The Moscow Times
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Russian Teacher Forces Late Students to Wear Gas Masks as Punishment, Sparking Probe

January 29, 2019



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A school in Far East Russia is being investigated after a teacher reportedly punished students for being tardy by forcing them to sit through the rest of class in gas masks.

Parents complained that a health and safety teacher made their seventh-graders wear gas masks for being late, a children's rights official in the republic of Buryatia said Monday.

"The OBZh teacher was disciplined verbally for using non-pedagogical disciplinary measures," the office said in an online statement.

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OBZh, a Russian acronym for "Foundations of Safety and Lifestyle," teaches students about healthy living, natural or technological disaster relief, and — a revived Soviet practice — the basics of civil defense.

After the disciplinary action was announced, regional investigators said Tuesday that they planned to carry out an inspection at the secondary school in the regional capital of Ulan-Ude.

“Naturally, long use of a gas mask can harm the physical and mental state of minors,” the Buryatia branch of the Investigative Committee said.

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