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Published on March 31, 2024



Renowned educator and founder of nationwide chain of TreeHouse schools highlights the key role that regular parent-teacher meetings can play in supporting the holistic development of students

In this hyper-digitalised world, communication is mainly conducted through technological conduits. Even schools are now relying on WhatsApp groups to facilitate effective dialogue between parents and teachers. However regular Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), where face-to-face interactions occur are still critically important. These interactions, which allow parents to attend a collective meeting followed by one-on-one conversation with teachers, are essential to facilitate stronger linkages between home and school.

"The PTMs primarily help in tracking and improving the academic growth of the students. Such meetings allow parents $to \ meet \ teachers \ and \ personally \ discuss \ areas \ of \ concern. \ This \ facilitates \ an \ open \ communication \ where \ teachers \ can$ point out the positives as well as problems that need more attention," says Rajesh Bhatia, the founder-managing director of Tree House Education & Accessories .

He believes PTMs allow parents and teachers to collectively create a unique, individualised approach to serve the unique needs of a student. The discussions can also focus on the social skills, emotional well-being, and the participation of the student in various extracurricular activities.

"When students see a healthy rapport developing between their parents and teachers, it reassures them that they have a robust support system. During these meetings, parents and teachers can also broach sensitive topics in complete confidentiality," adds Mr Bhatia.

The educator says that it is advisable to hold PTMs at least once every quarter during an academic year. "The focus of discussion should be on the academic well-being of the student as well any behavioural and social concerns. A respectful and honest dialogue helps cultivate a stronger relationship between teachers and parents and ultimately benefits the students who go on to perform better," says Mr Bhatia.

He also highlights the need for initiating a follow-up process based on these meetings. "Teachers need to ensure that the suggestions agreed upon during the PTMs are implemented. Subsequent communications can be made through appropriate channels to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to support the plan that has been designed for the student," he concludes.

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