

Don't spare the rod, says Dr. M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed called on headmasters today not to hesitate to use the cane in order to maintain discipline in schools.

"It is unfortunate that most heads of schools refrain from caning pupils for fear of reprisals from parents," he said in opening a course on Administration and Modern Management for secondary school headmasters at the Specialist Teachers' Training Institute here.

He said the Ministry would protect the headmasters who caned pupils to uphold discipline provided the caning followed the

prescribed procedure which has already been made known to schools.

The rules concerning caning were made to ensure that the pupils were not caned according to the whims and fancies of those who mete out the punishment or during fits of anger, he said.

"As long as caning is done within the rules, parents will not get angry and the Ministry will stand solidly behind the school," Dr. Mahathir said.

He said there had been many complaints of a lack of discipline in schools. Every effort to maintain discipline must be taken by those responsible for the

running of the nation's schools.

Teachers were barred from caning pupils in 1968 when the Ministry introduced rules governing corporal punishment in schools. Only the headmaster or a teacher delegated by him can cane a pupil. The caning must be done in the presence of at least one witness.

The headmaster must also record in a book details of the punishment such as the nature of the offence, the number of strokes and get the witness to sign.

Before the introduction of these rules, teachers were free to cane a pupil for misbehaviour.