

#education

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BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: MYTH OR REALITY?



Rahul Prithviraj
Our Own English High School, Sharjah

The probability of finding schools with no bullying is almost impossible. There's noticeably more bullying in middle school than high school. The victims are often physically bullied. I think teachers should be friendly and caring towards the students and must give them space to talk freely, especially the reserved ones.



Ananya D.
Delhi Private School, Sharjah.

Bullying is a reality in schools today. Some children get bullied more than others. Special needs children are often picked on. Students may speak differently, have problems with their handwriting and have other issues. More often children are bullied because they are different from others in appearance. Authorities should control it at the earliest.



Mohammed Basheer
Our Own English High School, Al Ain

Bullying decreases self-confidence, self-esteem and social ability of a student. Children usually don't report bullying, as they are afraid of getting bullied again. Preventing it involves a commitment to create a safe environment where children can thrive, socially and academically, without being afraid. Bullying should be banned in society.



Vennela Vallabhaneni
Indian High School, Dubai

Many young students are bullied by their seniors, which creates a sense of fear. Victims are afraid to tell their parents about the happenings at school. There should be several precautions and strict rules at school to avoid such happenings. I feel that maybe, secret cameras can be set, because many students just don't follow rules.



Rudransh Rajput
The Indian High School, Dubai

Bullying, by the seniors, in schools is a cruel reality. I am fortunate that bullies have no place in my school. We have separate blocks for each grade and the students from other grades are not allowed to enter other blocks without permission. On the bus too, our efficient bus conductors have allocated seats to the students according to the grades.



Smeeth Shah
Our Own English High School, Sharjah

While a student may not rush towards you and snatch your money away, there are bullies who harass their fellow students in one form or the other. According to me, if a student causes mental torture or hurts the self-respect of a student, he is certainly a bully. And yes, bullying in schools is a reality, for which severe action is required.

NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC
Coeducation in schools:
Preferable or not?

To get featured, send us your views along with your school name and photograph to education@khaleejtimes.com

Back to school and friends

Schools in Capital register good attendance on first day after winter break

Olivia Oarte-Ulherr

After a three-week-long break, students in the Capital were happy to be back in school on Sunday, with private and public schools across the emirate registering good attendance on the first day.

Derek Griffin, principal of International Community School (ICS), said nearly all of their students turned up on the first school day of the new year. "Everything went smoothly and everybody is back. It's a pretty good start for the term," he said, adding that classes resumed as usual with no disturbance.

Noting the happy young faces during the morning assembly, Griffin said: "I think a lot of them got bored during the holiday and missed their friends. They actually look forward to see their friends and going back to the routine of getting themselves occupied."

Gareth Jones, principal of American International School, Abu Dhabi, echoed similar views. "The students are happy to be back. After three weeks, they were happy to see their friends again." The school registered 96 per cent attendance on Sunday.

At Philippine School (TPS) Baniyas, attendance was more than 90 per cent with only 66 absent from its 844 stu-



Dr Amal Al Qubaisi asking a student about his school break.—Supplied photo

dents. Elinor Monique Sevilla, vice-principal for student affairs at the school, said the absentees were on a planned vacation and sought permission to join by the end of the month.

Nicole Manalo, a student of TPS, said it was a great first day. "I'm so happy to see my friends again. I felt a little bored during the holidays with lack of things to do. But now it's back to school and I've already got homework to do."

Public schools

Public schools in the emirate also registered good attendance on the first day. Dr Amal Al Qubaisi, Director-General of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (Adec), visited Al Ghazali School on

Sunday to congratulate students on their first day back to school.

Dr Al Qubaisi spoke to students about their holiday. "I was happy to see how enthusiastic all the students seemed, and felt how positive the attitude of teachers and school staff in general was. Our youth are our top priority and seeing them excited to go back to school brings me great joy and shows that our teachers are doing something right."

School activities

Excitement will definitely continue in the new year with several activities planned by the schools.

At ICS, students are gearing up for the World Future Energy Summit next

week at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre where the school's eco-club will be participating for the second year in a row.

At the stand, students will share how the school managed to reduce its energy usage and better disposal of waste.

At TPS, February and March will be dedicated for academic activities like essay writing and elocution contests in addition to classroom activities.

"We are also planning to join the Filipino Interschool Athletic Association at eight events that include basketball, volleyball, football, badminton, athletics (long jump, sprint) sepak takraw and chess," Sevilla said.

For Private International English School, the current academic year will end in March, so the next two months will be focused on preparing students for their final examination.

However, when classes resume in April, the school plans to carry out two important activities in the school calendar: A UAE heritage and culture trip by visiting the museums at the beginning of the new academic year; and holding a walk in the Corniche for the World Environment Day in June.

Sooraj Ramachandran, director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Middle East, which manages the school, said these activities are part of instilling a sense of social responsibility in students.

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WHY WE BECAME JOURNALISTS - 3



Media Matters



Ramesh Prabhu
is professor of journalism at Commits Institute of Journalism & Mass Communication, Bangalore. Commits offers a full-time two-year MA degree course.



(Clockwise from left) Neethu Reghukumar, Faye D'souza, Anjali Muthanna, Natasha Rego and Arunima Rajan.

This is the final of a three-part series which explored the motivations of a few young women and men who have chosen to become journalists.

NEETHU REGHUKUMAR

Reporter, CNN-IBN, Thiruvananthapuram

Being a journalist has been my passion since my schooldays. I feel that every individual has certain commitments to society and this is the best way to fulfill mine. When I took up journalism as a career, I knew I would not be able to transform things overnight but my thinking was that if I were able to change one person's life for the better, I would be able to achieve my goal. And I am glad to report I have been successful in helping bring about change in a few people's lives.

Why television? From the beginning, I have been fascinated with the thought of being on TV. I believe a story can be best told with visuals. I started my career as a print journalist, however, which is when I realised that both mediums have their own advantages and disadvantages. In print, we can write in-depth stories, but that is not the case with television (except for current affairs programmes). And in this era of breaking news, I feel that sometimes TV journalists tend to indulge in sensationalism, so I consider myself lucky to be working with CNN-IBN, which gives more weightage to credibility.

The best thing about being a journalist is that there is no monotony in my job. Every day I meet new people; each day is different. The risks and the uncertainty attached to this profession are what make my life so interesting today.

FAYE D'SOUZA

Editor/Anchor (Personal Finance), ET Now, Mumbai

When I was in college, television journalism became very popular in India, especially during the coverage of the Kargil war. I was also heavily influenced by global journalists like Anderson Cooper and Richard Quest. In addition, honestly, the decision to take up journalism as a major was to battle the impression that medical science and engineering or an MBA were the only options worth considering as a student. When I completed my post-grad

course, I wanted to work with radio. But Indian radio stations are not allowed to do news, and the content tended to be very Bollywood-focused at the time (it still is). So television it was, but I didn't choose television as much as it chose me. I was extremely fortunate to have received a job opportunity with CNBC TV18 and I have been working with business news channels ever since.

My first assignment with CNBC TV18 was on a show called "Insurance Intelligence". I was to report on the insurance sector, something other colleagues in my team found dull. But I fell in love with the sector immediately. Over the last 10 years, that helping people navigate and understand money is my true calling.

There are two things I love most about my job. First, I love understanding something complicated and passing the information on to my viewers. In TV parlance we call this "cracking it". When there is a complicated financial product, or a product that is designed badly so it causes more harm to investors than good, I love being able to explain to my viewers the problem and the corresponding solution.

Second, I love receiving e-mails from viewers telling me that I helped them make a change. It gives me the purpose I need to go on doing what I do.

ANJALI MUTHANNA

Till recently a reporter/sub-editor with Bangalore Times, now relocated to Sharjah

I sort of wandered into journalism. I actually wanted to do English Literature after school, but there were no Honours courses in Bangalore, which is where I wanted to come after I left Kuwait. So I did the Journalism-Psychology-Optional English B.A. course at Christ University. I didn't know what I wanted to do after I was done with undergrad, so I did the M.A. at Commits to figure out what I wanted to do, and that's when I decided to pursue print journalism professionally.

It was Commits that helped me figure out how to be industry-ready. I knew all the theory from the course I had done at Christ College, but since I hadn't done any internships — I always preferred to

fly back home during my vacations since the internships were not mandatory — I knew I wasn't ready for the real world of journalism. At Commits, I gained the confidence, more than anything else, to go out there and apply the skills I had acquired based on the mandatory internships and the sessions we had with people working in the industry.

At Bangalore Times, I worked as a desk editor. Like at most features publications, we desk editors are required to write stories, edit them, and supervise page layout. This means that you don't think about a story only in terms of the questions that need to be answered or the information that the reader should get, but how they should get it in terms of design. You think about how the story should look, which is very important these days because, as we are always being reminded, it's about packaging. And, of course, a desk editor is always a better writer.

I'm more of a desk person than a reporter, so I really like the production aspect of journalism. I like taking a story — whether it's mine or someone else's — and working on it so that it is as complete as it can possibly be. Of course, when I did get out there, I got to meet interesting people and hear all sorts of stories that took me out of myself. But I still preferred retreating to the relative safety of the desk.

NATASHA REGO

Sub-editor/reporter, The Afternoon, Mumbai

Journalism was not a childhood dream. I don't think I ever said, "I want to grow up to be a journalist." That came much later in life, when I did my master's degree. At some point, while reading the news, it occurred to me, reality is quite bizarre without the fiction. Keeping track of everyday happenings, identifying the people doing exceptional work in society and telling their story, keeping track of our leaders and exposing their true intent in the job they are doing... when I learnt of all of this, I knew that I would like to make a career in journalism. The creative process of laying out the paper, selecting news based on its importance and value, striving to tell two, three, sometimes four sides of a story... the reasons are many.

At this time in our country I find that being a journalist and being exposed first-hand to how a media organisation works, not only in the newsroom, but especially the influence of upper management on the working of the newsroom, is giving me great insight. The background research that goes into adding value to a story is also something I find very interesting. And because the news that comes through my newsroom is solely based on Mumbai and some surrounding districts, it has increased my knowledge of the present city as well as the city it once was.

ARUNIMA RAJAN

Independent journalist, Mumbai

I was 17 when I decided that I would not pursue a traditional career. I was interested in story-telling, but never really thought that writing could be a serious career option. It was a chance meeting with a family friend that changed my perspective about journalism. She was working as a copy editor with a newspaper in Bangalore. I was she who explained how interesting her line of work was and how it could be a rewarding career for a youngster. I had three options in front of me then: journalism, academics, and public relations. I chose a career with words because it was more creative compared with the other two.

Today, even though a lot of the work I do is routine, like visits to the press club and coverage of the same issues (budgets, government policies, school and college admissions), I definitely get my high from learning new things and meeting new people. Creating shareable, emotional, and well-researched stories often forces me to think out of the box. I have also picked up skills like the ability to look for interesting details about a person or an event, rather than merely focusing on the brief given by the editor.

THINK ABOUT IT: "I believe that good journalism, good television, can make our world a better place."
Christiane Amanpour, chief international correspondent of CNN and host of CNN International's nightly interview programme "Amanpour"



"MEDIA MATTERS" welcomes questions from readers who would like to know more about careers in journalism. Please send in your queries to education@khaleejtimes.com.