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Union-Caning

TEACHERS WITH POWER TO CANE NEED LEGAL PROTECTION, SAYS UNION

IPOH, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- The Congress of Teachers Union in the Education Service said today the decision to allow all teachers to cane students must be supported by legal and moral protection from possible police report or civil suits against educators.

Its Secretary-General Shahul Hamid Mydin Shah said such protection was necessary as caning of students could become an issue and exploited by some quarters at the expense of teachers.

"The ministry must ensure teachers are provided legal and moral support. Otherwise, they will be left alone to face possible police investigation if parents of affected students lodge reports," he said.

He was commenting on a statement by the Director-General of Education, Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat, that all teachers would be given the powers of a disciplinary teacher, including caning students.

Shahul Hamid said the decision was in line with the report of the Education Committee headed by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he was the Education Minister, which stipulates that all teachers are discipline teachers.

"So far, this has not been implemented in schools although there was a circular about it by Datuk Rafie on Sept 24, 2001. Allowing teachers to discipline students legally will definitely curb indiscipline among students," he said.

He said teachers would have the moral obligation to discipline students as they are regarded as discipline teachers too, unlike now where only the headmaster and one discipline teacher have been delegated the powers to cane.

Shahul Hamid said most teachers do not want to get into trouble by caning or disciplining students as they are now disallowed to do so and they think it was not their business.

He, however, said teachers must be given guidelines and courses on how to discipline students by caning them in order to avoid injuries or unnecessary punishment.

"They should not be emotional when caning students. Any punishment should be preventive, educative, corrective rather than punitive. It must be done to make the students realise their mistakes," he said.

He said fresh trainee teachers in teachers' training colleges should also be exposed to the moral obligation to discipline students as their task would become more challenging when they start teaching in future.

Shahul Hamid, however, said indiscipline in school cannot be overcome by just caning as the role of parents was important, especially in counselling their children when they show signs of indiscipline.

"They should not leave everything to their teachers. Although teachers have the moral obligation to educate students to become good citizens, parents should also complement and supplement their efforts," he said.

He said police could also play their part by monitoring and counselling students found loitering in supermarkets when they should be in school.

"The police can visit schools and give talks. We know they have other duties but they can take some time to work closely with the school authorities to create a disciplined environment in school," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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