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NUTP: Educate children on sexual orientation

BY **ALYAA ALHADJRI**
 newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Children should be educated on the issues involving gender identity and sexual orientation rather than be subjected to follow a guideline which they do not understand.

National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general Loke Yim Pheng yesterday said any move to introduce such a guideline in schools must begin with a discussion between the relevant authorities, for instance the Health and Education ministries.

Loke said while she could not comment on the controversial guideline on recognising lesbian and gay traits, as published by the Yayasan Guru Malaysia Bhd and Putrajaya Consultative Council of Parents and Teachers Associations, it is more important that such issues are addressed through proper education.

"First of all, I believe in education and not guidelines. So

when children are educated (on the issue), they will know how to think," said Loke when met yesterday after the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Service (Cuepacs) supreme council meeting.

"I think this topic is very sensitive so we have to really understand it before making a decision," she said.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Aids Council yesterday said such a guideline singles out people based on their sexuality and is a form of discrimination that encourages stigmatisation.

Its president Datuk Dr Raj Karim, in a statement, said stigmatising conditions should not enter the education system, as all children should be given equal opportunities for personal development and growth and protection from harm.

Raj said gender and sexuality-based discrimination impedes access to health services including HIV treatment, care and support services.