

Teachers should help young pupils who are unable to fast – minister

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Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek has called on teachers to play a role in identifying Muslim pupils, especially in Year One, who are fasting but show signs of struggle to complete the ritual.

Fadhlina reportedly said there were parents who asked their Year One children to fast while at school but many end up tired and unable to do it.

"There must be monitoring done in schools.

"If teachers see that a child is dehydrated or has health issues or is not ready to fast, I asked them to discuss with the parents of the pupils involved," she was quoted as saying by News Straits Times after a breaking fast function at the Universiti Sains Malaysia Engineering Campus' Islamic Centre in Nibong Tebal, Penang, last night.

Fadhlina said this when asked for comments on a viral Twitter thread yesterday that inquired how to officially lodge a complaint against a school administration

that purportedly forced students as young as seven to fast.

The thread that also mentioned the Nibong Tebal MP also prompted similar inquiries or complaints from other concerned parents with children in other schools.

"Parents and teachers must communicate and find the best way to teach the children the proper process of fasting," she said.

Not obligatory for children

Further, Fadhlina reminded that it was not obligatory for children who have yet to reach puberty to fast, and as such, they could not be forced to.

She, however, said some children are ready and able to fast at an early age.

"This means the obligation (to fast) is based on one's own ability. So, this is where the role of the parents comes in... and it should start at home.

"Parents need to find ways they want to introduce their children to fasting," she added.

Previously, the minister said there is no need for school canteens to close during Ramadan and that educating non-Muslim students about the fasting month does not mean they shouldn't have the opportunity to have meals.

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