

Acts of vandalism that can boomerang

Archival News | New Straits Times | 14/08/1999

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Vandalism by students, such as bringing down fences to serve as a short cut to school, can hurt them later.

At a time when school security is being tightened, tearing down fences to create short cuts is an open invitation to anyone with criminal intentions to enter the school.

A classic case of student vandalism is at Sekolah Menengah Sri Serdang where students admitted that they frequently tear down fences to avoid taking the long walk to the main gate.

Students seen using the "illegal way" said that the school authorities normally repaired the fencing but in a matter of days, it would be torn down again.

A student who wanted to remain anonymous said they also used the shortcut to frequent stalls nearby.

"There is also a small park where we get together and "lepak". A lot of the students use the illegal way. Most use it because it is a shortcut to their homes," said the student.

He added that no action had been taken against them so far.

Their acts of vandalism, if unchecked, could see a repeat of what happened at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Yoke Kuan in Sekinchan, Klang, two days ago.

Six students were injured when a man entered the school compound with a parang and ran amok after setting his motorcycle ablaze two days ago.

Checks on schools in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Serdang and Damansara over the last two days show that there is a glaring lack of security in most schools.

Even a primary school in Serdang, Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Sri Serdang, did not have much security. One could easily drive in and out as there was no guard.

In our report yesterday, we published a picture of the damaged fencing at the La Salle Secondary School at Jalan Gasing. Another picture showed that although there is a guardhouse at Sekolah Menengah Bukit Bandaraya in Bangsar, there was no guard.

In Johor Baru, checks on a few schools showed that despite the Sekinchan incident, most schools still maintained the tradition of keeping their main gates open.

Only Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Gelang Patah was found to have its main gates locked while pupils played in the compound. However, there was a small side gate that was left ajar.

Parent Mary Phang, whose 11-year-old son attends SRJK (C) Ching Yeh, had this to say of security at the school:

"I feel sorry for the victims of the man who ran amok at SMK Yoke Kuan, but I think it is a rare case. I feel that the security measures at my son's school are alright. People should not get paranoid over that one incident."

The main gates at the Ching Yeh school were found to have been left ajar.

Another parent, Y.K. Wong, whose son studies at Sekolah Menengah Senai, also expressed faith in the school's safety measures.

He felt it was necessary for schools to keep their gates locked during school hours. However, during pick-up and drop-off times, the main gates needed to be left open, he said.

"The school authorities should mend any damaged fences to stop outsiders with bad intentions from entering," he said.

A check on SRJK (C) Ming Terk at Gelang Patah, found that the school also left its main gate open during school hours. There was, however, a prominent signboard at the gate stating that trespassers would be prosecuted.

(END) Source : New Straits Times