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China launches campaign to halt school bullying, excessive homework

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FILE PHOTO: Heung Yee Kuk Yuen Long District Secondary School students attend a nunchaku performance event by the sea, in a tribute to the late martial artist and actor Bruce Lee, ahead of National Security Education Day, in Hong Kong, China last year. China's Education Ministry today (May 14) said it was launching a campaign to address issues including excessive homework and bullying in schools, as part of efforts to boost students' mental health. — REUTERS/PIC FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSE

HONG KONG: China's Education Ministry today (May 14) said it was launching a campaign to address issues including excessive homework and bullying in schools, as part of efforts to boost students' mental health.

The announcement came a day after the ministry said it was carrying out mental health education for teachers and students, with particular focus on rural migrant children or those "left behind", whose parents work in large cities for much of the year.

The ministry's notice, published on its website, detailed 12 negative practices at schools, including encroachment during scheduled breaks, neglect and tolerance of bullying behaviour.

Beijing has, since 2021, tried to reform the education sector and ease academic pressure on students, clamping down on a US$120 billion private tutoring industry to cut education costs. Many residents have cited high childcare and education costs as reasons not to have children.

The announcements came after the killing of a 13-year old boy in northern China, whose case triggered a heated media debate over juvenile crime and the plight of children left at home by migrant workers.

Three boys were arrested after they allegedly bullied and killed the student in the small city of Handan on March 10. — Reuters