

# No need to make face masks mandatory in schools, says MMA

Its president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai says it is more important for students to wash or sanitise their hands.

[FMT Reporters](#) - 26 Apr 2023, 8:41pm



*Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said only students displaying Covid-19 symptoms or those with a medical condition should wear face masks in schools.*

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association has brushed off a proposal to make face masks mandatory in schools to help curb the spread of Covid-19.

Its president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said it was more important for students to wash or sanitise their hands.

He said teachers should also do their part by reminding students to sanitise their hands more frequently and avoid touching their face.

“There is no need for a mask mandate in schools.

“Only students with symptoms or a medical condition that may put them at high risk should be wearing face masks,” he said in a statement.

Muruga was responding to news reports that the health ministry was considering making face masks mandatory in schools following the rise in Covid-19 cases linked to the XBB.1.16 variant, otherwise known as Arcturus.

Health minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said she would be holding an urgent meeting with her counterpart in the education ministry, Fadhlina Sidek, before schools reopen on May 2.

Muruga said students displaying symptoms should wear face masks, get tested and isolated if they are found to be positive.

“As an added preventive measure, schools can get their teachers and students to self-test on Sunday evenings ahead of school on Monday.”

However, Muruga said it should only be for a brief period to prevent outbreaks in schools after the Hari Raya holidays.

Muruga also advised parents to encourage their children to keep themselves healthy, saying that a strong immune system was the body’s natural defence against illnesses.

Vaccination, wearing face masks and sanitising hands were not the only important components in managing Covid-19, he said.

“We also have to take steps to look after our health – a key point that hasn’t been sufficiently emphasised.”

Twelve cases of the Arcturus variant have been detected, with six in the Klang Valley and the remaining in Sarawak.