Survey to assess campus security

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Alipore: Boards highlighting ways to safeguard children and posters listing the names of the child protection committee members have come up on the campus of a city school after an online safety audit where students and teachers were asked to answer questions on security.

Sri Sri Academy had engaged a Bangalore-based organisation to conduct the survey and find out whether students felt safe on the campus.
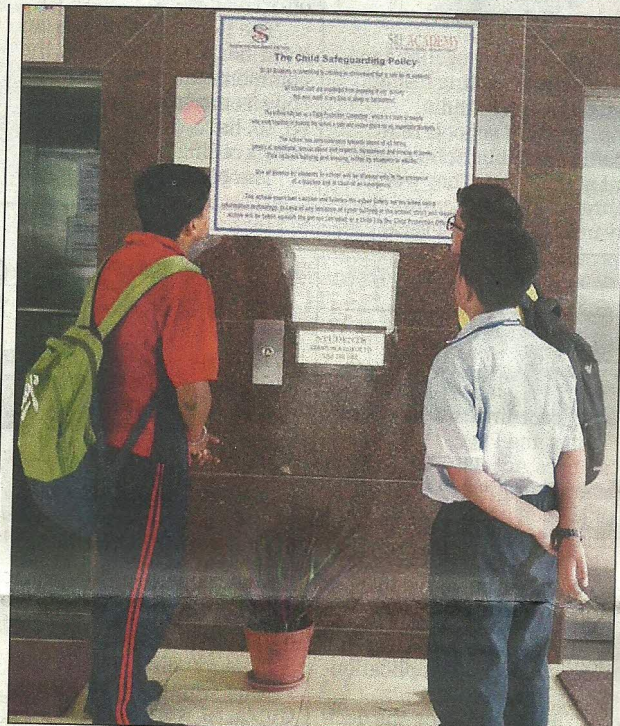
Twenty students of classes VI to XII and as many teachers filled in the online questionnaire.

"The school asked us for our feedback so that we can feel safer in school. The questions included whether there are safe boundaries and whether a student feels safe to report an abuse," said Class VI student Medha Chattopadhyay.

The school felt the need to seek the feedback of students and teachers because the management might not always be aware of a student's perspective completely.

"The audit considered all stakeholders and not just what the school is providing. If we take feedback from students and teachers, it opens the mind to possibilities so that the administration does not overlook any area," said Suvina Shunglu, the principal of the school.

The school has now put

Students of Sri Sri Academy read the school's Child Safeguarding Policy. Picture by Gautam Bose

up boards stating its Child Safeguarding Policy at vantage points across the campus, including in front of the lift and the front desk. Posters with the names of the members of the child protection committee have also been put up so that students know who to reach out to.

Boxes have been placed at various points on the campus where students can report any case of abuse in school. The complaints will be directly handled by the principal and the teacher in charge of safety.

"They can report (any abuse against anybody) by putting it in a sealed envelope. The idea is to create conduits for them so that they can reach the right person and be heard," Shunglu said.

The school underlined the need for a strong sense of belonging so that anybody

who sees anything objectionable on the campus reports it.

The highlights of the school's Child Safeguarding Policy are zero tolerance to abuse of all forms, restrictions on engaging in any activity that may result in any kind of abuse or harassment and strict action against cyber bullying.

"The boards have been put up in front of the lift on alternate floors. They work as reminders," said Papia Lahiri, the teacher in charge of safety and inclusion.

The school has also issued an advisory to parents, asking them to monitor the time spent by their children online as also the content.

"Parents hand a smartphone to their children as early as Class V or VI. It is easy to give one but it is difficult to be vigilant," Shunglu said.