Palestine Solidarity Week about peace and love, says Fadhlina

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AMPANG: The purpose of the Palestine Solidarity Week is to spread the message of peace and love to all, says Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek (***pic***).
“Whoever tries to divert or slander the issue, I will not let it happen in the school ecosystem,” she told the media after attending the Palestine Solidarity Week at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Dato’ Ahmad Razali today (Nov 2).

“About (this programme) being polemic, it is because it has been politicised and there has been outside interference,” she added.

She said the planning and implementation of the programme had already undergone engagement sessions and added that the troubleshooting for problems was done at the ministry level.

Fadhlina then added that the guidelines for the programme are meant for the school administrators to carry out.

“Its message is clear and it is an education process that takes into account the students’ level. Each school has its own dynamic,” she said, adding that it is the teachers responsibility to deliver the message using activities that are suitable for the school.

“The purpose of this event is to raise the nation's stance and to ensure the message (of peace) reaches all the students,” she added.

Last Thursday (Oct 26), the ministry had announced that all educational institutions under its purview – including schools, vocational and matriculation colleges and teacher training institutes – would be holding a Palestine Solidarity Week aimed at educating children about values such as human rights, harmony and universal peace.

The announcement has triggered debate and raised concerns, especially after a video clip depicting a man dressed as a militant and wielding a replica rifle during a school programme went viral, causing concern among parents and netizens.

In response, the ministry stated that it would not tolerate any elements of extremism and violence during the Palestine Solidarity Week, even as many have called for a review of the ministry’s decision to organise the programme.

Following images of students and teachers dressed up in Hamas attire and carrying toy guns, Fadhlina posted the dos and don’ts of the controversial programme that is slated to run from Oct 29 to Nov 3 on her social media accounts on Nov 30.

On Wednesday (Nov 1), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said students are encouraged to know more about the Israel-Palestine conflict, but on no account should anyone be forced to do so.