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South Point gives week's break from screen time

JINUK MAZUMDAR

Calcutta: A city school has decided to give a week's break to both students and teachers from online classes and asked students to utilise this period to read books and pursue their hobbies.

South Point school issued the notice to all parents on Wednesday and said the "short recess" had been planned so that teachers and pupils get a break from screen time and could "resume their virtual classes after the recess in a refreshed state of mind".

The authorities later told Metro that just as students needed a break from screen time, teachers, too, needed to recover from the stress resulting from taking classes online.

The notice from the principal has asked parents to strengthen their bond with their children and encourage them to read.

"These are tough times for all of us and more so for the young ones. Please encourage your wards to use this break to read story books and pursue their hobbies and hope you will be able to spend quality time with your children and strengthen your bond," the notice reads.

The recess will stretch from July 20 to 26 and online classes will resume on July 27.

"The mental and physical health of our stakeholders, including our pupils and their teachers, is always our concern and we realise that they deserve a much needed break from their untiring efforts. Therefore we have decided to have a short recess... so that teachers and pupils alike get a break from screen time and can resume their virtual classes after the recess in a refreshed state of mind," the principal wrote.

This is the third short break the school is giving since online classes started in April. The summer break, too, was for a week.

"It is better to give short breaks so that students do not lose out on studies and simultaneously get time off from the screen," said Krishna Dasgupta, trustee, South Point. "Even teachers need this break."

The Centre has advocated limited screen time for students and teachers. At least two schools in the city have decided to reduce the screen time, abiding by the National Council of Educational Research and Training.

La Martiniere for Girls will reduce the sessions for middle school (Classes VI to VIII) and senior school (IX to XII) by 40 minutes each. For the primary section, it is within the stipulated duration.

St James' School will reduce eight periods to four for Classes IX to XII. Classes I to VIII will have three periods of 30 minutes each.

"It is strenuous for students to be looking at the laptop or the phone for so many hours at a stretch," said Terence Ireland, the principal of St James'.

Calcutta: The Bengal government on Thursday announced an online undergraduate admission process, which requires colleges to accept applications from August 10.

A notification issued to the affiliating universities on Thursday says students "should not be called for counselling or verification of documents during the process of admission". No physical presence "will be required at the college/university".

The government did not

announce when classes would start.

The admission procedure was announced a day before the publication of the Bengal higher secondary examination results. The CBSE plus II board and ISC (Class XII) results have been announced.

After the HSE results are published, the colleges will go through details of how the students have performed across the boards and then announce the eligibility criteria on their websites and come up with a format for online application.

The colleges start online filtration of applications. Students applying to and enrolling in four schools will be notified. The colleges list are as follows.

Hopes pinned on Monday flight take-off

SANJAY MANDAL

Calcutta: A woman in Calcutta waiting to fly to Delhi to be with her husband after several months. A youth in Mumbai waiting to come down to Calcutta to meet his elderly parents after more than four months.

Passengers who had plans to fly in and out of Calcutta after lockdown norms were relaxed but got stranded again because of suspension of domestic flights from six cities are again making bookings in the hope that the ban would cease to exist from Monday.

Flights to Calcutta from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Nagpur were suspended on July 6, following a request from the Bengal government, because of a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases there.

"We have no plans as of now to ask the Centre for an extension of the ban," a senior state government official said on Thursday.

Bengal chief secretary Rajiva Sinha had written to the Centre requesting a ban on flights from eight cities to Calcutta. Apart from the six, Indore and Surat were on the list.

The Centre suspended flights from the six cities to Calcutta till Sunday. Around 26 flights were cancelled.

"Hundreds of people cancelled their bookings or were waiting to be rebooked. The list includes many who want to go to Mumbai and Chennai for treatment and those who work abroad and are stuck here," said Anil Punjabi, chairman, east, Travel Agents

Federation of India.

"We were keeping the bookings on hold because we were not sure whether the ban would be extended. Now, as the date for resumption of operations draws closer, people have started booking tickets," said Punjabi.

An official of IndiGo said they had about 60 per cent of the seats booked on most flights from Calcutta. Post-lockdown, the airline has four flights to Delhi, three to Chennai, two to Ahmedabad and one each to Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune from Calcutta.

Anup Mitra, who stays in Goregaon East in Mumbai, had last visited his parents in Calcutta in February.

"I am their only child and so wanted to come and visit them after the lockdown restrictions were eased. But then the flights were stopped. Now I am planning to book a ticket to Calcutta as soon as services resume," said Mitra, who works with a company that makes animation movies.

Reema Wadhwa, who has been staying with her parents at their Park Street home since her son was born about six months back, was scheduled to take an AirAsia flight to Delhi on July 10 with husband Deepak Khatwari, who was to come down from there, and their newborn.

The plan was cancelled. Now, Wadhwa and her son are booked on a flight to Delhi on July 26. "We are hoping there are no more cancellations," said Wadhwa.

A SpiceJet official said they would start flying to Patna from July 18 and Jaipur from August 1 from Calcutta.

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