

E-learning at children's homes is hard

Lack of devices and bad Internet connections are hindering kids' progress

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GEORGE TOWN: With the new school term extended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students in children's homes are facing difficulties with virtual classes and e-learning programmes.

At the Children's Protection Society (CPS) in Scotland Road here, a shortage of devices and bad Internet connections were hindering the virtual learning progress, said senior social worker G. Suria.

She said with virtual classes extended again, it would affect the children's learning progress.

"We have limited resources for virtual classes and here, we have 21 children from different classes and schools. But we only have six laptops in total.

"This makes it difficult for us to ensure a proper learning process for the children.

"As many of them have to attend online classes every day, some of us lend them our old phones so that they can do online learning.

"But many need a laptop because their teachers will be conducting classes online and even though some of them are from the same school and batch, they are in different classes.

"They have different teachers for different subjects and because of that they cannot share the laptops," she said when met yesterday.



Rocky road: T. Ganga (right), 10, sharing a computer with G. Divinesh (second from right), eight, and other pupils attending online class on the first day of school session at The Children's Protection Society home in George Town, Penang. — ZHAFARAN NASIB/The Star

Suria said as the society did not have enough funds to buy new devices, the students had no choice but to share laptops.

CPS honorary secretary Magdeline Leong, who was present, said another problem that was plaguing them was the Internet

connectivity in the area.

"We are within a low-rise area surrounded by high-rise buildings so the Internet connectivity here is bad, and with so many students using the Internet, we cannot ensure a smooth online experience for them.

"As such, we are still looking for-

ward to the reopening of schools when the cases drop and the movement control order is lifted," Leong said.

In the northern Seberang Prai district, police said a total of 66 school liaison officers had been assigned to 32 government schools

and a private school to ensure standard operating procedure compliance during the MCO.

OCPD Asst Comm Noorzainy Mohd Noor said the officers would conduct spot checks at each school at least twice a day.

"Their task is to ensure teachers and students observe the SOP, right from the start till the end of school sessions.

"Only classroom activities are allowed, while sports and other co-curricular activities are not allowed.

"Students who are living in other districts will have to show police a special letter from their respective schools at the police roadblocks," he told reporters after visiting SMJK Chung Ling, Butterworth, during the first day of school.

ACP Noorzainy said a total of 9,892 students would sit for 2020 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, Sijil Vokasional Malaysia, Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia, Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia, Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia and Diploma Vokasional Malaysia in the district.

On the SOP implementation at SMJK Chung Ling, ACP Noorzainy said police were satisfied with the school's arrangement in observing the SOP.

He said the students' attendance was good during the first day of school, with 2m physical distancing among students being practised in the classrooms.