

MCA, netizens say Seri Pristana headmaster, police have done more damage
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BY RITA JONG

A former deputy education minister is appalled that police and the SK Seri Pristana school authorities subjected the Selangor primary school's children to police questioning.

"The police had no business going into the school premises in the first place," Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong (pic), who is also the MCA Education Bureau chief, told The Malaysian Insider in Kuala Lumpur.

"Why the need to interview the pupils? Even if they had to do it, it should have been with the approval of the parents."

He said police should have more important things to do than interview schoolchildren.

He added that this latest revelation will only anger the public more and damage the reputation of national schools.

The former deputy education minister was commenting on the police's admission yesterday that they had interviewed several pupils there following the revelation that students were told to have recess meals in the shower room.

Sungai Buloh police chief Superintendent Junaidi Bujang, who had earlier denied that police questioned the pupils, yesterday admitted that "they were questioned on an interview basis".

"The SK Seri Pristana fiasco has to stop, otherwise the repercussions would be frightening," Wee warned, adding that the matter has got out of hand.

Wee then took a swipe at the headmaster, Mohd Nasir Mohd Noor, saying he should have been pro-active and remedied the situation early on.

"Instead what we have are police reports and counter reports being lodged," he said.

"He should have come out, showed his sincerity, explained and listened to the parents' grouses. But until today, he seems to still be defending his decision, making the matter worse."

"Do you think that non-Muslims will ever go to your school again? The noble objective to attract more non-Malays to Sekolah Kebangsaan will fail and this is the price they have to pay," he said.

Seri Pristana became embroiled in this controversy about a month ago when a parent uploaded a picture of pupils eating in a shower room during Ramadan following a directive from the headmaster.

The picture went viral and subsequently 18 police reports were lodged against the school and the headmaster.

The headmaster and other teachers in the school also lodged four reports claiming there

were death threats from several parents.

Netizens slammed the police, labelling them "professional bullies" for questioning the pupils.

"How can a child be interviewed without the parents present? This is intimidation," said one netizen.

"Sometimes we wonder if the police themselves know the law and the limitations of what they can or cannot do. Looks like they need to be re-schooled."

Others called for the sacking of the headmaster, saying he abused his powers when he allowed police to interview the pupils.

"The parents should really bring this matter to the civil court at least. Surely we can't let this wrongdoing go unpunished," said another comment. - August 29, 2013.

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