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SCHOOL

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A child's manners are the headmaster's legacy

A child spends nearly fifteen years in school — from the age of four until seventeen or eighteen. These are the years when the accumulated knowledge of past generations is passed down through lessons in mathematics, science, and literature. But these years are also meant for something deeper: learning how to live among others, how to behave, how to treat people with dignity, and how to take one's place in society. This vital responsibility does not fall on "the system" in the abstract — it rests, quite directly, on the headmasters and principals who shape the culture of each school.

Good manners are not relics from an older, gentler age. They are the everyday habits that make society liveable. They are expressed in tone, in patience, in consideration, and in the small courtesies of daily life — saying "please," "thank you," and "sorry," listening without interrupting, keeping one's surroundings clean, and showing respect for others' time and space. These are the foundations of a civilised personality.

Yet, when we step outside, the collapse of manners is impossible to ignore. People spit on roads, cycle or ride motorcycles on pavements meant for pedestrians, jump queues, arrive late without informing, and talk loudly on phones in public places. Many gossip freely, ignore messages, or dominate conversations. Some throw rubbish out of car windows, speak rudely to waiters and guards, or drive as though the rest of the world does not exist. Impatience at home, arrogance at work, and indifference on the streets have become everyday realities. These are not isolated flaws — they are signals of a society where courtesy has decayed.

And every time we see such behaviour, we must acknowledge an uncomfortable truth: somewhere earlier in life, a headmaster or principal failed this individual. Of course, parents, relatives, media, political culture, and society at large shape behaviour. But the school years — the one structured period of a child's life — exist precisely to prepare them for adult citizenship. If a grown man spits on the road or jumps a queue, if a young man cycles recklessly on the pavement, if a working adult shouts, blames, litters, or bullies, it means that the school where they spent fifteen years did not succeed in forming their character. The school's leadership failed to make manners a priority. The child passed exams, but did not pass the far more important test of courtesy.

This responsibility begins with teachers, but it is set and enforced by the headmaster. Teachers must be role models of good manners — polite, patient, respectful in their tone, and composed under pressure. **Before expecting children to behave well, every teacher should ask: Am I the example they instinctively admire? We do not learn manners by obeying rules; we learn them by admiring people.** When a child sees an adult behaving with quiet dignity, speaking gently, or helping without being asked, admiration becomes imitation. That is how manners root themselves in character.

But for teachers to play this role, headmasters must make it a central expectation. Schools should organise regular workshops on manners — not only for students, but for teachers and par-

ents as well. Adults need reminders that courtesy begins with example. The tone of a school mirrors the conduct of its leadership. If the headmaster speaks with calm authority, treats staff respectfully, and creates an atmosphere of order and dignity, the entire institution reflects that culture. If the leadership tolerates shouting, humiliation, and indifference, students will absorb those behaviours instead.

Schools can go further by creating their own learning materials — videos, posters, stories, or classroom activities — showing examples of good and bad manners suited to different age groups. This can evolve into a core subject shaped by teachers themselves, one that transforms the school's environment and quietly influences each child who walks through its gates. The change does not happen through rules; it happens through culture. And culture is created by leadership.

Good manners have nothing to do with religion, rituals, or forced obedience. They are not patriotic slogans or compulsory songs. They are simply the daily discipline of living courteously in an increasingly crowded, impatient, and competitive world. In a society where cities are bursting and tempers run short, manners are not optional — they are essential.

India has built digital classrooms, smart labs, and modern campuses. But without courtesy, all this learning stands on weak foundations. A well-mannered young person — one who speaks softly, listens patiently, respects others, and carries himself with dignity — is the finest outcome a school can deliver. And that outcome depends overwhelmingly on the headmaster's vision and commitment. If our school heads make manners a priority, they will achieve something far more valuable than producing toppers: they will shape responsible citizens for a civilised nation.

LETTER TO EDITOR

BEYOND THE SYLLABUS: THE CASE FOR A SCHOOL'S OWN CURRICULUM.

Sir,

Your editorial in the November 2025 issue "Beyond the Syllabus" makes a persuasive argument for schools to design their own core curriculum, but as a teacher and headmaster in a government school, I must sound a note of caution. The idea, however noble in intent, may deepen the divide between India's privileged and underprivileged learners.

The national and state syllabi exist for a reason — to provide equity and comparability in a country of vast disparities. When every child studies the same prescribed material, the final public examination serves as a common measure. If individual schools start adding or modifying curricula, how will we ensure that students from small rural schools are not left behind or judged by unequal standards?

Creating a "school-designed curriculum" requires well-trained teachers, planning time, and resources for project work, field visits, or reading materials. Private schools may manage this easily, but most government schools struggle even to maintain adequate staff strength. In Tripura and Bihar, for instance, many schools still function with a single teacher handling multiple grades. In such circumstances, asking every school to design a separate curriculum seems unrealistic.

Rather than fragmenting the system, we should focus on strengthening and enriching the common curriculum — making it more flexible, inquiry-based, and connected to local contexts. State councils and NCERT can allow schools some autonomy within a structured framework, but not complete freedom that risks inconsistency and exclusion.

True reform must begin with teacher capacity-building and better classroom conditions, not with yet another layer of curricular complexity. The dream of "each school having its own curriculum" sounds appealing, but without addressing the inequalities of our system, it could easily become a privilege of the few, leaving the majority of Indian children further behind.

Yours sincerely,

R. Balan
Government Higher Secondary School, Kerala

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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INDIA TO INTRODUCE MANDATORY AI CURRICULUM FROM CLASS 3

In a landmark education reform, India will make Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Computational Thinking (CT) mandatory subjects from Class 3 onwards beginning in the 2026–27 academic year. The initiative, led by the Ministry of Education, places India among the world's earliest adopters of AI education at the primary level.

Curriculum development is being spearheaded by IIT Madras under the guidance of Professor Karthik Raman, with resource materials and digital content due by December 2025. The framework aligns with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework 2023, emphasizing "AI for Public Good" — focusing on ethics, problem-solving, and social responsibility rather than coding skills.

The rollout will be phased and supported by a massive teacher training program under the NISHTHA scheme, aiming to equip over 10 million educators using video-based modules. Lessons for younger students will be interactive, while older students will explore real-world and advanced AI applications.

Globally, countries like China, Singapore, and Hong Kong are advancing similar AI literacy initiatives. However, experts warn that India must address key challenges — including data privacy, algorithmic bias, and maintaining human oversight — to ensure safe and meaningful AI learning for its 250 million schoolchildren.

India's International Schools Face Teacher Training Crisis

Despite charging some of the highest school fees in the country — often between ₹8–20 lakh a year — India's international schools are facing growing criticism for a shortage of adequately trained teachers. Parents say that while schools promise "global education" through IB and Cambridge curricula, many teachers lack the specialist training required to deliver inquiry-based, critical-thinking pedagogy.

According to UDISEPlus data, over 90% of Indian teachers are classified as "trained," but this reflects general qualifications, not IB or IGCSE certifications. The International Baccalaureate's own research confirms persistent challenges: many Indian teachers feel uncertain about implementing the IB framework and receive only brief orientation workshops before teaching.

Experts warn that this training gap undermines classroom quality, with lessons often reverting to traditional lecture styles rather than inquiry-driven learning. Despite high fees, few schools disclose how much they invest in teacher development or how many staff hold international certifications.

Education researchers urge greater transparency — schools should publish data on teacher credentials and ongoing training. Parents, meanwhile, are turning to hybrid or CBSE schools that blend project-based methods with Indian academic rigor. Until international schools align fee levels with genuine teacher capability, "global education" risks becoming more branding than substance.

INDIA'S SCHOOLS ARE EMBRACING AI — BUT FACING A 'HALLUCINATION' CRISIS

In The Wire, education researcher Santosh Koshy Joy warns that India's rapid adoption of generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini in classrooms—often without regulation or teacher training—is creating a serious risk of misinformation and "AI hallucinations."

Over 70% of Indian teachers now use AI tools for lesson planning, according to a CENTA survey. While these tools promise efficiency, their unchecked use is allowing fabricated or inaccurate information to seep into lesson plans, quizzes, and study materials. Joy cautions that overworked teachers, relying heavily on AI-generated content, may unintentionally formalise falsehoods in classrooms—weakening critical thinking and factual integrity among students.

The article highlights that India lacks a regulatory framework for AI in education. Joy calls for urgent reforms: mandatory teacher training on AI vetting, labelling of AI-assisted materials, integrating AI literacy into curricula, and stricter oversight of EdTech tools. Without these guardrails, he argues, AI risks undermining India's educational foundations rather than strengthening them.

Read the full report by Santosh Koshy Joy in The Wire
https://bit.ly/4ri29bd

STUDENTS USE AI, PARENTS PANIC — HOW INDIAN SCHOOLS ARE LEARNING TO LIVE WITH CHATGPT

In a ThePrint report, journalist Priyanka Mehta explores how Indian schools are struggling to adapt as both students and teachers increasingly turn to AI tools like ChatGPT. Once viewed with alarm, AI use in classrooms has now become commonplace — students use it for homework, projects, and presentations, while teachers rely on it to create quizzes, worksheets, and lesson plans.

Many educators admit they can no longer fully control or detect AI-generated work. Some students even use "humaniser" tools to disguise ChatGPT text, making plagiarism nearly impossible to spot. Teachers now face the new challenge of distinguishing between authentic student understanding and AI-assisted answers.

Despite this sweeping change, there are still no formal government guidelines regulating AI use in schools. Principals and teachers are calling for national policies on ethical AI use, while some schools are beginning to train staff in responsible integration. Parents, meanwhile, are expressing concern over falling grades and students' growing dependence on AI tools.

As one principal put it, "AI is a bullet that has already left the gun" — schools can no longer ban it, only learn how to live with it responsibly.

Read the full story by Priyanka Mehta in ThePrint:
https://bit.ly/4pnpGpm

SAL KHAN: AI WILL SUPPORT, NOT REPLACE, TEACHERS — THE FUTURE OF LEARNING IS HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION

In an interview with BBC journalist Katty Kay, education innovator Sal Khan—founder of Khan Academy and author of Brave New Words—outlined an optimistic vision for how artificial intelligence could transform education without eroding the essential human role of teachers.

Khan compared AI to having a team of graduate assistants in every classroom, supporting teachers by grading assignments, identifying struggling students, and providing personalised learning in real time. In this best-case scenario, AI acts as an "on-call teaching assistant", allowing educators to focus on mentoring, discussion, and creativity rather than administrative tasks.

Addressing fears that AI might replace teachers, Khan stressed that the human element in schools—empathy, accountability, and social learning—cannot be automated. He believes AI can bridge gaps in access, particularly in rural and under-resourced settings like parts of India, giving every child an intelligent tutor while keeping the teacher "in the loop."

Khan also sees AI as a tool to reignite curiosity and creativity, helping students connect lessons to real-life contexts. Future classrooms, he predicts, will combine AI-driven personalisation with immersive tools like virtual reality—making learning interactive, inclusive, and deeply human.

For teachers, his message is clear: AI won't replace you—it will empower you.

NEARLY 8,000 INDIAN SCHOOLS HAVE NO STUDENTS BUT 20,000 TEACHERS ON PAYROLL

A new government report has revealed that nearly 8,000 schools across India had zero student enrolments during the 2024–25 academic year — yet more than 20,000 teachers remain on their payrolls. West Bengal alone accounted for nearly half of these cases, with 3,812 schools and 17,965 teachers.

Telangana followed with 2,245 schools and 1,016 teachers, while Madhya Pradesh had 463 such schools employing 223 teachers. In contrast, nine states — including Haryana, Maharashtra,

Goa, and Assam — reported no zero-enrolment schools.

The total number of such institutions has dropped 38% from the previous year's figure of nearly 13,000, as several states began merging schools to optimise staff and infrastructure use. Officials from the Ministry of Education noted that education being a state subject, corrective measures must be implemented locally.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh is planning to withdraw recognition from schools with no enrolments for three consecutive years. The data also highlights a broader inefficiency — over 1 lakh "single-teacher" schools nationwide, enrolling more than 33 lakh students — exposing deep structural gaps in India's public education system.

TOXIC AIR CRISIS SHUTS DELHI SCHOOLS AND TRIGGERS PUBLIC PROTESTS

Severe air pollution has once again gripped India's capital in November, with Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring to 425 — classified as "severe" by the Central Pollution Control Board. Authorities have ordered elementary schools to shift online, halted construction, and advised residents to work from home as smog blanketed the city.

For the first time, Delhi residents took to the streets in protest, gathering at India Gate with banners reading "I miss breathing" and "Breathing is killing us." Doctors have issued unprecedented warnings urging vulnerable groups — including those with chronic lung or heart disease — to temporarily leave the city.

Experts from AIIMS reported a surge in patients suffering from breathlessness, asthma, and heart ailments, particularly among children and the elderly. The city's annual pollution spike is driven by crop burning, vehicle emissions, and weather patterns that trap pollutants.

A new Lancet report highlights the scale of the crisis: India recorded 1.72 million deaths linked to outdoor air pollution in 2022 — a 38% rise since 2010. Despite repeated health emergencies, environmental activists say authorities have failed to implement effective long-term solutions.

WHY PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN BANGALORE OPPOSE GOVERNMENT SAFETY NORMS?

Private school managements in Karnataka have opposed the government's move to make fire safety, building safety, and land conversion certificates mandatory for renewal of recognition (RR) for schools established before 2017–18. Ac-

cording to The Hindu, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) has made online submission of these documents compulsory for the 2025–26 academic year, warning that schools operating without valid recognition could face action.

The Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS), led by general secretary D. Shashikumar, argued that since the issue is still pending before the High Court, the government should grant conditional renewal until the matter is resolved.

The association also criticised the authorities for not implementing earlier decisions from high-level meetings held in 2024 and 2025 to streamline safety certification procedures.

The controversy follows reports of fake certificates being uploaded by some schools, prompting DSEL to direct officials to verify their authenticity.

Meanwhile, MLC Puttanna has petitioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to form a legislative committee to address the broader challenges faced by older private schools, to which the Chief Minister has reportedly agreed.

OVER 15.89 CRORE CHILDREN IN GUJARAT RECEIVE FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Gujarat Health Minister Praful Pansheriya announced that over 15.89 crore children have received free health check-ups across the state in the past 11 years under the School Health–Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (SH-RBSK). Launched in 2014–15, the initiative has provided specialised medical care to more than 2.18 lakh children, including 1.67 lakh heart surgeries, 20,000 kidney treatments, and 11,000 cancer treatments, all at no cost.

The programme, implemented under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel's leadership, aims to ensure a healthier future generation through early diagnosis and treatment for children from birth to 18 years. It covers students in anganwadis, primary, and secondary schools, as well as out-of-school children.

Currently, 992 mobile health teams operate statewide, each with medical officers, a pharmacist, and a nurse, delivering services directly to communities. The scheme also uses 4D screening technology for newborns, digital health records via the Teko Portal, and 28 District Early Intervention Centres for ongoing care.

Describing SH-RBSK as a model for comprehensive child healthcare, the Minister said it integrates technology, preventive care, and accessibility to build a "strong and healthy generation" in Gujarat.

ODISHA TO RE-ENROL SCHOOL DROPOUTS THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has signed a partnership with the Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) to bring school dropouts and out-of-school children back into the education system through open and distance learning (ODL). The initiative aims to ensure inclusive access to education for learners who left school early, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged areas of Odisha.

Under the collaboration, students who dropped out before completing Classes 10 and 12 will be re-enrolled under NIOS, allowing them to study flexible courses aligned with the National Curriculum Framework. The programme will integrate digital resources, printed self-learning materials, and local academic support centres to help learners study at their own pace while balancing work or family responsibilities.

OSEPA officials said the scheme is part of the state's broader mission to achieve "education for all", reducing dropout rates and improving literacy levels among adolescents and young adults. NIOS will also provide training and certification support to ensure equivalence with mainstream school qualifications, enabling learners to pursue higher education or vocational opportunities.

340 TRIPURA SCHOOLS OPERATE WITH ONLY ONE TEACHER, REVEALS EDUCATION MINISTRY REPORT

A recent Ministry of Education (UDISE 2024–25) report has revealed that 340 schools in Tripura—serving a total of 6,492 students—operate with only one teacher, underscoring persistent staffing challenges in the state's public education system. While Tripura recorded a healthy pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 18 overall and an average school enrolment of 140 students, the single-teacher schools average just over 20 students each.

Despite these gaps, the report notes progress in infrastructure: all 4,943 schools in the state have electricity, and 97% have separate toilet facilities for students. However, only 41% have internet access, and fewer than 5% are equipped with rainwater harvesting systems or solar panels.

The report highlights stark contrasts between public and private institutions. Tripura's 4,187 government schools employ 27,601 teachers, averaging seven per school, whereas 485 private schools employ 8,195 teachers—an average of 16 teachers each. Private schools also have higher student loads, averaging 333 students per school, over twice the state average.

While 3,289 schools now offer computer classes, the study found dropout rates highest at the secondary level (8.8%), compared to 3.2% in middle school and 1.3% in foundational grades. The findings point to an urgent need for teacher recruitment and digital infrastructure upgrades to balance access and quality in Tripura's school system.

HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES MORAL THINKING — LESSONS FOR INDIA'S MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

A new analysis by Dr. Irini Mavrou of University College London highlights how the language we think in can directly influence our moral judgement — a finding with strong implications for India's multilingual education system. Writing in The Conversation, Mavrou explains that bilinguals tend to make different moral decisions depending on whether they are using their first or second language.

Studies involving Spanish–English and Greek–English bilinguals showed that people are more emotional and rule-driven when reasoning in their mother tongue (L1), often expressing guilt or empathy. In contrast, when using a second language (L2) learned in more neutral environments like schools, decisions become more logical and utilitarian, focused on outcomes rather than emotions — a phenomenon called the "moral foreign language effect."

This research suggests that multilingual students may reason differently depending on the medium of instruction — a vital insight for teachers in India, where millions of students are educated in English despite growing up speaking regional languages. It reinforces the need for educators to balance linguistic fluency with emotional and ethical understanding, ensuring that language choice in classrooms supports not just academic growth, but also values, empathy, and moral development in an increasingly multilingual society.

WHY READING FLUENCY MATTERS — AND WHAT INDIAN TEACHERS CAN LEARN

Education expert Penny Slater argues that reading fluency — often overlooked in classrooms — is the vital bridge between word decoding and reading comprehension. In her article in TES Magazine, she explains that while Indian schools, like many others globally, focus on phonics and comprehension, many children remain "word callers" who can read text but fail to fully understand it.

Fluency combines three essential skills: accuracy (reading words correctly), automaticity (reading effortlessly without decoding each word), and prosody (reading with rhythm, phrasing, and expression). Fluent readers, she notes, can focus their mental energy on understanding meaning — which is crucial for improving comprehension and nurturing a love for reading.

For teachers, fluency instruction doesn't require separate lessons but can be woven into daily practice. Slater suggests strategies such as echo reading (students mimic the teacher's expression), repeated reading (reading the same text multiple times to build confidence), performance reading (reading aloud in pairs or small groups), and text marking (showing where to pause or emphasise meaning).

For India's multilingual classrooms, these methods are especially valuable: they support pronunciation, rhythm, and confidence in both English and vernacular reading. By modelling expressive reading and creating joyful fluency practice, teachers can help children move beyond decoding words — to truly think, feel, and understand what they read.

CAMBRIDGE EDUCATION HEAD CALLS FOR 'REWILDING' SCHOOLS — A VISION FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Professor Hilary Cremin, Head of the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, argues that modern schooling is "broken beyond repair" and must be radically reimagined. In her new book, Rewilding Education, Cremin contends that today's exam-driven, standardised systems are damaging children's health, suppressing creativity, and deepening inequality — concerns that strongly resonate with India's own education challenges.

Cremin describes current schooling as a "factory model" designed for the 19th century, not the rapidly changing realities of the 21st — marked by climate crisis, AI disruption, and social inequality. She criticises over-standardisation, high-stakes testing, and rigid discipline, which she says make both students and teachers "sick". Instead, she calls for an education that prioritises curiosity, wellbeing, empathy, and social responsibility alongside academic learning.

The concept of "rewilding" education borrows from ecology: schools should abandon one-size-fits-all models and allow flexible, holistic learning to flourish. Cremin urges greater outdoor and community-based learning, project work, arts integration, and space for reflection and mindfulness. Drawing inspiration from thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore, she proposes that nature be treated as a "co-educator," fostering both wisdom and care for the planet.

Her message is clear: to prepare children for the future, education must move beyond rote learning and competition — towards body, mind, heart, and soul learning that restores humanity to schooling.

Chaitra Kashyap

Solving problems through design

Chaitra R, IB MYP design teacher at Sreenidhi International School, Hyderabad, says, "Design in education is about understanding problems deeply and finding meaningful solutions with empathy at the heart." It encourages students to think critically, view challenges from others' perspectives, and create human-centred, inclusive solutions that make a real difference.

In the MYP, "design" goes far beyond fields like graphic, interior, or product design. It is understood as a structured, step-by-step process for developing solutions to real-world challenges. This process draws inspiration from human-centred design and design thinking, approaches that are increasingly shaping innovation, education, and business around the world.

When we talk about "designing for a problem" in MYP Design, it doesn't mean students are expected to invent something entirely new each time. Instead, they learn to identify, define, and frame authentic challenges, allowing them to investigate and create meaningful solutions. Teachers across disciplines encounter problems in many forms, and design provides a systematic way to approach them—by guiding students to recognize the issue, analyse it, and generate a range of possible solutions. From there, students test, refine, and evaluate their ideas based on feedback and real-world impact.

A key element that often gets overlooked in this process is empathy. When we design solutions to address people's problems, empathy becomes the foundation. It allows us to view the world through others' experiences—to understand their challenges, emotions, and motivations. Empathy helps us appreciate problems not just as designers, but as human beings

who seek to improve lives.

This is the crucial difference between problem-solving and designing for people. In design education, we emphasize not only identifying a problem but also addressing it meaningfully through human experience. Students must learn to ask: How does the user feel? What challenges do they face? How can we make their experience better?

By shifting the focus from who we are designing for to what we are designing and why, students begin to develop empathy as an essential design skill. It is this empathetic understanding that transforms design from a technical process into a truly human-centred practice.

Empathy is not just a concept or a definition—it's a lived experience. In design, we cannot truly be empathetic until we have encountered a problem ourselves or experienced situations that make us understand what others go through. Empathy must be practised and cultivated through awareness and engagement.

In design classrooms, educators play a crucial role in helping students practise empathy by encouraging them to see problems through real human experiences. Empathy-driven design goes beyond creating solutions—it begins with understanding who is facing the challenge and how it impacts their lives. When students are guided to explore problems deeply, identify the people affected, and analyze the emotional, social, and practical dimensions of the issue, they begin to design with purpose and sensitivity.

By nurturing empathy in the design process, educators enable students to gain a broader perspective—one that allows them to create meaningful, human-centered solutions that truly make a difference.

For example, consider online shopping — a system most of us use regularly. Students may initially think of improving the platform in general, but a truly empathy-driven and human-centered design approach requires them to look deeper into specific human experiences.

Instead of asking, "How can we make online shopping better?", students should ask, "How can we make online shopping better for a busy working parent who constantly struggles with time?"

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog.

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Archana Madhusudan

The importance of emotional intelligence in classrooms

According to Archana Madhusudan, academic director, Sun Jupiter International School, Bangalore, education is not just about grades and examinations; it is also about preparing students for life. Emotional intelligence helps children recognise their own feelings, understand others' emotions, and respond thoughtfully. By nurturing emotional intelligence in classrooms, teachers can create a space where learning is not only intellectual but also emotional and social.

In a world where academic achievements often take precedence, the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) is frequently overlooked. The education system has long emphasised grades, examinations, and performance metrics, but true success extends beyond intellectual ability. As one child psychologist and emotional intelligence coach emphasises, without emotional balance, learning and performance lose their foundation. The growing recognition of emotional intelligence in the classroom is not just an educational reform; it is a human necessity. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have witnessed a surge in emotional and behavioural challenges among children. These challenges have revealed an urgent need to integrate emotional awareness and regulation into education systems globally.

For long, the focus of education has been only on intellectual pursuits — memorising facts, scoring high marks, and excelling in examinations. However, the emotional well-being of students, which plays an equally critical role in their overall development, has remained completely neglected. Most of the focus is on marks and grades, and we have never worried about emotional intelligence. A child might perform exceptionally well academically, but if he is internally distressed or anxious, that performance will eventually go down. The educator points out that emotional disturbances hinder not only learning but also execution and decision-making. Historically, emotional expression was often dismissed as adults rarely empathised with children's feelings, and youngsters were told to "shut up and listen." Such responses led generations to bury their emotions rather than express them healthily. Over time, this suppression resulted in adults who are actually individuals afraid of offending others, and those who bottle up emotions, eventually bursting out. The terms depression and anxiety were seldom heard of in the past, but today, even children as young as five or six seek counselling for these conditions. It is surprising and painful to note that a child of five or six years has anxiety, and the reason is the lack of emotional control. Emotional development, she insists, must be prioritised not only in classrooms but also at home.

Teachers today face a unique phase of challenges. With more and more single-child families coming up, children often grow up without learning the values of sharing, caring, or compromise. They are pampered a lot, as per her observation. As a result, when they enter the classroom environment, they struggle to adapt and regulate their emotions, leading to behavioural disruptions. One of the most striking examples she provides concerns the simple act of saying sorry. Today's children do not say sorry, she points out, even when we ask them to apologise, they refuse. Maybe if we ask for something very hard, they will happily give it. But they will not say 'sorry'. This reluctance stems from the lack of emotional education at home and school. The act of sincere apology — one that signifies self-awareness and empathy — must be practised by adults before teaching the children. "Children are wet sponges; they absorb everything," she notes. "They are mirrors. They reflect whatever they see."

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog.

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Nita Kar

Happy teachers, stronger learning

Nita Kar, educator, having 25 years of experience in well known schools of Kolkata, describes how teacher well-being affects student learning directly. When teachers feel supported and balanced, classrooms become more positive and engaging.

As an educator with 25 years of experience teaching high school students, I have come to firmly believe that a teacher's ultimate goal goes far beyond merely imparting knowledge. It is about helping and guiding students to discover their true potential and empowering them to become efficient, confident, and compassionate individuals who can positively impact society. In this context, teaching is both a vocation and a responsibility that requires dedication, empathy, and mindfulness. The practice of a healer, therapist, teacher, or any helping professional should be centred towards oneself first, because if the helper is unhappy, stressed, or emotionally turbulent, they will not be capable of making a meaningful difference in the lives of others. This idea is beautifully expressed in a quote by Thich Nhat Hanh, the revered monk and author, who reminds us that self-care is a prerequisite for helping others effectively. In the context of education, this emphasises the significance of teacher well-being.

As educators, we are responsible for creating positive learning environments for our students; however, the demands of teaching can take a considerable toll on our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. During my 25-year career, I have witnessed firsthand the complex and minute relationship between teacher well-being and student learning. The well-being of educators is not just an individual concern but a systemic one, influencing student engagement, classroom culture, and academic outcomes. Therefore, it becomes critical to first understand the factors affecting teacher well-being, how these factors will impact students, and how educators, administrators, and parents have to collaborate to foster teacher wellness, which in turn will promote academic success and holistic development.

Teachers are undeniably the backbone of the educational system. Their well-being directly affects the quality of instruction, classroom management, and the ability to connect effectively and meaningfully with students. Research and experience indicate that teachers who experience positive well-being are highly effective in creating supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environments. On the other hand, high levels of stress and burnout among teachers negatively affect retention, performance, and student outcomes.

A teacher who is content, balanced, and emotionally grounded can form stronger bonds with students, understand their diverse needs, and communicate effectively. These attributes are foundational for nurturing curiosity, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering creativity. In contrast, a teacher experiencing chronic stress or emotional exhaustion may find it difficult to maintain classroom discipline, deliver engaging lessons, or respond to individual student needs. This creates a ripple effect that impacts not only the teacher but the entire classroom ecosystem.

Navigating professional demands

Teachers are no strangers to challenges. In fact, they often assume multiple roles simultaneously. We are not just instructors; we are mentors, counsellors, role models, and sometimes even act as second parents to the students. Each role comes with its own responsibilities, expectations, and pressures. Before a teacher can begin teaching, they must create an environment that is conducive to learning. This requires establishing rules, maintaining discipline, and engaging students in ways that encourage participation without creating stress or tension. A teacher, entering a classroom without a well-planned management strategy, may find it difficult to focus on instruction, thereby affecting the quality of learning.

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog.

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Dhanlaxmi Krishnan

Bridging sports and studies

Dhanlaxmi Krishnan, physical education teacher, describes how athletics and education go hand in hand in shaping a student's future.

Sports not only build physical fitness but also teach discipline, teamwork, goal-setting, and leadership—skills that support academic success. By combining visible thinking routines with training, educators can track progress, boost engagement, and help students grow holistically. The speaker explains how athletics develops qualities that last a lifetime, benefiting both the classroom and the field.

As a physical education teacher and track and field coach, I would like to discuss how athletics and education can be combined for a bright future for a student. It is essential to use a lot of visible thinking routines for the students in the school, as it can help us to understand the success criteria of the journey in sports. Bridging athletics and education can help us become better educators, as we can understand the students' connection to track and field and how education and sports go hand in hand. We should know how athletics can help in developing an athlete and also educating them. We should know how to boost students' engagement and what it means to develop a student holistically. We always think that athletics is all about physical activity, but there is more to it. It helps in building qualities in an athlete; he realizes how to be goal-oriented, disciplined, and consistent in performances.

A child has to be goal-oriented and needs discipline. In India, we cannot depend only on sports or only on education. The students should also have good co-curricular qualities. In

athletics, there are a couple of principles that are important for educators and students to know, the pathway to follow. Goal setting and progress tracking do not apply only in sports but also in education. Educators have certain goals with learners in focus. In athletics, we have clear and measurable goals. For example, if I need to improve my sprint time, it is a clear goal for me as an athlete. Similarly, a student may feel he should score well in specific subjects. In this way, goals are connected to different areas. We, as educators, need to help the students set academic and personal learning goals, and we need to track their progress in due course. During a parent-teacher meeting, we give feedback to the parents about the progress of their child and also where he is lagging. This helps the parents, teachers, and students understand the progress of the student and what we should do to help them improve.

Children usually move from place to place, and in sports, we set personal bests depending on their previous records. In this way, they know their timing, understand where they stand, and their current status. I always ask my athletes to maintain a book where they record their achievements, their jumps, throws, and timing. When they compare themselves with any upcoming event, they will have the data to work more on. Even coaches have progress reports that help them to know where the children stand. When I tell my athletes to set SMART goals.

SMART moves, bright minds

The word SMART is an abbreviation. S stands for specific, M for measurable, A for achievable, R for relevant, and T for time-bound. Smart goals have a clear-cut answer for questions such as who, what, when, and where. It is a very specific and clear goal, and the student should be able to define the goals very clearly to get good grades. In education, when the student improves on a particular subject by practising regularly, we can find consistency in their performance. In athletics, we need to be clear about drills, such as jumping, throwing, and running.

M stands for measurable, both in track and field, and about measurement in sports and athletics. It is about the distance the student has covered in shotput, jumped in the long jump, and how fast he has run the race.

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog.

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Jeetesh Gulani

The power of interdisciplinary classrooms

Jeetesh Gulani, STEM learning expert specializing in curriculum, explains how Interdisciplinary learning breaks down the walls between subjects, offering students a broader and more connected view of knowledge.

It encourages them to think critically and explore how different concepts relate. This makes lessons more engaging and fosters long-term understanding.

I, with a deep passion for innovative education design, continuously explore ways to break down traditional subject silos. My goal is to create interactive and meaningful learning experiences that truly engage students and prepare them for real-world challenges. I want to explain what is Interdisciplinary Curriculum. Interdisciplinary learning excites me because it changes how education is experienced. Imagine this, what if every lesson were not just a collection of isolated facts but a fascinating story, where history, science, math, and more come together in one seamless, connected narrative.

This is not just a new teaching style; as a matter of fact, oral teaching of old followed this exact format. It is a powerful way to spark real curiosity and help students retain what they learn. When knowledge is wrapped in stories, it sticks with us far longer than dry, disconnected facts. Most classrooms today are built around separate subjects, teaching each in its own bubble. I have seen how this siloed structure leaves students puzzled when they reach high school or college.

That is when they suddenly have to connect the dots on their own. Without prior training, this can be difficult. So I believe curriculum design must integrate two, three, or even four subjects into a cohesive experience early on. This approach helps students see relevance clearly. It pulls them in and invites them to think critically about how different ideas fit together.

Example to bring It alive

Let me share an example that vividly illustrates this point. You may remember learning about the thermite reaction, a chemical process where iron oxide and aluminum combine to produce molten iron and aluminum oxide. It is an exothermic, or heat-producing, reaction that is fairly common in chemistry class.

Separately, you might remember learning about World War II and the devastating nuclear bombs that ended it. But how often do we connect these two things? The truth is, the thermite reaction played a vital role during the war. It was used to disable German artillery during the Normandy invasion, which helped the Allied forces make progress.

Most students never realize the connection because science and history are taught separately. But when they are taught together, suddenly chemistry becomes more than just a formula. It becomes a story with life, drama, and meaning. It shifts from abstraction to something memorable.

Here is another example: The Gustav Gun

This was an immense piece of German engineering, so massive that it required thousands of people just to move it along railway tracks. It could shell targets far beyond the range of other artillery. Now imagine if a single commando could airdrop on this weapon and disable it with a small pouch of thermite reaction ingredients, just rust and aluminum foil.

While historical records may not confirm that this tactic was ever used, the story itself sparks imagination. It brings science, history, and strategy to life. Learning this way makes concepts unforgettable. The best lessons are not about memorizing facts but about connecting dots and exploring how ideas shape the world.

That said, moving to interdisciplinary learning is not without challenges. The biggest barrier is that our educational systems are still centered on standardized exams. These exams are designed around separate subjects and rarely accommodate integrated approaches.

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog.

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Annie Besant

The woman who shaped modern Indian education

When Annie Besant stepped onto Indian soil in 1893, few could have imagined how deeply this Irish reformer would transform the country's educational landscape.

Born Annie Wood in London on 1 October 1847, she had already lived several lives by the time she arrived at the port of Bombay. Freethinker, socialist, orator, writer, and agitator—she was known across Britain for her fearless opinions and tireless energy.

Long before India became her spiritual home, Besant had fought other battles at home. In Victorian England she had been a leading voice of the National Secular Society and a close ally of Charles Bradlaugh.

The two courted controversy in 1877 when they were tried for publishing a birth-control pamphlet—a bold act that challenged church and state alike. She threw herself into workers' causes, supporting the match-girls' strike of 1888, marching on "Bloody Sunday," and addressing crowds for the Fabian Society and the Social Democratic Federation.

When she contested elections to the London School Board for Tower Hamlets, she topped the poll—an extraordinary feat at a time when few women could even vote.

A TURNING TOWARD THE SPIRIT

In 1890 Besant's restless search for truth took a new direction when she met the Russian mystic Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society. The encounter altered the course of her life. Drawn to the Society's vision of a universal brotherhood that united science, religion, and philosophy, she soon devoted herself entirely to Theosophy. Three years later she sailed for India—the land she came to regard as her true home.

In the sacred city of Benares she found what she called "the living heart of Hindu wisdom." The grandeur of Hindu philosophy and the dignity of Indian spiritual traditions convinced her that a nation's revival must begin with education—not as mere literacy, but as moral and spiritual awakening.

From then on, she would dedicate her life to that mission.

THEOSOPHY AND A NEW IDEA OF EDUCATION

The Theosophical Society, of which Besant became president in 1907, taught that education must nurture the body, mind, and spirit together. "Education," she said, "must fit the child, not the child be forced into a system." Influenced by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott's work among the marginalized in Madras—especially the Olcott Panchama Schools for "untouchable" children—she envisioned a holistic programme that joined moral, physical, intellectual, and spiritual training.

To her, British education in India had become a machine for producing clerks. "The aim of education," she wrote, "is to draw out every faculty of the boy—to strengthen him physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually." Schools should not churn out nervous, over-examined youth but vigorous citizens proud of their heritage and ready to serve their country.

BUILDING THE CENTRAL HINDU COLLEGE

In 1898 Besant founded her great experiment—the Central Hindu College at Benares. Here she sought to blend Western scientific knowledge with the moral philosophy of Hinduism. Laboratories and libraries stood beside shrines and prayer halls; classes in physics shared space with lessons in the Bhagavad Gita. The institution soon became famous for its discipline, its character training, and its spirit of patriotism.

From this seed would grow one of India's most distinguished universities. When Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya later

established the Banaras Hindu University in 1915, Besant's college became its nucleus. Her Sanatana Dharma textbooks—written with Dr. Bhagavan Das—were among the first attempts to teach religion systematically in modern schools. She called it "education for India, by Indians, and of Indian spirit."

LEARNING AS A NATIONAL DUTY

Besant's vision of learning was inseparable from her sense of India's destiny. She lamented that government schools had banished religion, while missionary schools replaced Indian faiths with Christianity. To her, this neglect of moral education was at the root of social decay. "If every religious community gave religious education to its children," she said, "the education of the country would proceed on healthy lines." For Hindus, she argued, reviving the moral force of their tradition was essential to national regeneration. "If India is to rise again," she declared, "she must begin by reviving spirituality; then rebuild education suited to her needs.

CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP

For Besant, true education cultivated not just intellect but character. She insisted on games and physical training—"for the training of the body is as important as that of the mind." Discipline on the playground, she believed, bred courage and quick judgment; emotional training bred patriotism and compassion. A nation of selfish individuals could never be free. Her ideal student was vigorous, thoughtful, and devoted to public service—a citizen ready to shoulder the burdens of a new India.

CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S LEARNING

When Besant turned her attention to women, she entered another neglected field. In 1904 she wrote The Education of Indian Girls, outlining one of the earliest comprehensive plans for female education in the country. Although her ideas reflected the gender notions of her age—preparing women chiefly as mothers and homemakers—they also broke social taboos by insisting that girls must be educated.

She promoted instruction in religion, hygiene, household management, music, and the arts—subjects that, in her view, strengthened family and nation alike. To prove that such schooling was possible, she founded the Central Hindu School for Girls in 1904. It was a modest beginning, but in an era when female literacy was almost nonexistent, it marked a quiet revolution. Her balanced approach—modern yet respectful of tradition—won the confidence of conservative families and helped open doors for generations of Indian women.

THE LIMITS OF HER VISION

Yet Besant's ideas were not free from the social hierarchies of her time. Her scheme for the lower castes and depressed classes remained cautious and paternalistic. She supported only primary instruction for manual workers and preferred separate schools for the "untouchables." Higher education, she felt, was the rightful domain of the upper castes. The same woman who preached universal brotherhood could not entirely escape the boundaries of the society she admired. Her educational reforms thus carried both light and shadow—progressive in spirit, conservative in structure.

A LASTING LEGACY

By the early twentieth century, Besant's voice had become one of the most influential in Indian public life. Her writings—Education as a National Duty and The Birth of New India—inspired a generation of teachers and reformers. Her emphasis on self-reliance in learning paved the way for later experiments by Tagore at Santiniketan and by Gandhi in his Nai Talim schools. Through her, education was no longer merely a colonial instrument but a path to self-respect and nationhood.

Still, she remained a product of both Victorian England and Brahmanical India, holding ideals of hierarchy even as she preached freedom. Her work was complex, sometimes contradictory, but always animated by faith in the transformative power of knowledge.

EPILOGUE

For Annie Besant, education was not a profession—it was a sacred trust. "The future of India," she believed, "depends not on politics alone but on the awakening of her moral and intellectual conscience." Through her schools, her speeches, and her example, she helped ignite that awakening.

When she died at Adyar, Madras, on 20 September 1933, the flag of the Theosophical Society flew at half-mast, and students across the country mourned a woman who had come from far away yet had become one of their own.

Foreign by birth, Annie Besant became Indian by conviction—and in the story of modern Indian education, she remains one of its most passionate architects.

Editorial Team

Image source: Wikipedia.

Teaching manners as a core subject

Across India, we worry about academic results, exam rankings, and school infrastructure. What we rarely discuss is the invisible glue of a school's culture: how students speak, greet, listen, behave, and respond to adults and peers. Manners are not a small thing. They shape the tone of a school more than any textbook or committee.

Most Indian schools have reduced manners to a vague moral instruction—worth preaching, but not worth systematically teaching.
However, some schools across the world have shown what is possible when manners become a core subject.
A powerful example is that of Great Yarmouth Charter Academy in the UK. Once labelled a failing school, known for open defiance, rudeness and chaos, the school transformed itself within three years. Visitors today describe the students as courteous, confident and unusually warm.
Many remark that they have "never shaken so many hands in their life." This change did not come from new buildings or technology. It came from a deliberate school-wide decision to teach manners as seriously as mathematics.

WHY MANNERS MATTER MORE THAN WE ADMIT

Manners may seem like small pleasantries, but in truth they determine how well young people navigate the adult world. A polite greeting, looking someone in the eye, saying "please" and "thank you," listening without interrupting, apologising when wrong—these are not ornamental behaviours. They build confidence, emotional maturity, employability, and the ability to form healthy relationships.
Not every child learns these habits at home. Many children come from environments lacking stability or adult modelling. Schools therefore become the most important place where children can learn the behaviours that will help them flourish in society. Teaching manners is not about enforcing a rigid Victorian code. It is about giving all children, regardless of background, the social tools for success.

WHERE SCHOOLS SHOULD BEGIN

A school that wants to teach manners must begin with clarity. It is not enough to tell students to "be respectful." Respect must be defined. Teachers and students need a shared understanding of what respectful behaviour looks like from moment to moment—how to sit, how to listen, how to greet, how to speak, how to disagree, how to apologise. The schools that have succeeded have clear, simple expectations that all students can follow and all adults can reinforce.
The second step is explicit teaching. Manners do not form naturally. They must be practised repeatedly, explained patiently, and reinforced daily. A weekly manners period, daily reminders during assembly, and brief modelling at the start and end of lessons all help build a consistent culture. Corrections must be gentle and immediate. When a child walks past without greeting, the teacher might simply say, "Let's try that again." Humiliation is unnecessary. Warm firmness works far better.
The third step is consistency. The small acts of rudeness that teachers often ignore—eye-rolling, muttering, refusing to greet—must be addressed. Schools that overlook these behaviours unintentionally teach children that sulkiness and disrespect are acceptable. But when adults consistently correct these habits with calm, matter-of-fact feedback, children quickly understand what is expected and rise to it.
The fourth and most critical step is adult modelling. Stu-

dents do not learn manners only from instruction; they absorb them by imitation. When every teacher in the corridor greets students with a smile, says "thank you," uses a polite tone, and maintains a calm presence even under pressure, students naturally mirror that behaviour. Staff culture becomes student culture.

TEACHING MANNERS ACROSS AGE GROUPS

Different age groups need different approaches. In early primary years, the goal is to establish basic habits—greeting teachers, sharing, taking turns, speaking in sentences, and using gentle voices. These habits can be taught through songs, stories, simple routines and friendly repetition.

In upper primary classes, manners can become more structured. Children learn to listen without interrupting, show gratitude, treat school property well, and speak politely even when upset. Group work, classroom charters, and reflective discussions help students internalise these behaviours.

By middle school, manners become a tool for building confidence. Teenagers need to practise assertive but respectful communication, shaking hands, making eye contact, speaking clearly, managing disagreements, and showing maturity during group tasks. This is also the age when digital manners—using phones responsibly and communicating respectfully online—must be taught.

In the senior secondary years, manners evolve into professional etiquette. Students learn workplace behaviour, interview manners, meeting etiquette, email communication, punctuality, grooming, and leadership conduct. These lessons prepare them directly for college and employment.

Across all ages, manners provide a stable foundation for safe classrooms. When students feel respected, they feel brave enough to speak, ask questions, and express ideas without fear of ridicule. Manners do not suppress individuality—they create the environment where individuality can flourish.

WHY INDIAN SCHOOLS OFTEN STRUGGLE

Indian schools struggle to teach manners for structural reasons: overcrowded classrooms, overworked teachers, overwhelming exam pressure, and a lack of training in behaviour management. Many adults in schools unintentionally model impatience, raised voices and hurried interactions—behaviours children quickly copy. And in most places, manners are expected but never defined or practised.

Yet none of these barriers are impossible to overcome. Even a modest school can begin with small steps: a clear greeting routine, consistent teacher modelling, a weekly manners session, and gentle correction of poor behaviour. When adults decide that manners are worth teaching, the culture of a school can change within a year.

THE PROMISE OF A MANNERS-BASED SCHOOL

The example of Great Yarmouth Charter Academy in the UK shows that teaching manners does not make children robotic. It makes them confident.

A respectful environment allows laughter, creativity and individuality to emerge naturally because students feel secure. A child in a courteous classroom knows he will not be mocked for asking a question or sharing an idea. That safety creates space for true learning.

If Indian schools wish to shape students who not only score marks but also carry themselves with dignity, clarity and self-respect, manners must be treated as a core subject—taught deliberately, practised daily, and modelled by every adult in the building.

The transformation that follows is not cosmetic. It is cultural, emotional and lifelong.

Editorial Team

The manners curriculum: a practical guide for school leaders

This blueprint—based on adapted and edited excerpts from a leading British school's blog—shows how manners can be taught as clearly and systematically as any academic subject. It offers school leaders a practical framework to build respectful behaviour, strengthen student confidence, and reshape the entire culture of a school through simple, consistent, everyday practices.

THE 4 FOUNDATIONS

1. Define Manners Clearly

Most schools preach "respect," "values," or "discipline," but few define what these look like in daily practice. Children need precise, observable behaviours. That is why schools like Charter Academy in UK use simple acronyms:

STEPS
S – Say "Sir/Miss"
T – Thank you
E – Excuse me
P – Please
S – Smile

SLANT
S – Sit up
L – Listen
A – Ask and answer
N – Never interrupt
T– Track the speaker

SHAPE
S – Speak in sentences
H – Hands down
A – Articulate clearly
P – Project your voice
E – Eye contact

These may be adapted to Indian contexts, but the key is clarity and consistency.

2. Teach Manners Explicitly

We often assume children "just know" how to behave, but they don't.

Learning manners is like learning multiplication tables—through explanation and repetition.

Schools need:
- A weekly 30-minute Manners Class
- Daily reminders during assembly
- A teacher model for each behaviour
- Posters in classrooms and corridors
- Corrective feedback must be positive and immediate, not humiliating. For example:
"Rahul, you walked past without greeting. Let's try again—Good morning!"
"Good morning Ma'am."
"Well done!"
Tone matters. Manners taught with warmth produce confidence—not fear.

3. Correct Poor Manners Consistently

India's classrooms often ignore small misbehaviours—eye-rolling, mumbling, sulking, responding rudely—because teachers are overwhelmed. But "tactical ignoring," as the British blog explains, does not help children.
If a child is allowed to roll his eyes at authority at age 12, he will repeat the same habit at a job interviews. Correcting poor manners is not punishment—it is preparation for adulthood.

4. Adults Must Model the Manners They Expect

This is the most important and most neglected step in India. Students learn manners not by instruction but by imitation.

Teachers must:
- greet students
- smile
- thank students
- speak with respect
- avoid shouting
- listen patiently
- maintain calm tone
- stand at doors and say goodbye

When children experience courteous adults consistently, they naturally mirror that behaviour.

STRUCTURING MANNERS AS A CORE SUBJECT: AGE-WISE FRAMEWORK

Teaching manners cannot be one-size-fits-all. Different age groups need different habits and methods.

Ages 4–7 (Early Primary): The Foundations

Goals:
- basic greetings
- sharing
- taking turns
- gentle voice
- tidy habits
- politeness in class

Methods:
- songs and rhymes
- role-play games
- classroom routines ("Good Morning Circle")
- stories with moral behaviour
- sticker charts
-paired activities

Typical learning outcomes:
"Please-Sorry-Thank You routine," lining up, speaking in sentences, helping classmates.

Ages 8–12 (Upper Primary): The Habits Stage

Goals:
- listening without interrupting
- respectful disagreement
- gratitude
- managing emotions
- politeness during meals
- caring for school property
- correct posture and speaking manners

Methods:
- scenarios and skits
- reflective writing ("How did I show respect today?")
- group discussions
- buddy responsibilities (helping younger children)
- classroom charters

Outcome:
Students develop self-control, responsibility, and teamwork.

Ages 13–16 (Middle & Secondary): The Confidence Stage

At this age, manners become a tool for identity and leadership.

Goals:
- Confident speaking
- shaking hands
- eye contact
- respectful assertiveness
- digital manners (phone use)
- managing disagreements maturely
- humility and gratitude

Methods:
- etiquette workshops
- public speaking exercises
- student-led assemblies
- community work (school cleanliness)
- mentoring younger students

Outcome:
Teenagers gain the poise and communication skills needed for adult life.

Ages 16–18 (Senior Secondary): The Professional Stage

Goals:
- interview etiquette
- workplace behaviour
- meeting decorum
- email and phone manners
- dressing appropriately
- punctuality and responsibility
- leadership with kindness

Methods:
- mock interviews
- internship training
- collaboration with alumni
- industry speakers
- formal events practice

Outcome:
Students enter college and work life with confidence, clarity, and self-awareness.

WHY MOST INDIAN SCHOOLS FAIL TO TEACH MANNERS

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Teacher stress and lack of training
- Exam pressure dominating the timetable
- Poor role-modelling by adults
- No structured manners curriculum
- Belief that manners are "parents' responsibility"

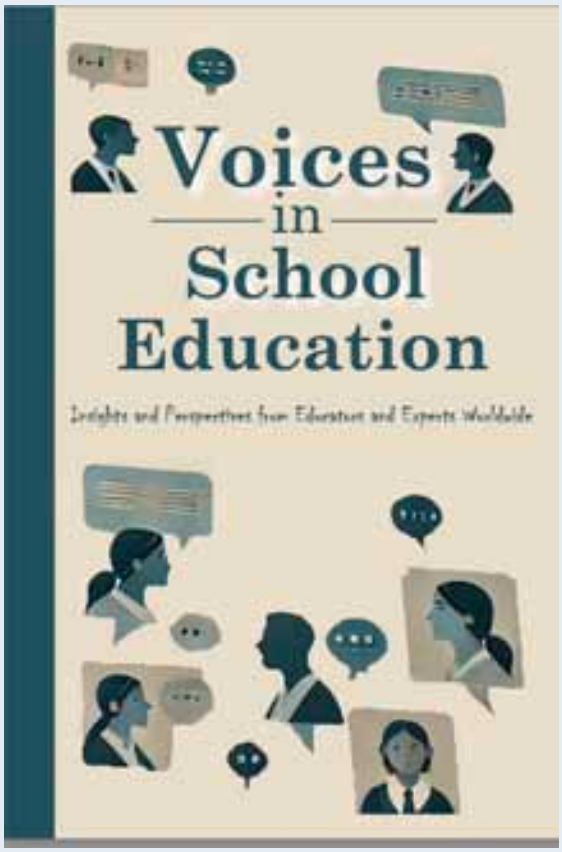
But schools cannot escape this responsibility: children spend more waking hours in school than at home.

MANNERS CAN TRANSFORM A SCHOOL

If Indian schools treat manners as a structured, teachable subject—with clarity, consistency, and kindness—they can produce students who not only score marks but carry themselves into the world with dignity, grace, and strength.

Editorial Team

Courtesy: Read about Great Yarmouth Charter Academy blog post https://bit.ly/4a6QFkz



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