

*Many parents in Hanoi have forced their children to take on extra classes to revise and prepare for the coming academic year in spite of the city's ban on additional schooling in June and July.*



*Students at Ky Ha Primary School in the central province of Ha Tinh*

The parents said that the curriculum was too heavy, requiring extra time for students to revise and brush up their skills before starting the new school year. They expressed concern that their children would not be able to catch up with other classmates after three months off.

As a result, many students have already started their studies without having had time off during the summer holiday.

Le Minh Triet, a second grader in Long Bien district's Thach Ban ward has started extra classes on Vietnamese language and math twice a week, immediately after completing the academic year last month.

Triet's mother said she was concerned after hearing her colleagues talk about their children's results, and feared that her son would forget the lessons if he was away from school.

Triet was not alone, and his mother was not the only parent with such concerns.

She was able to find an extra class held by a primary teacher at the teacher's house.

Le Huong Thao, a parent living on Ba Dinh district's Nghia Dung street said that she was trying to find an extra math class for her son as his grades had been weak.

"I asked the math teacher to let him join the class, but she wouldn't accept as the class was already full and had been going for two weeks already," she said.

"I have also found two more classes on English language and Vietnamese literature for him."

Thao said she knew the boy needed time to rest, but insisted that if he didn't keep studying, he wouldn't be able to pass the high-school exams next year.

"I wish the curriculum was less heavy, so my son would have more time for extracurricular activities. He keeps complaining about having no time for his hobbies," she said.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Training issued a ban on extra classes during summer holidays. After five years of implementation, extra classes are still an issue.

According to the department's regulations on organising study activities for students during summer, Hanoi's schools will be allowed to hold revision classes after August 1, restricting to students attending the school. Headmasters will be in charge of managing the extra classes, and teachers will not be allowed to hold classes out of school.

Le Hong Vu, head of Tay Ho district's Sub-department of Education and Training said to Ha Noi Moi (New Hanoi) newspaper that only one out of eight secondary schools in the district had received permission to hold extra classes for students, and this school has not organised any classes.

Pham Gia Huu, head of Thanh Xuan district's Sub-department of Education and Training said that all 11 schools reported that no classes would be held until August, as regulated.

Nguyen Huu Do, Director of the city's Department of Education and Training said that headmasters would take responsibility if their schools were found to have held classes before the regulated time (August 1) or forced students to attend classes.

However, the oversight of extra classes held off school grounds seems to be ineffective. A representative of the municipal Department, who wished to remain anonymous, said current regulations stipulated that teachers were not allowed to hold extra classes off school property, but could work at licensed educational centres.

Therefore, many teachers chose to work for certain centres and students would be informed about where to register for classes.

He added that the regulation stipulates that teachers were not allowed to teach students to avoid negative activity such as giving bad marks if students did not attend the classes.

However, the fact showed that both teachers and students wanted to be in the same class as teachers knew the ability of students better than any new teacher.

He said parents played an important role in dealing with the unlicensed extra classes. Parents should be aware of their children's abilities to decide whether they needed extra classes, and send them to classes held by the schools instead of finding classes held by a well-known teacher.

If not, the education sector's efforts to curb extra classes would be useless, he added.

*Source: VNA* □