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KUALA LUMPUR: The seven suspects arrested for their alleged involvement in the burning of the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah tahfiz last week may have been caught up in drugs at the time that they went missing from school.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said they were expelled from school at least a year ago due to truancy issues.

He said the suspects, aged between 11 and 18, could have started taking drugs when they were absent from school.

"The suspects were last known to be enrolled in three different Klang Valley schools," Mahdzir told reporters after launching an anti-drug campaign at SMK Seri Saujana yesterday.

"One left school in 2012," he added.

The schools where the suspects last studied are located in the Keramat area.

Mahdzir said when a child constantly skipped school, he could easily get influenced and fall into the trap of drugs.

He said urban areas were the

main targets of drug dealers, followed by the suburbs, fishing villages and Felda settlements.

"In Kuala Lumpur, we have a record of schools where students could potentially get involved in drug-related activities," he said, adding that these were among the 402 hotspot schools identified by the ministry.

He urged all parties to work together to combat the drug epidemic.

"Otherwise, an entire generation could be lost," he said.

The teenagers were picked up between 6pm on Friday and 2.30am on Saturday.

On Saturday, City police chief Comm Datuk Amar Singh said insults exchanged between the teenagers early in the week were believed to be the trigger that led to the tragic fire.

He also said there was a possibility that the suspects were high on drugs during the incident.



Vital lessons: Students viewing a display on the dangers of drugs at SMK Seri Saujana in Bandar Baru Seri Petaling, Kuala Lumpur.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

