



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Press Statement

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Collection of Fees: Parents, kindergartens and daycare centres need to know too besides school bus operators

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) urges the government to seriously review all the measures that they have taken during the Movement Control Order (MCO) and see if there had been areas that have not been addressed. One such unresolved area is the issue concerning kindergarten and daycare centre operators.

Kindergarten and daycare centre operators have asked parents to pay their fees, sometimes including the cost of meals, for their children despite being under the MCO since 18 March. The same situation applies to school bus operators who are asking students to pay for the monthly fare. Parents are in a dilemma as there is no clear guidelines on services that could not be provided.

Senior Minister (security cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's recently stated that "(school bus) operators should not demand fees for services not rendered". He has also to address the other equally crucial point concerning kindergartens and daycare centres which in CAP's opinion is that parents should not be paying (under similar circumstances) for services not rendered. The Transport Minister must come out with a public statement rather than a directive to the school bus operators soon.

CAP had actually raised the issue in early April after receiving complaints from parents, but it fell on deaf ears. We should be duly concerned because, besides the affected parents, there were 6,111 pre-schools in the country in 2018; and 16,861 registered school buses in the peninsula run by 10,496 operators in peninsula alone that desperately need to know their position in this issue.

We wish to iterate our stand that kindergartens, daycare centres and school bus operators should not charge any fees during the MCO, primarily because they had not provided any services during this period. Now the responsibility lies with the government to announce in no uncertain terms about the collection of such fees. The government should at the same time provide relief to school bus, kindergarten and daycare centre operators who are financially affected by the lockdown.

MOHIDEEN ABDUL KADER
President
Consumers' Association of Penang