

Bunking lectures at this Thane college impossible as parents get mobile alerts

100% ATTENDANCE Students of St John the Baptist Junior College have smart ID cards which tracks in and out time

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THANE: Cracking the whip on integrated coaching programmes in the state, education Minister Vinod Tawade had made it mandatory for all junior colleges to have biometric attendance system from the current academic year.

However, St John the Baptist Junior College at Talaopali has taken it a notch higher.

The management has not only installed a biometric system to register students' attendance, it is also using an ultra-high frequency reader that sends messages to parents the moment their children enter and leave the college campus for the day.

While parents said they are happy with the new system, students said they can no longer spend time on the college campus.

"Our identity cards get scanned the moment we enter and leave. This has made it mandatory for us to attend all the lectures," said Akshay Pathankar, SYJC student.

Karen D'Costa, another student, "Initially, not many were

WHY WAS BIOMETRIC ATTENDANCE MADE MANDATORY

The GR, dated June 15, stated that most students enrolled in the science stream do not attend classes in junior colleges, instead they attend coaching classes

A few junior colleges and coaching classes have tie ups, wherein students do not have to attend classes in the colleges or the coaching centre's faculty offer lectures on college campus

Owing to this arrangement, it was found that students have been missing regular classes and attending integrated courses

As a result, biometric attendance was made mandatory in colleges.



■ **Students of St John the Baptist High School and Junior College show their identity cards, which get automatically scanned on entering and leaving the college.**

familiar with the new system and would either enter late or bunked lectures. Now that everyone knows how the system works, students try to be in the classroom on time because parents come to know even if we are

late by a few minutes."

The college has given students identity cards that work as smart cards which get scanned as they enter the junior college section. The scanner, installed on the ceiling, tracks in and out time.

The equipment has a specific radius and is triggered whenever a student wearing an identity card comes within its range. The college has 340 SYJC students in commerce and science streams.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ULTRA HIGH FREQUENCY AND BIOMETRIC SYSTEMS

- Biometric readers scan fingerprints to record attendance. With 340 students in a single batch, it will become difficult to manage them
- Ultra high frequency system prevents students from crowding near biometric machines and eliminates chances of proxy attendance
- System matches every student's face with the card it scanned after which a message is sent to the registered contact number
- This system can be accessed by parents, teachers and the school
- This enables teachers to reach parents easily and keep track of a child's movements
- Similar system will be used to mark attendance of school staff

Academic year for FYJC students is yet to begin.

"Initially, there were lot of complaints and parents also took a while to get used to the new system. But it has been a month now and everything is working

smoothly. We even noticed a 100% attendance. This week we sought feedback from the parents and were glad with the positive response," said Edward Mascarenhas, vice-principal, St John the Baptist Junior College.

"We get a message the moment our child enters and leaves the college. With the increase in the crime rate in the city, young children need monitoring. Timely update from the school helps us keep a track of our children, which helps ensure their safety," said Melissa Fernandes, whose daughter is a student of the institute.

Paresh Kulkarni, father of another student, said, "My wife and I are working parents. We are not sure if our son is in college or at home. However, with this new system we can be rest assured that he attending lectures and not loitering around."

In the past, several students would bunk class test as the same would be offered at coaching classes. However, the new system has helped curb this practise.

"Our faculty is qualified to ensure students are well-prepared," said Mascarenhas.