

Ministry criticised for poor liaison with schools

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PETALING JAYA: Parents have criticised the Education Ministry for poor communication channels with schools

The Sun - 11/3/2007
which has caused many of them to force parents to declare their income, irrespective of whether they are seeking textbook loans.

theSun received complaints from parents of pupils in three Selangor pri-

mary schools which had made it compulsory for parents to fill in a form declaring their income and income tax registration number, although they had not sought aid.

One parent said a teacher told his child that he would be punished if the information was not submitted.

In another case, a parent was told to get his employer to verify his declaration, which he found to be ridiculous.

Schools which distributed the forms included SK SEA Park, SK Taman Rakan, SK Sungai Long, SK Kajang and SK Bandar Tun Hussein Onn (Fasa II), Cheras.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had, on Jan 25, said parents who had been asked to provide the details although they had not required any form of assistance, should approach him directly.

Hishammuddin had said he would personally look into the matter, adding that the salary figures were to ensure the assistance provided reached people really in need.

On Tuesday, an aide to the minister told *theSun* parents should submit their details to him to be forwarded to the minister.

Parents, however, are questioning the need for the minister's personal attention in an operational matter, when a circular to all education departments and schools would have resolved the matter.

"This shows poor communication channels between the ministry and state officials," one parent said.

One headmaster said he was only carrying out his duties as per the state education department's instructions.

Efforts to contact the ministry's public relations officer and the Selangor education director have been unsuccessful.