

Traffic woes, security worries raise city schools' app-etite for carpools

Authorities, Parents Rack Brains To Plan The Way Forward

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Several prominent schools in the city — including Modern High School for Girls, South City International School, St James School and Pratt Memorial, among others — have taken a cue from the parents of La Martiniere students and are in various stages of launching a carpool app to bail themselves out of traffic woes.

At Modern High, parents were given a presentation to enroll on an app on Saturday. The initiative, which has been supported by police, saw participation from a wide section of guardians. “We shall start the initiative very soon,” said Modern High director Devi Kar.

“It will help to know each other. Much like app cabs, the parents will have to register on an app. The only difference is that the app will be exclusive for a school,” she said.

The motive is to reduce the number of cars on the road. “One parent will offer his car and others travelling on the same route can avail the facility. The one driving the car has to be either a parent or a trusted driver. The

TOGETHER WE TRAVEL



A common sight in front of almost every school in Kolkata

idea is to create an environment of trust. It is not a commercial operation,” explained Kar.

South City International School authorities, too, are toying with the idea to introduce an app for carpool. “We are mulling to introduce it in our school as well. We have 1,700 students and there are 13 school buses plying in different directions. Yet, there is extreme traffic on the road when the school starts and lets off. There are too many cars blocking the entrance and we need to reduce the pressure of cars on the road,” said principal John Bagul.

3-acre Rawdon Square green zone turns parking lot for school cars

La Martiniere has a 3-acre green zone near the school which has been converted into a parking lot for school cars. The school authorities have also installed a security system to ensure the safety of the cars parked there.

On June 14, TOI reported on how lack of parking space near La Marts prompted cops and PWD to look for an alternative

HOW CARPOOL APP WORKS

- ▶ Parents download the app, sign in and create a profile
- ▶ Parents living in the same locality and on the same route get to know each other through the app
- ▶ Thereafter, by rotation, each parent takes out the car and others avail the carpool facility

What schools are doing

- **La Martiniere** | Launched carpool app
- **Modern High** | Parents told to register on an app
- **South City International** | In process of introducing an app
- **Pratt Memorial** | Offering carpool for parents

HOW IT HELPS

- ▶ Reduces number of cars on roads
- ▶ Keeps congestion and pollution in check
- ▶ Creates an atmosphere of trust

Pratt Memorial School and St James School are considering enrolling and offering parents carpool. “It is a similar attempt but restricted to parents who drive kids to the school every day. Students studying in Pratt Memorial and St James and travelling on same route can avail the offer. The parents will have to give the cars in rotation for pooling,” said principal TH Ireland.

Though not an app, Delhi Public School, Ruby Park, authorities are planning to give a deadline to parents who avail commercial carpools. “Around 80% of students take the school-

bus. There are 130 buses and 70% buses are owned by the school. Problem starts with carpools that are run commercially. They often pick up students late than the scheduled time. As a result, students are left stranded. Sometimes, I monitor them myself. Now we are planning to set a deadline within which parents have to decide if they would avail the schoolbus or start a personal or private carpool,” said principal Anushree Ghosh.

The Heritage School is perhaps the only one in the city who does not allow students to commute on private cars.