

# Have laws to curb bullying in schools

RECENTLY, another alleged case of school bullying, involving a Year Six pupil in Alor Setar, went viral on social media.

The two-minutes video clip that began circulating on Whatsapp and Facebook showed a primary student being bullied and teased by several pupils in a classroom. The victim was also seen to have been kicked and pushed around while he cried helplessly and begged for help.

It was reported that the school management had held a meeting between the pupils, their parents as well as the police.

The victim's parent decided against lodging a formal police report but instead urged the police to speak to the pupils involved.

Incidents of school bullies is not new and there have been many incidents reported last year.

If no concrete action is taken

now, it would harm not only the victim physically and psychologically but would also effect the reputation of our education system.

If we take the matter lightly, it will certainly send a wrong signal to the bullies and they will have no regret and understanding of the consequences of their actions.

The act of bullying itself can be divided into two main categories namely, direct bullying or indirect bullying.

Direct bullying is a relatively open attack on a victim that is physical and/or verbal in nature. Indirect bullying is more subtle and harder to detect, and involves one or more forms of aggression, including social isolation, intentional exclusion, rumor-spreading, damaging someone's reputation, making faces or obscene gestures behind someone's back and manipulating

friendships and other relationships.

Regardless the types of bullying, the Government must act now to put an end to this as this can interfere directly with the student's learning and threaten the safety and well being of thousand of students.

This can be done by amending the Education Act 1996 or creating a new specific law which address the issue of bullying.

We can learn from the United Kingdom where Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides for an anti-bullying policy to be made for all state schools.

It has been widely believed that creating and developing a strong and proper policy against bullying would create greater awareness among pupils not to be involved in such acts.

Through this policy, it would also establish a climate in which bully-

ing is not acceptable in school.

In the United States, as of August, 2013, all states except for Montana already have their own anti-bullying laws.

Some of the written policies even require disciplinary procedures to be made specifically to deal with bullying incidents while others mandate that schools track and report every bullying incident that occurs.

A growing number of states in the US also currently require schools to employ someone specially trained in anti-bullying education.

Besides effective legislation, it is also important for everyone in the community to work together to send a unified message against bullying.

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