

Colleges say 'no' to prospective students from affected countries

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — To contain the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak, several private colleges had taken the "preventive measure" of not allowing prospective students from SARS-affected countries to enrol for the new semester.

They initiated this move even before the Health Ministry issued the guidelines to quarantine students arriving from SARS-affected countries for 10 days about two weeks ago.

Stamford College director of ad-

ministration Andrew Choo said new students, especially from Beijing, China, were told not to come to Malaysia more than a month ago.

"We discouraged them from coming, but a few insisted on coming because they have obtained their visas," he said, adding that three arrived last month.

Choo said the students were quarantined in the hostel for 10 days before they were declared free of the SARS symptoms.

He said while quarantined, they were provided with basic necessities.

Stamford, which has 600 students

from China, has also advised its students not to travel to SARS-affected countries, while students from China were discouraged from going home for holidays.

"But if they have to, we told them to get our approval so that we can take precautions when they return," Choo said, adding that a few students, however, did not abide by the directive.

"They went home without telling us and we now have to take precautions when they return here."

Student affairs director of Inti College, Kusma Morris, said since day one of the SARS outbreak, the

college had issued letters to new students from SARS-affected countries informing them that "the college is not accepting them and that they can register for the next semester courses".

For the June/July intake, Inti has received no new students from these countries, especially from China, she said.

"When we issued these letters, the Health Ministry has not come up with the quarantine guidelines but, however, we had left an apartment empty just in case," Morris said.

She added that among the measures the college has taken were

placing two wardens at all the hostels and issuing circulars to the staff on what actions they could take if they saw students displaying SARS symptoms.

"But at our headquarters in Nilai, we had quarantined a few students from China during the early stage of the outbreak for 10 days."

A staff from Sunway College said since early this month, the college has advised its international students against enrolling here.

"We did not want to risk our students and staff.

"So far, no new students from the SARS-affected countries are coming,"

the staff said.

A Prime College student service staff said the college has no new students arriving from China because its new intake only begins in September.

"However, we are following the guidelines diligently and we will quarantine students should the situation arise," she said.

Yesterday, Health Ministry's disease control division deputy director Dr Hassan Abdul Rahman said health officers would be visiting universities and colleges nationwide starting June 1 to ensure that they abide by the quarantine order.