

Schools urged to consider both online and physical classes



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by ASILA JALIL / pic by TMR FILE

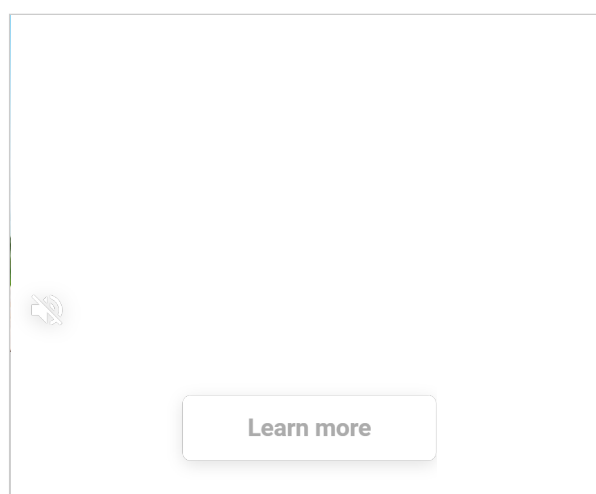
SCHOOLS could consider alternating between physical and hybrid classes ahead of next month's reopening to ensure continuity of the students' education without compromising their health.

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The reopening of schools has been postponed to Oct 3, Education Minister Dr Radzi Jidin said yesterday evening.



Schools will now reopen in stages starting with exam year students on Oct 3, he said, in view of the current health and risk assessment.

"The reopening of schools next month will only involve exam year students in Forms Five and Six.

"The reopening, however, would not involve schools in Phase One states," the minister said in a Facebook post last night.

Meanwhile, Wan said the schools' location, infrastructure, vaccination rate of the school population, and students' access to Internet and relevant devices, are vital elements that require thorough inspection to ensure a smooth and safe learning environment.



Schools can opt to alternate between online and physical classes if they have limited space capacity and good access to the Internet, she said.

“Another factor to consider is the capacity of the school to implement the hybrid model as that would need proper planning and organisation,” she told *The Malaysian Reserve* recently.

The location of the schools and the number of Covid-19 cases in the area must be assessed prior to the reopening and the authorities need to ensure standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been adjusted to include the possible threat of the new variants at school compounds.

“Consultation with health experts is vital to ensure that SOPs are well thought-out to ensure the safety of students, teachers and the school community.

“Then, the conditions such as classroom size, ventilation, hygiene and safe food provision should be considered. As the new variant is airborne, added measures to the SOPs are required,” Wan added.

The Education Ministry (MoE) announced last month that schools will reopen for face-to-face learning on Sept 1, while the home-based teaching and learning (PdPR) will continue until the end of this month.

National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar said all school staff will be vaccinated ahead of next month’s reopening.

Efforts are being made to also ensure support staff and those employed at schools such as cleaners, canteen operators, security guards and bus drivers are inoculated.

The National Union of Teaching Profession Peninsular Malaysia (NUTP) suggested MoE to postpone the reopening of schools until conditions are deemed safe for the community.

Its secretary general Harry Tan said it is unnecessary to reopen schools now as the daily cases are still hitting 20,000.

He added that there are also only 10 more weeks left for the schooling session and parents would opt to not send their children to school despite the high vaccination rate.

“Therefore, the NUTP urges MoE to reconsider the reopening for the safety of the students as well as the teaching staff. MoE needs to postpone the reopening of schools until it is safe to do so.

“NUTP hopes MoE will help in ensuring a smooth PdPR process by providing affordable and fast Internet service as well as free Internet for those in the bottom 40% income group. Meanwhile, teachers should be given a special Internet package and training to improve their skills for PdPR,” he said in a statement last week.

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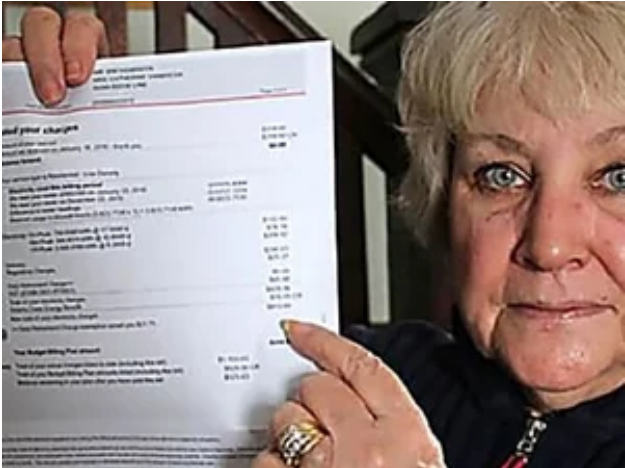
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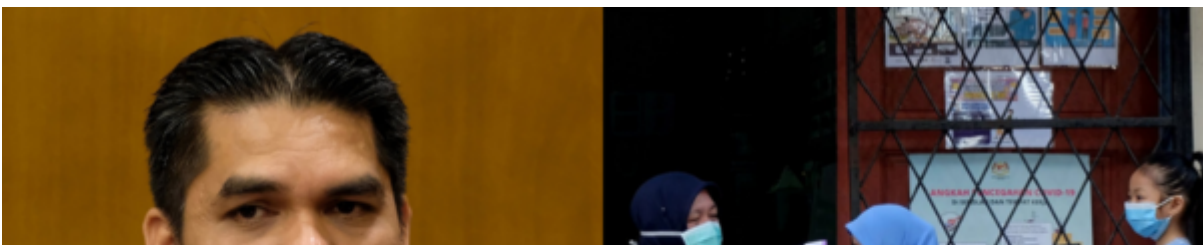
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