter's social networking site activities. I even heard that it will allow me to monitor messages that my daughter sends or receives from her

smartphone, which was given to her for emergency communication," said Ujjaini. She added that there are apps that even monitor the speed of a car.

The recent spate of gory incidents has left Olympian shooter Joydeep Karmakar worried. His son Adriyan is a Class VII student in Newtown School. "In the wake of the Ryan incident, there is a lot of clamour in the parents' chat groups. We have downloaded 'Mylyapp' as suggested by the school. It is basically a platform from which the parents can know everything related to children in school. The daily routine of children, contacts of class teachers, the circulars

## SAFETY FIRST

and notices issued by school. Even classwork and homework given to students can be monitored through the app. The wall activities of the school are posted on the app," he said.

Adriyan, like other kids in the school, has been handed a Radio Frequency Identification Card. "The moment my child enters or leaves the campus or even when he boards or disembarks from the bus, messages are automatically delivered to my mobile," Karmakar said.

Dinesh Jha, father of Tridibesh Jha — a Class IX student in Rammohan Mission School — feels that awareness can be the only method to ensure security for a child. "A lot of discussion is going on among parents on how to protect the child, especially after the gruesome murder of a child at Ryan International School. My son has been prohibited from using social networking sites since he has not attained 18 years. Also, playing games on mobiles is a strict no-no as I have blocked all the websites to download such games. These are some of the basic precautions I have taken to ensure the safety of my child," Jha said.

Another handy tool that is being talked about among parents is 'Life360', which even has a panic button that can be triggered by the child. "Though my child is not allowed to take mobile phones with her to school, I have downloaded the app on both his and my mobile. It helps me to save the places frequented by her and once she arrives or leaves the location, an alert is sent to me. This has lessened my concern about her whereabouts after school," said Anusuya Ghosh, parent of a girl studying in Class VIII.

## KEEPING AN EYE ROUND THE CLOCK

### Newtown School

• There are 10 gate readers on the campus. They read data of Radio Frequency Identification cards given to children. If the data is not read within a particular time, it sends a message to the parent that the student is out of campus

• The school has also installed apps on the parents' mobile phones through which they can track the movement of schoolbuses

**Sunil Agarwal**  
FOUNDER-DIRECTOR

### Heritage School

• The school is in the process of developing an app that will allow parents to track kids when they are at school. There is a GPS system in place so that the parents know where the child is at any given point

• Parents can communicate with class teachers or school authorities. Even exam-related issues and results will be uploaded on the app that can be accessed with a password

**Seema Sapru** | PRINCIPAL

### Garden High School, South City International School, all DPS schools in Kolkata

• Guardians told to install 'MySchoolBus' app. Video cameras have been installed in few schoolbuses for streaming activities inside the bus

• Once a bus comes within a kilometre or two of the pick-up/drop location, parents receive an SMS or an app-based notification

**Subhabrata Som** | CO-FOUNDER OF NRXEN IT TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAS DEVELOPED THE APP

### South Point High School

• The school has received the OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health and Safety Management Certification from the British Standards Institute (BSI). A rigorous safety policy is in place to protect all stakeholders, including teachers and staff, parents, visitors and, most importantly, students

• The certification stipulates processes to identify, control and decrease the risks associated with health and safety in the school

**Krishna Damani** | SOUTH POINT EDUCATION SOCIETY TRUSTEE

