

Health DG: Kulim school closed after teacher, students test positive

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COVID-19 | Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said a school in Kulim, Kedah has been closed after one of its teachers and three students tested positive for Covid-19.

This contradicts with what Education Ministry officials previously told Malaysiakini.

During a press conference today, Noor Hisham said the school had been shut and disinfected.

“So we have closed down the school and then we have actually screened and tested the students. Sanitisation has also been done in the location.

“I hope within a week or two, we will manage to contain the infection in that area,” he said when asked.

However, one Education Ministry officer said they were still waiting for further instructions on whether to close the school in question.

“For the closure of the school, that is under the advice of the Health Ministry and National Security Council,” said the officer.

The Kulim District Education Office also said there was no instruction from the Education Ministry for them to close the school so far.

Malaysiakini has contacted the Education Ministry for clarification.

According to a chart issued by the Health Ministry yesterday, there were four new cases in Kulim involving a teacher and three students (Cases 9,204 to 9,207) who tested positive on Aug 17.

The three students are classmates to two siblings (Case 9,615 and 9,163) who tested positive on Aug 15, while one of the siblings is the teacher's pupil.

Two of the students and one of the siblings are 13 years old, while the others are eight years old. All of them live in Padang Meiha, Kedah.

These Tawar cluster cases have now reached its third generation of infections.

The cluster is linked to a funeral held between July 31 and Aug 1.

As of today, the total number of cases in this cluster rose to 47, surpassing the Sivagangga cluster by two cases to become the second-largest active cluster in the country.

Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said contact tracing for the cluster was still underway with 1,490 people tested so far and 360 tests still pending results in Kedah and Penang.

School closure on case-by-case basis

On Aug 4, Education Minister Mohd Radzi Mohd Jidin revealed that his ministry will assess the need for closing schools in Covid-19 affected areas on a case-by-case basis.

"If there is a need to close a school based on advice from the Health Ministry and the National Security Council as well as the state government, we will discuss the matter.

"Each case is different as in Sarawak more than 200 schools were closed but in Kedah, we closed only five schools based on the existing cases, the risks and how

to deal with them," he said.

He was replying to a question from Teo Nie Ching (Harapan-Kulai) in Parliament who wanted to know if the ministry planned to close schools in Sabah which recorded two positive cases involving students as well as schools in Covid-19 red zones.

Currently, the Kedah Education Department has closed five schools for 28 days from Aug 2 to rein in the Sivagangga cluster after two primary school students tested positive.

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