MHA building operations centre to respond more quickly to incidents

Slated to be up by 2032, it will bring together officers from various law enforcement agencies

Wong Meng Yiong

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is building a new operations centre to house officers from various law enforcement agencies so they can respond to incidents more quickly and comprehensively.

Law and Home Affairs Minister K. Shanmugam said on Feb 24 that the Home Team Operations Centre (HTOC) will bring together officers from the police, Singapore Civil Defence Force, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB).

He said MHA would also be introducing a unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capability, for all Home Team departments to make more effective use of drones.

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He added: “I feel privileged to have been with CNB for 17 years and have been part of the team that laid the foundations of the Central Narcotics Bureau.”

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More mother tongue language learning at new pre-schools

MOE to study impact of kids spending extra time on mother tongue language activities

Chin Soo Fang
Senior Education Correspondent

A small-scale pilot will be launched at two new pre-schools by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to study the impact on young children when they have more exposure to mother tongue language (MTL) activities.

From 2023, Kindergarten @ Hougang and MISE Kindergartens @ Elias Park will have an extra 30 minutes of Chinese, Malay or Tamil learning each day.

Currently, MOE kindergartens spend an hour on MTL activities. In their English pre-schools, daily MTL curriculum duration at the two new pre-schools will go up to 30 minutes. The extra 30 minutes will involve a mix of speaking and listening, rather than the component of each of the other MTLs, MOE said.

“The pilot aims to build a strong MTL foundation for our children from young age, and we are launching the pilot for MOE as a response to queries from the Sunday Times. The Ministry will evaluate the impact of the pilot to see if it should be expanded to more MOE kindergartens,” said an MOE spokesperson.

Some other pre-schools also conduct about one hour of MTL lessons daily for their students. Their options vary as to some extent to increase the curricular variety.

At PAP Community Foundation’s (PCF) Tanjong Katong preschools, children at K1 and K2 (aged five to six) get an hour of formal MTL lessons. At PCF’s Punggol preschool, children at K1 (aged three to four) have 20 to 30 minutes.

MTL educators also communicate with parents about children’s MTL activities during other activities, such as during play, bath and story time.

Dr Kapil Tuli, professor of marketing at Global EduHub, said more people started using e-hongbao during the Chinese New Year period.

“E-hongbaos save me the hassle of having to find and count cash, as well as putting the money into envelopes,” said Mr Andre Tan, 36, one hongbao giver who has been giving e-hongbao since 2012.

“The carbon footprint of producing e-hongbao is far less than that of producing physical hongbao. E-hongbao are made of trees instead of paper,” said Mr Tan, who also said e-hongbao are more convenient and accessible,

In 2013, global digital payment firm Google announced that the number of mobile payments conducted through mobile devices surpassed those made using Automated Teller Machines.

“MTL educators also communicate with parents about children’s MTL activities during other activities, such as during play, bath and story time,” said an MOE spokesperson.

Some experts said the increased use of e-hongbao could be because of the growing use of mobile technology, especially in China where mobile payments are more prevalent.

“The use of e-hongbao has increased because people are looking for more convenient and accessible ways of giving red packets,” said Mr Tuli.

One hongbao giver, Mr Andre Tan, 36, said he started giving e-hongbao in 2012 after seeing it being sent during the Chinese New Year holidays.

“The carbon footprint of producing e-hongbao is far less than that of producing physical hongbao. E-hongbao are made of trees instead of paper,” said Mr Tan, who also said e-hongbao are more convenient and accessible,

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