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No online classes up to Class 5, says govt

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PRIMARY and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar on Wednesday ordered schools to cancel online classes from kindergarten up to Class 5 with immediate effect, and directed them not to collect any additional fees for the virtual classes.

He made the announcement at a virtual press conference on Wednesday evening, following concerns raised by parents and educationists over online classes for children of these classes, and schools charging additional fees for the classes held online due to Covid-19.

Kumar said experts had come to the conclusion that online classes cannot be an alternative to the education being provided to children through direct teaching. "The objective of education is not to complete the syllabus, but to improve the knowledge of children," he said.

The minister also announced that a committee of experts has been constituted to frame guidelines for engaging children of pre-primary and primary schools in the learning process until classes resume.

Several experts had pointed out the ills of online classes for schoolchildren at an age when they need to develop their motor and social skills, rather than screenbased online education.