



Tuesday May 10, 2011

Enforce mobile phone ban in schools, says Wee

PETALING JAYA: Teachers should conduct random spot checks on students to ensure they do not bring mobile phones to schools, said Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong.

He said female teachers were also allowed to conduct body searches on girls if they were suspected of hiding their phones.

“There have been cases of students hiding phones in their underwear. Spot checks are necessary to ensure they do not bring such devices to schools,” he said after launching the 18th National Secondary Schools Current Affairs Quiz competition here yesterday.

He said all schools were urged to enforce a 2009 circular that disallowed students from bringing mobile phones to schools.

He added this could be one of the causes of bullying incidents in schools.

Dr Wee said although some parents were against the move, they needed to understand the arguments for the ban.

“If they need to contact their children, they can always come to school. We will give them full cooperation,” he said.

Yesterday, in Putrajaya, Dr Wee met with the four students who were seen pulling and cutting off their classmate's hair in a video uploaded on YouTube.

He also met the school authorities, Federal Territory education director Adenan Deraman and families of the students involved.

Dr Wee said the bullies, who had been suspended for 14 days, would be given counselling while the victim would be sent to a special school.

“When we penalise the students, we must also not forget that our duty is to educate them. That's why we are giving them a chance to turn over a new leaf because they are still young. They deserve the right to start over,” he said.

He also warned the bullies would be expelled if they repeated their action.

Asked why there were now more bullying cases, Dr Wee said students developed copycat behaviour after watching violent videos on YouTube.

“When they go to school, they do the same to their classmates to show others that they are stronger and more superior but they do not know the consequences of their actions,” he said.