

District schools to be ranked on safety

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GURUGRAM: A meeting of the district-level school safety committee took place for the first time since March 2019 on Tuesday under the chairmanship of deputy commissioner Amit Khatri, who said that private schools would be ranked via an audit framework on various safety yardsticks.

Emphasising the safety of students in school premises and buses, he said that action against erring schools would be taken and responsibility fixed. He said that the administration would be adopting a 'gaming model', under which schools with good safety arrangements would be appreciated and encouraged, whereas schools that failed to enforce safety standards would be 'named and shamed'.

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The committee was formed in 2017 in the backdrop of the murder of a private school student to address safety issues in private schools.

Following the incident, the school education department had approved certain safety regulations for all schools in the state.

The department, under Section 21 of the Haryana School Education Act, 1995, authorised the committee to inspect schools

and address defects or deficiencies found at the time of inspection.

Tuesday's meeting took place at Delhi Public School, Sector 45, and saw the participation of around 200 school principals among other stakeholders, as per officials of the education department.

Members of the audit team of the safety committee also shared their observations about deficiencies found in school premises and buses.

As per the committee's safety report, bus drivers ferrying students don't carry original documents, are under-aged and don't possess a valid license. Further, the driver and conductors are not dressed in school uniforms and use mobile phones during the commute.

The report also outlined that the Surakshit School Vahan Policy was not being followed

and background checks carried out by the school were not adequate.

Concerning safety within the school campus, the report said that CCTV camera surveillance in schools was not 100% and blackspots had been found on campuses.

Additionally, non-emergency staff like gardeners and carpenters were seen on the premises during school hours.

District education officer Indu Boken said that the points raised by the team would be looked into when the rank-based audit would be carried out.

"The meeting covered various aspects, including handling of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases, accessing emergency helplines, and other safety concerns with different stakeholders," Boken said.