

School Bus GPS Tracker Buying Guide

A practical guide for schools in India, by Satcop India, makers of My School Ride

Choosing a GPS tracker for school buses is a decision you will live with for years. This guide explains what to look for, how a fixed device compares with phone tracking, which questions to ask vendors, and how to get a fair quote.

1. What a school bus GPS tracker should do

Must-haves

- Live location of every bus on one map
- Automatic tracking whenever the bus runs, with no app to start
- Trip history and playback
- Alerts: overspeed, route deviation and late running
- A parent app with live bus position and ETA
- A school dashboard with simple reports

Good to add

- RFID card attendance on boarding and drop-off
- Gate attendance (UHF) matched with bus attendance
- Inside camera and road-facing dashcam
- Driver and attendant app for attendance and alerts
- Campus-level logins for school chains

2. Fixed device or driver's phone?

	Fixed GPS device	Driver phone app
Starts tracking	Automatically with the bus	Only when someone opens the app
Battery	Powered by the bus	Phone battery can run out
Driver changes	Device stays with the bus	New driver needs the app
Who controls it	The school	Often the driver
Best for	Daily routes, whole fleet	Pilots, temporary buses, backup

Our view: for daily school routes, a fixed device is the reliable base. A phone app works well on top of it for attendance, alerts and parents.

3. Hardware checklist

- ☐ Made for vehicles (vibration, heat, dust)
- ☐ Clear installation plan and time per bus
- ☐ Warranty and a replacement process
- ☐ Offline alerts, so you know when a device stops reporting
- ☐ Can work with cameras and RFID later

4. Software and app checklist

- ☐ Live map with all buses and clear status
- ☐ Accurate ETA for each stop
- ☐ Alerts sent to the right people, not everyone

- ☐ Parent app that is easy to use, with languages your parents read
- ☐ Reports you will actually use: punctuality, alerts, attendance
- ☐ Data export and clear data ownership

5. Twelve questions to ask every vendor

1. Who designs and makes the device?
2. Does tracking work without anyone opening an app?
3. How will we know if a bus goes offline?
4. What does the parent app show?
5. Which alerts are included, and who gets them?
6. Can we add RFID attendance and cameras later?
7. How many schools, buses and students use your system?
8. Can we speak to a school of our size?
9. Who installs and services devices in our city?
10. What are your support hours and response times?
11. Who owns our data, and can we export it?
12. What exactly is included in the quote?

6. Getting a fair quote

Prices depend on your fleet and the features you choose, so ask for a quote with line items: - Devices and installation - Cameras (if any) - RFID cards and readers (if any) - Software, apps and data/SIM - Training and support

Compare quotes only when they include the same things. The lowest number is not always the lowest cost over a school year.

7. Planning by city

Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata: long, traffic-heavy routes. Prioritise live ETA and route alerts.

Pune, Ahmedabad, Surat, Jaipur, Lucknow, Indore, Nagpur: growing suburbs. Plan for frequent route changes.

Chandigarh, Kochi, Coimbatore, Bhopal, Visakhapatnam, Vadodara and other cities: many schools are new to GPS. Start with tracking and attendance.

Satcop India has its head office in Pune (Kharadi) and an office in Hyderabad (Gachibowli). In every other city, we serve schools and visit to demo on your buses.

8. A simple rollout

1. Pilot on 3 to 5 long routes for two weeks
2. Onboard parents on those routes
3. Roll out to the full fleet before the new term
4. Add attendance and cameras where needed
5. Review trip history and alerts monthly

About us. Satcop India, makers of My School Ride. My School Ride helps schools track buses, record student attendance and keep parents informed. Used by 200+ schools, 10,000+ buses and 200,000+ students. Website: satcop.com

Ask for a quote / Book a demo: call +91 8600 002222 or WhatsApp +91 91560 88090 (wa.me/919156088090).

General guidance only; no legal claims.