

22 APRIL 2016

## Minister: act against drug peddling in schools

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IPOH — The Education Ministry wants the police and National Anti-Drug Agency to step up enforcement in schools where drugs or drug-laced food are being pushed to children.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, said the enforcement authorities and ministry were aware of locations near schools where drugs were either sold or samples given out to students.

He declined to identify the schools or areas where such activities have been detected, but said there were 10,191 schools nationwide under his ministry.

"We (the ministry) know about these areas and so do the police. We are aware of the hotspots which are being used to peddle drugs including to school students," he said after opening the Perak Malay Contractors Association's annual general meeting here yesterday.

"However, I cannot name them because it is sensitive information. But it is important for the authorities to carry out monitoring activities in those areas."

Mahdzir said not all schools required monitoring but those that did would need strong action from police to curb drug-related activities.

He said Malaysia had strict laws on drug trafficking that could be used against both peddlers and users.

"I hope the police will take stern action against any individual or party who influences students with drugs, either using them to deliver the drugs or consume them," he said.

On Wednesday, *Malay Mail* reported that drug suppliers were turning pupils as young as seven into drug addicts by giving them free drug-laced sweets.

The syndicate also recruited children to entrap other children by using them to distribute drug-laced candy to their peers.

The drug distributors' objective is to ensure a continued customer base by causing addiction among the young students.

On Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi told Dewan Negara that children as young as seven were among the 131,841 drug addicts detected in the country between 2010 and this March.

The children were the youngest ever known drug users identified locally.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also the home minister, said those between 20 and 39 represented the largest group of drug addicts, with 93,044 cases.