

# How overly involved parents at schools affect students' wellbeing

As bizarre as this story may seem, the over-involvement of parents or even other guardians in a child's education or overall life is common in our country. From being judgemental about almost everything to being insensitive about asking very personal questions, these unhealthy practices have been making students' lives miserable for a long time now.

NADEEMAHAFROSE MONDOL

"Back in class four, I would use my mother's phone to log into my Facebook account as I didn't have a phone myself. I would also ensure that I logged out after using Facebook. One day, I saw a notification that someone had attempted to log into my account. At the time, if someone repeatedly entered the wrong password, the front camera would immediately switch on and take a photo. I was shocked to find out that it was my best friend's mother who tried logging into my account. I couldn't wrap my head around how a person my mother's age would want to invade the personal space of a fourth-grader, probably to find something that a fourth-grader wouldn't even think of doing," said Nafisa Tabassum Hawa, an HSC 2022 candidate.

As bizarre as this story may seem, the over-involvement of parents or even other guardians in a child's education or overall life is common in our country. From being judgemental about almost everything to being insensitive about asking very personal questions, these unhealthy practices have been making students' lives miserable for a long time now.

In some cases, parents are overprotective of their children. They develop an unhealthy fixation with the idea that their child is the best in the entire school, which sometimes leads them to grow the mentality of being envious of other kids and meddle in their lives.

"In school, some guardians would always ask me questions like why I went to school alone, why I didn't wear an orna, why my parents let me stand in the line alone to pay tuition fees, and so on. Some of them even used to get angry that I didn't help their kids cheat during exams. What made it more annoying was that they would gossip about all these behind my back and spread absurd rumours about me," said Fatima Farhana Prova, an MBA student from Jahangirnagar University (JU).

What's dismaying is that these parents are adults who also have children the same age and are making these vile remarks



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

about young students. Judging other students is so normal to them that they think it's fine to talk about what clothes other kids are wearing, whom they are communicating with, and other private affairs.

Some overprotective parents continue to be highly controlling of their kids till the last years of their school lives, impeding their ability to grow up as responsible, independent individuals. And the students who actually try to learn basic life skills, like going to school by themselves or paying school fees without anyone's help, get criticised by these people.

Such insulting comments are not only made towards the students but their parents are frequently blamed as well. Parents who make such remarks think that the right way to go about parenting is to be overly involved in their children's lives. As a result, those who don't think like them are rebuked.

"Since I had working parents, I used to go to school alone," said Mehjabeen Khan, currently studying Computer Science and Information Systems at California

State University. "Some guardians used to be so unnecessarily concerned that whenever my mom would drop me off at school once in a while, they would insult her for being a 'bad parent'. They even filled her ears with baseless acquisitions like me being a *noshito meye*, only because I had male friends."

These overly involved guardians play a vital role in influencing many students and their parents to do the same things that their kids do. And the most accurate example of this would be pressuring students into attending coaching classes.

Zakia Hossain\*, an undergrad student at JU, shares her experience.

"One of my friends suffered almost every day for not being able to match his parents' expected academic standards. They sent him to several coaching classes taken by our school's teachers seven days a week. His results did get better, not because he had been studying hard but because he was a familiar face in almost all coaching classes. His mother also influenced other parents to send their children to more

coaching classes for achieving better results in the exams."

Aside from these problems, some parents who prefer remaining in a group of other overly involved parents often meddle in other students' lives so much that they forget to respect their privacy or boundaries. This happens mostly because they don't consider children as individual human beings who need privacy.

The scary part of this overall toxic culture is that children are pushed to become more and more self-conscious as well as demotivated. As this problem lingers on for the rest of their school lives, they tend to lose respect toward the people who are involved with such practices, which includes their own parents. Such over-involvement of parents also creates a reflex of disobedience in children, and as usual, the entire blame shifts back to the children.

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## BMSS organises ABC of Surgery workshop

A CORRESPONDENT

On March 10, the Standing Committee on Medical Education (SCOME) of Bangladesh Medical Students' Society (BMSS) organised the event "ABC of Surgery" at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute with third and fifth-year medical students as well as intern doctors from various medical colleges across Bangladesh. The surgical workshop was conducted under the supervision of Dr Saklayen Russel, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Vascular Surgery, Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute, in collaboration with Nutricare as the nutrition partner.

The event was inaugurated with a presentation from the National Officer of SCOME, Dr Suzana Afrin, regarding the past activities of SCOME. It was then followed by a welcome speech from Dr Saklayen.

There were several interesting sessions about surgical training skills facilitated by doctors of the Vascular Surgery department. Assistant Registrars Dr Wahidul Azad Palash and Dr Rusama Nuzhat discussed surgical dressing, suture materials, and knots. Following that, two other sessions were taken by resident doctors, Dr Saima Islam and Dr Marjan Hashi, regarding IV cannulations, catheterisation, and surgical history taking.

Later, Dr Serajus Salekin, Assistant Professor of Thoracic Surgery at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, taught the students and intern doctors about pleural fluid aspiration.

The most awaited segment was conducted by the abovementioned trainers – the hands-on training segment. The participants were divided into three groups, and each group took turns on three different stations. They explored the operation theatre, learnt how to do dressing on an admitted patient, and had the opportunity to use surgical instruments for practising suturing techniques. Dr Saklayen demonstrated the proper method of gowning and wearing gloves and ended the event with an interactive Q&A session with the audience.

At the end of the day, Dr Saklayen and the other doctors of the Vascular Surgery Department received crests from the President of BMSS, Dr Myesha Maliha Binte Mamun. All the participants were provided with certificates as well.

"The awe of discovering the human body. The honour of being trusted to give advice. The gratitude for helping someone through a difficult illness. These things never grow old," said Dr Myesha Maliha.

# A guide to applying for undergraduate programs in the United States

ROBIAH AREFIN IBN MAHMUD

Applying to universities in the United States is a confusing, exhausting, and painful experience. So, here is a five-step guide cultivated from my experiences and mistakes on how to make it less so.

**Plan your standardised tests**

A good SAT score makes a lot of difference. Start preparing early and sit for your first test at least six months before your application deadline so that you can re-sit for it if needed. You will also need to sit for the IELTS Academic test. While not all US universities require proof of English proficiency, some do, and you will definitely need it to apply for your student visa anyway. Any score above 7 should do.

**Do a lot of research**

The key to getting into US universities all boils down to finding the right fit. Find a list of 10 to 20 universities that interest you and spend as much time as you can to find features about the institutions that align with your personality and life goals.

University websites and YouTube videos by currently enrolled students are excellent places to start. At the same time, think about how your specific quirks and traits will fit within their community. This is an effective way to tie your application back to your hobbies and extracurriculars.

Also, take note of all your deadlines including financial aid applications. This entire process needs to be thorough and should take about three months.

**Get your academic documents in order**

Your high-school counsellor is your best friend here. Universities require a high-school transcript from your counsellor with a record of your school and board exam grades.

If you apply before graduation, you will receive predicted grades. In most cases, you will also need a minimum of two recommendation letters from school teachers. However, don't stress if the recommendation letters and transcripts are slightly overdue. Most universities generally grant a couple of weeks after the deadline for your counsellor and teachers to submit their materials.

**Apply for financial aid**

Most colleges will either provide financial aid or scholarships. For financial aid, check whether the university you are applying to is either need-blind or need-aware. The latter will consider financial aid requirements as part of your evaluation.

Your financial aid application starts with a College Scholarship Service (CSS) profile which documents all your household income, costs, and the estimated amount your family

can contribute. Here, you will need your parents' tax returns and bank statements.

Note, Bangladeshi applicants need the tax return from the previous tax year. For instance, applicants for fall 2023 will submit the tax return from the 2020 to 2021 tax year. Afterwards, some universities might request verification of documents through an Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC) package or their own portal.

**Write a stellar essay**

There isn't any fixed formula for writing a stellar essay. This is actually a blessing in disguise as it allows you to express your true self. For inspiration, you can check out various online resources to find excellent sample essays from successful applications.

However, avoid plagiarism at all costs. Universities will detect it no matter how obscure your sources are. And obviously, don't make others write it for you. Besides being unethical, it will only lead to impersonal essays that colleges don't appreciate.

*Robiah is embarking upon a daring quest to achieve the perfect medium-rare steak. Send kosher salt and freshly-grounded black pepper to robiaharefin@gmail.com*

