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Education Ministry is sports un-friendly

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THE National Sports Policy provides for it, but as far as Malaysian Association for Physical Education, Sports Science and Fitness (PPJSKM) president Leonard de Vries is concerned, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is not providing adequate time for sports in schools.

And de Vries is appealing to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to emphasise the importance of Physical Education in primary and secondary schools by increasing the number of periods per week.

"In reviewing and trying to re-invent the schools system, PPJSKM hopes that our Prime Minister will not forget the subject called Physical Education," said de Vries yesterday.

"The Ministry of Education is not providing adequate time for PE and sports in schools, and as such, we would like to call upon Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to be the first Asian leader with the insight, wisdom and understanding by providing four to five periods a week for PE, and not one or two periods."

The National Sports Policy on Strategy and Implementation states that the MOE will provide adequate time for physical education for all pupils as well as develop and coordinate sports activities in schools including the development of leadership qualities in sport and physical education with the cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Sports Council, and the National Sports Associations.

But this, according to de Vries is not happening in schools today.

"Sports activities are no longer what they used to be in schools. In fact, in some schools, it is virtually non-existent," he said.

"Approximately 4,000 hours are given for cognitive subjects and only 150 hours for PE on the present five-year secondary school curriculum."

Which is why the association has also called for a review of the National Sports Policy to stay current and relevant to sports today.

And with the advent of computer information and technology, it is increasingly difficult to attract students to take up sports.

"Malaysia strives to win at international sport, and this depends greatly on the foundations of providing basic skills in specific sports and sports fitness," added de Vries.

"And these can only be achieved through sound PE and sport programmes in schools."