PETALING JAYA: Exposing students to life in prison will help prevent them from committing crimes in the future, said Suhakam commissioner James Nayagam.

However, he said, students should be informed in advance if school authorities plan to send them for such programmes.
Nayagam, who has been working with young prisoners for the past 10 years, said he had conducted similar programmes over the past few years.

In these programmes, students were required to surrender their personal items, wear a standard uniform and were assigned to prison cells, he said.

Nayagam was commenting on news reports of 33 naughty students from SMK Bandar Baru Uda in Johor Baru who were sent to Kluang Prison under the guise of a motivation camp.

Nayagam said the school authorities should have told the students in advance and prepared them for the programme.

Readers of The Star on Facebook also defended the school's decision.

&#65533;If my kids were naughty, I wouldn't mind sending them there,&#65533; said Patmawati Paddong.

User Jared Lim said: &#65533;What is there to complain about? If you don't know how to guide and teach your kids, let the wardens do their job.&#65533;

Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Heng Seai Kie said the school should apologise to the students' parents for not informing them earlier that their children would be brought to a prison.

&#65533;We understand that the school is trying to help the students but it is not right to mislead parents by not telling them that the motivation camp would be held in a prison,&#65533; she said.

Yayasan Salam Malaysia general manager Dr Hartini Zainuddin said it was outrageous of the school to send the naughty boys to a motivational course in prison.

&#65533;They are violating the Child Act, Federal Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others.

&#65533;They will not achieve anything by trying to instil fear in these children," she said.

Montfort Boys Town (MBT) public affairs head Jamie Loo said othermethods should be used to rehabilitate naughty students.