

Word of the day

Hierarchical (adjective): arranged in order of rank. Used in a sentence: Many of the kingdoms followed the hierarchical structure. Suggested by S.Rakshana. Your turn! Pick a word from today's The Hindu in School, the meaning of which you do not know and send it to us at school@thehindu.co.in. (Subject: Word of the day)



OPINION | 3

The emotional roller coaster

Principals talk about adolescence being the most challenging phase in a student's life and how schools prepare to help children cope with this inevitable change

Provide a safe and friendly environment

Adolescence is a time of physical turbulence accompanied by mental upheaval. This is the time when problems will come in all shapes and sizes. So we, as teachers, have to prepare ourselves and our environment to cater to these changes and problems. We have to provide them with a safe and friendly environment, built on trust. Give them the independence to think and help them to be assertive when need be. Teaching them to accept their limits without feeling guilty is another dimension for us to look into. As teachers we must make them believe in themselves, and help them to accept their body changes positively. We ourselves should adapt to the changing environment of the society, accept the cultural change and move ahead with the modern times. In Rajhans Vidyalaya we have an in house counsellor to help children. We also have life skill periods where we discuss with them various ways and means to handle different situations in their life. Above all, giving them unconditional love and bestowing our faith in them is the most important thing that will allow children to sail smoothly through this stage.

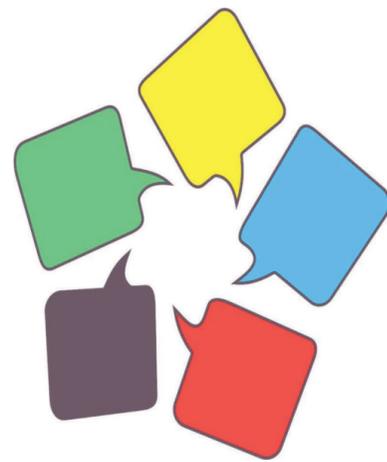


Deepshikha Shrivastava,
Principal, Rajhans Vidyalaya, Mumbai

Principals, write to us!

Our next Leaderboard topic:

Every student is expected to have good study habits. What exactly does good study habits mean and how do teachers and parents inculcate them in students? Can students change their study habits as they grow up? How does the school help children with this? We invite principals to send in their responses in not more than 200 words to school@thehindu.co.in (Subject: Leaderboard - Adolescents), with their name, a photograph and the complete address of the school.



LEADERBOARD

The most important phase



Adolescence is one of the important phases in every student's life. It's a phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. They develop physical and psychological changes which differ from students to student and to some extent, time to time. At this stage students need explicit attention.

At first teachers need to be trained to understand and be ready to provide support. Proper monitoring should be done to understand their behavioural changes and counselling could help them.

In school, students welfare societies/clubs should be established, which consist of experienced teachers, counsellors, special educators and members from leadership teams.

Sanjay Nandi,
Principal, Podar International School (CIE), Kalyan

A productive force in society

The purpose of education is to prepare the children for life. Youth is predominantly characterised by endless vigour, exuberance and promptness to accept and adapt to changes with open mindedness. Our duty is to harness youth potential and mould them into a productive force in society. The first step towards this mission should be to build a healthy family bond that promotes trust, respect, recognition and freedom among the students, teachers and parents. It is important to develop a positive ambience and the spirit of readiness to address and support the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of the youth and resolve their issues and apprehensions within the school system. The objective of all fundamental lessons imparted in school should be to inspire them to discover themselves (their strengths) and develop a positive self image, discover harmony and peace with self and prepare them to take charge of their lives. They should be inspired to ponder and reflect on real world challenges and issues important to humanity so that the positive attributes like love, empathy, reverence towards human rights and democracy, tolerance, justice and peaceful conflict resolution manifest and blossom in them and they emerge as balanced individuals and responsible world citizens.



Anilkumar B
Principal Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Tarapur

A big step to the future

Adolescence is the most crucial period of student's life. It is a time of numerous biological, psychological and social changes. During this phase of development, adolescents begin to transit from childhood to adulthood. Issues of independence, identity, sexuality and relationships are very common. Mental health problems such as mood disorder, anxiety and thought fluctuations become apparent. As a school, we understand and respect these issues by providing a safe and supportive environment. We can help young people develop resilience. Teachers are extremely important in the lives of kids. We need to be supportive, encourage students to plan their future and help them find creative and expressive outlets for their feelings as vehicles to learn new strategies for managing emotions, example sports and music.



Sunita Patnaik,
Principal, Ryan International School, Surat

Motivating adolescents

By middle school, most students are being transformed and destabilised by the onset of adolescence. Complaints, arguments, delays, disobedience and the testing of limits become part of the young person's repertoire at home and school, as both parents and teachers find themselves contending with more active and passive resistance. A school must provide an emotionally supportive academic climate for young adolescents to ensure their educational progress. Teachers play a vital role in student's transition through adolescence. Guidance and counselling will help solve most of the problems. Schools should be flexible with strategies to personalise instruction when needed; it can also establish a reward system for good behaviour and academic achievement for motivating students.



M. Anuradha,
Principal, Reeds World School, Coimbatore

Specific needs of students

Adolescence, by and large, represents a unique period of intensive growth and change in all the aspects of a child's life. A substantial percentage of student population in countries like India happen to be adolescents as the onset of adolescence is quite early because of our peculiar climatic and cultural factors. Therefore it is very essential to understand their psychology and specific needs. As this is the stage where maximum growth takes place, parents and teachers alike should see to their eating habits and personal hygiene. They need to be helped to adjust with the physiological changes. It is highly desirable to avoid murmuring and criticising them blindly as they obviously crave for recognition. It would be good to include some adventures, mountaineering, and exploration, in the school curriculum so as to quench their curiosity. Adolescents usually learn about human life cycle and other related matters in biology. Hence the schools should arrange guidance, for adolescents, on sex education.



S. Sriprya,
Principal, Sree Narayana Public School, Palakkad, Kerala

How to gain confidence

Adolescence is a tender phase for a human being, where he/she feels sensitive and insecure about the people and surroundings. Students keep fluctuating their decisions often due to lack of stability. This is the time, where teachers should make them confident by empowering their skills on planning, goal setting, self-management and gender sensitivity. These skills can be imparted by giving them different roles in scholastic and co-scholastic areas. In our school, house activities and club activities are planned and implemented through senior children. Skill development activities are integral part of curriculum, where students develop the confidence to lead. Awareness talks can be arranged on adolescent stress management, relationship management, communication and advocacy. Elders and teachers should help and encourage them to resolve the challenges they face. Teachers at school and parents at home should share their positives and negatives to make them relax and help in gaining confidence.



Chandra Jyothi Velagapudi,
Principal, RSR International School, Andhra Pradesh

The support system

Teachers play a very important role in the lives of adolescents. They spend more time with a child than their own parents do. Students at this age usually lack motivation, and are often confused about their place in the world. So, schools play an important role in helping them transit through adolescence and succeed academically. Here are some of the strategies that, as per my experience, have affected students positively. Students should be engaged in planning for their own future, parental involvement should be encouraged and ways should be found for them to be included in the student's support system. Students who require help should be offered assistance, and good behaviour should be praised. Reach out to students in need, if you suspect they are having problems at home, allow them to open up about it. Show Interest in their lives and ask them about their time outside of class. These are some of the ways to help adolescent students.



Shilpa G. Jejurkar,
Principal, Arunodaya Public School, Thane.

Those tumultuous years

Adolescence is an emotional roller coaster for children, as they go from being a child to an adult. These seven years of transition have physical, emotional, behavioral and psychological challenges for the individual. A confused and distracted phase, where a child is unable to cope up with the changes in and around him, can result in low self confidence, anger, stubbornness, day dreaming and low academic performance. In school, these challenges are dealt with on daily basis. The value education classes have a structured format to deal with each challenge, which helps them in developing self confidence, time management, anger management and self management. Yoga and physical education classes also keep them distracted from emotional impulsiveness. Group discussions and group activities sensitizes them towards friends, family and society. Workshops on sex education are conducted for understanding the physical and hormonal changes. Our academic modules are designed for coping up with all of these challenges to help them navigate through adolescence.



Sangita Dwivedi,
Principal, D.G. International School, Thane

Challenges abound

Adolescence is one of the most challenging phases in a school. Problematic behaviours are of particular concern in middle schools, where a contagious youth culture of academic negativism and misconduct can thwart learning and disrupt the

school routine. To help students, provide a positive school climate which plays an important influence on school bonding, student-school bonding may be improved by defining in positive ways the culture and personality of the school, establishing school policies and fair and relevant practices, participation in academic and co-curricular activities and so on, provide social skills training with the help of counselors and take various workshops for the students to help them in the swift transition of the adolescence.

Manisha M. Kachhy,
Principal, Sanskar Public School, Thane

Unrecognised talents

In the past two years I learned a very important, yet a weird lesson.

Studious one will be the centre of attention!

Isn't that weird? Every time the smartest one in our class gets to do work, which is productive, we the average ones bring books or fills bottles for our teachers.

In my observation people tend to change their attitude towards you according to the marks you get.

When I was in class X, I

MY SPACE

was considered in the bracket of above average students, due to which I was roped in for many extracurricular activities. This continued until I had a downfall in class XI. I saw everything slipping out of my hand. And I saw myself being put into the weak students bracket.

We always give a chance to the high achievers when it comes to extracurricular activities, even when we know they are not good at that. Why does this happen? Just because they score well!

Again my failures are the ones who lose the chance of showcasing our talents.

School is the first step where a child can display his/her talent and get a reason to be happy. But unfortunately the talents of a student who is not great in academics never finds a way out.

Let the child free. Many of them would be writers, waiting with a pen and paper. Some of them would be artist waiting to colour this world. Some would be dancers and some singers.

We all are students, and we all love being appreciated; even if not in studies at least recognise us in the part where we excel.

Just give these non-scholars a chance. Let them shine. Shine bright in the field they love.

Meghna Jeevan,
Class XII, VSGS, Chennai

The dangers of being phubbed



WASHINGTON: People who are phone snubbed - or "phubbed" - by others face higher levels of stress and depression, and turn to smartphones and social media to find acceptance, a study has found.

Phubbing is the practise of ignoring one's companion or companions in order to pay attention to one's phone.

Researchers from Baylor Uni-

versity in the US found that the circle nearly completes itself as the offended parties frequently jump online to find affirmation in the likes and shares and positive comments of social media.

The study investigated the relationship between phubbing, social media attachment, depression, anxiety and stress. "When an individual is phubbed, he/she feels so-

Research proves that phone snubbed people are at high risk of stress, depression

cially excluded, which leads to an increased need for attention. Instead of turning to face-to-face interaction to restore a sense of inclusion, study participants turned to social media to regain a sense of belonging," said Meredith David, assistant professor at Baylor University.

As part of their study, researchers surveyed more than 330 people across two studies. They found that nearly half of those who were phubbed reported spending more than 1.5 hours on their phone each day.

Over half of individuals who said they were phubbed indicated that social media enhances their life and makes their life better. The majority reported that people's comments on their social

media posts makes them feel affirmed and more accepted.

To counter the negative effects of smartphone use, the researchers advise consumers to establish "smartphone-free" zones and times; establish social contracts (and penalties) regarding phone use with friends and family and coworkers. **PTI**

WRITE TO US

Have you ever been phubbed or did you phub anyone? What are the ways of avoiding this practice so that people can lead stress and depression-free lives? Mail yoursuggestions to school@thehindu.co.in with Subject: Phubbed