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Interview of the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia to RIA Novosti informational agency



Bastrykin: we do not propose to ban the Internet, but we need restrictions for children

The Chairman of the Russian Investigative Committee Alexander Bastrykin told RIA Novosti how in 10 years he managed to build a departmental education system to train professional staff, about his attitude to distance education for children and what restrictions are still needed to protect children from harmful information on the Internet.

- Alexander Ivanovich, your recent interview that mentioned the role of educational work with young people in the educational process sparked much discussion in society. Your departmental practice is already on this path, right?

- The Investigative Committee for 10 years managed to build a departmental system of education,



Официальный сайт

Следственный комитет Российской Федерации

which includes institutions of both general education and higher education. These are the Alexander Nevsky Cadet Corps of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation in Moscow, the St. Petersburg Cadet Corps, the F.F. Slipchenko Volgograd Cadet Corps, the V.I. Istomin Cadet Corps in Sevastopol, the Boarding School for Girls in the northern capital, the Moscow and St. Petersburg Academy and their five branches in Yekaterinburg, Khabarovsk, Rostov-On-Don, Novosibirsk and Nizhny Novgorod. In addition to cadets and students acquire knowledge in general education and specialized disciplines, much attention is paid to issues of patriotic and moral education of students, early career guidance is organized, additional educational programs are created. All this allows to realize one of the strategic goals of the agency - to bring up in one person a professional and a decent man in the spirit of citizenship and patriotism. And here it is extremely important to lay a strong personal foundation. This, of course, is something the family has to deal with to a greater extent. But looking at today's realities, we realize that on weekdays the child spends as much or even more time with teachers and peers than with his parents, so the education system must also take responsibility for shaping his personality. But in most educational institutions in the country, as far as I know, this is almost not practiced.

- It is important to create the conditions for the child to have a clear understanding of our profession and a desire to learn and develop. All this should be built into a single chain, when, after entering the cadet corps, a student first learns the basics, then he has the opportunity to enter a specialized institution of higher education, and upon its completion to continue service in the system. To implement this approach, in November 2020 I approved the Concept of Continuing Departmental Education for the period from 2021 to 2025. Particular attention is paid to strengthening the connection between theory and law enforcement practice, the personal interaction of students with the faculty, with the investigative authorities, the use of practice-oriented methods in the educational process. This way, we provide training for professional staff. We constantly encourage our cadets to learn new things and to continue their education in the system. Cadet graduates automatically receive an additional 50 points when applying to departmental institutions of higher education. This norm is enshrined in the relevant order. And on the whole, over the past few years we have seen the results of our efforts: more and more graduates of cadet corps express a desire to continue their education in the academies of the Investigative Committee. While in 2017 there were only six applicants, in 2020 and 2021 there were 64 and 65, respectively.

Let me remind you that we were able to provide scholarships for our academy students at the level of educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defense - about 18 thousand rubles. Also in 2021, scholarships named after an outstanding representative of the national investigation - Viktor Vasilievich Naidenov - were introduced. Material and social security is also an important component and support that allows you to focus on learning without being distracted by everyday issues.

We try to support orphans and children left without parental care: quotas are established for such children in admission to educational institutions of higher education. In 2020-2021, 40% of the



Официальный сайт

Следственный комитет Российской Федерации

children of this category were enrolled in the academy of the IC of Russia, and 50% in the cadet corps of the IC of Russia. And currently we have 262 such students. We especially support the children of our deceased employees; they also have benefits when entering educational institutions of the Investigative Committee.

In 2018-2021, 450 graduates of our academies joined the ranks of the IC of Russia in more than 60 regions of the country.

- Speaking of cadet education, don't you think it requires quite a high physical and mental load and can harm a child?

- Of course, the life of a cadet is strictly organized. His day is scheduled literally by the minute. Remember the phrase of the great commander Alexander Suvorov: "Hard in the study - easy in battle"? Of course, I am not suggesting that we send our students and cadets straight into combat. But what they become in life depends on a long and complex process of upbringing and education. By the example of students at our departmental institutions, we see that there are very many right-minded people among the young people who have passed our school and difficult challenges. They are grateful that we made real officers out of them, tempered their character, and fostered important personal qualities. And behind that is a lot of discipline - that's a significant advantage of being in a cadet class. A strict daily routine was established for them, everyone was always on their toes, looked after. By the way, the parents of such children also support us. And in general there are a lot more people who want to enroll now than we can accept, but we're working on it. Parents are well aware that such occupation of their children greatly reduces the risk of getting involved in destructive movements and groups on the Internet that contribute to negative influences on teenagers. And it's not just because they have less time. Children begin to see the really important goals in life and distinguish them from imaginary hobbies and a waste of time.

- Do you think that with time and freedom of action, teens tend to have less useful time? What is going on with Timur Bekmansurov now?

- Almost a month has passed since the tragedy in Perm. All this time the doctors were treating the defendant in the criminal case, who had committed the shooting in the educational institution. Bekmansurov's state of health now allows him to take part in investigative actions. Yesterday he was indicted. He admitted guilt in full. Today, the investigation petitioned the court for a measure of restraint in the form of detention.

Now teenagers have a lot of choices - a lot of activities and hobbies. Unfortunately, as we see, some people practice gambling, smoking, drinking alcohol and even drugs, to say nothing of watching questionable content on the Internet.

We believe that we need to lead children to more useful and substantial activities and hobbies. But if



Официальный сайт

Следственный комитет Российской Федерации

they see it as some sort of obligation when they're forced to by adults, it doesn't make sense. It is important to make sure that minors sincerely appreciate the effect of such classes and realize that it is much more interesting than a waste of time. This is part of a long process of value formation.

- And how do you lead them to that?

- In addition to our core studies, we organize the educational process. And the students are interested in that. For example, we hold regular meetings with war veterans on memorial dates and other days, providing them with possible assistance. There are very few veterans left, and their support is essential. So, just last week, students of the Boarding School of the IC of Russia in St. Petersburg visited the Boarding School for War and Labor Veterans No 2, over which the educational institution has the patronage. It's very important for students to know that they've benefited people. We remember our young heroes - the children who showed courage, selflessness and bravery, giving their lives to save others: Zhenya Tabakov, Danila Sadykov, Alexei Martynenko, Svyatoslav Yushkov, Vanya Krapivin, Andrei Kasimov, Alexander Stroylov, Andrei Pavlov, Kseniya Kopylova. The stories of their deeds are not forgotten and are the subject of lessons of courage held for students. Students and cadets visit monuments and memorials, and in many regions students together with investigative staff restore and tidy such places. They participate in the work of search parties on the battlefields of World War II. They go to premieres of documentary films about the war, participate in conferences on various war-related topics, such as "Lessons from Nuremberg," "The Khabarovsk Process". This is a large block of information to dip into history, and it is possible that, for some, information about these processes will motivate them to pursue international law in the future and allow them to expand their knowledge of history.

Since February of this year the educational organizations and specialized cadet classes of the Investigative Committee are implementing a new modular educational project "Patriots of the Fatherland". Its main goal is to develop students' interest in studying national history and professional orientation of the younger generation. Other projects developed and implemented by the department include "The Great Names of Russia: Alexander Nevsky - the symbol of a feat of arms and spiritual unity," "Hero of My Family, Hero of My Country," "Peter the Great in the History of the Russian State," "No Limitation Period," and "Investigator is My Future Profession".

In addition, our students participate in many other modern competitions, Olympiads and other activities. There is no place in the value system of our kids for desecrating memorials and the memory of their ancestors and posting videos of the process, as some "heroes" of social networks do.

That is, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. It is necessary to make sure that the educational organization had free clubs and sections for ideological and political, labor, moral, aesthetic, physical education, development of social and creative activity of students, organizing their reasonable leisure time, taking into account age and interests. After all, education is not only knowledge and skills, but also moral, spiritual values that form the personality of a citizen and consolidate the society. That's



Официальный сайт

Следственный комитет Российской Федерации

when educational organizations will be a second home for students.

- What does the Young Investigator program, which is implemented by the Investigative Committee, provide?

- "Young Investigator" is an additional general education program developed in the Investigative Committee. It is aimed at improving the general level of legal literacy, patriotic and moral education of the younger generation; the formation of children's legal awareness and gaining knowledge about the profession. Each year more than 500 children from all over Russia participate in Young Investigator specialty camps at Artek, Orlyonok, Okean, and Smena. More than 2,000 children have gone through the program in four years. Among them are children from large and low-income families, orphans and children left without parental care, children of Russian cadets killed in the line of duty, our cadets and students. For many of them, the experience they gained from the program helped them decide on their future profession. Having received knowledge, children already think in different categories, they think about the future, about their careers. Their value system is formed in a creative direction. This practice, in my opinion, is very effective, and our experience could be useful for other organizations. It's important that the kids get to interact with each other, enjoying live interaction and putting their phones away. I've already talked about the need to intensify the work of the Russian Movement of Schoolchildren, which has been operating for several years. What are they developing now? Among the various generally good initiatives is, for example, cybersport. It's a little surprising that as part of a cybersports school league, children as young as eight years old can participate in such competitions. Whether it is useful to spend enormous resources of your health at such an age to compete in computer games, and then go to distance learning is an open question. But they believe that it is useful to occupy children with such hobbies; we do not share this position. By the way, we recently implemented a project in social networks that was aimed specifically at parents, "Take Time for Children," which aims to draw the attention of parents to the need to spend as much time with their children as possible. Many social network users across the country joined the project.

- Are you still adamantly opposed to distance learning and other new technological solutions?

- It should be said that due to the increased public danger of modern crime, the training of highly professional officers with high moral and psychological qualities, employees who can creatively use advanced digital technology is brought to the forefront. However, I am convinced that in the digital transformation of society, even the highest level of digitalization of education will never replace the teacher.

That's why I'm for a balanced approach. I always welcome new solutions, technologies and methods in different areas. But I do not support a one-sided approach that takes into account only one aspect. When we talk about distance learning, from the outside everything seems simple: the process is fast and cost-effective. But for some reason on the agenda is not the question of shaping the personality



Официальный сайт

Следственный комитет Российской Федерации

of the student, his psyche, the digestibility of the material, the excessive strain of vision and the brain in front of the computer. It's no secret that the most effective method of rest is a change of activity. When you are in person at the institution, you walk around the buildings, move around, eat lunch with fellow students, and talk to professors in person. And if you sit for 8-10 hours, staring at the monitor, how much can you remember? Personally, as a father of children who are in such training, I can say that the material in the distance format is learned worse. And, unfortunately, the relevant agencies responsible for organizing education either deliberately ignore these side effects or simply ignore them. I think time will pass, there will be studies that will show the correlation of academic performance and quality of education between distance learning students and real students. I'm ready to predict that the result will not be in favor of the remote.

- There has been a lot of debate about possible bans on destructive content on the Internet, do you still support this position?

- Those who would comment on my interviews would do well to read them in their entirety, rather than draw conclusions from extracts from the media. It is especially surprising when such things are done by professional journalists with years of experience in Russia and abroad. I've known this kind of rhetoric for a long time, and they probably do it on purpose. By absolutizing and rounding off other people's judgments, such journalists mislead the public and discredit the government with their words. In addition, they advise me not to get involved in the field of the Internet, asking a strange question: what do I, as the head of the Investigative Committee of Russia, have to do with these processes? Let me make it clear: The Investigative Committee investigates various crimes, including those committed by teenagers. The investigation establishes the causes and conditions that contributed to such crimes, performing a preventive function. Therefore, it is our direct responsibility to deal with issues related to child safety.

It is possible and necessary to talk about some prohibitions. But this must be done on the basis of a clear understanding and analysis of the situation and investigative practice. The Investigative Committee has never proposed banning the Internet altogether. It was about restricting minors to view certain resources that contain information potentially harmful for them. As you know, one of the instructions of the President of Russia concerns the consideration of the issue of regulation of the circulation of information products for children on the Internet. I am in favor of adequate measures aimed at the safety of children. Large companies that refuse to filter banned material should certainly be dealt with. I am convinced that by working together, our government agencies will develop an appropriate mechanism for promptly blocking dangerous resources, as well as ways to limit their viewing by minors.

In conclusion, I note that in 2023 we will celebrate the Year of the Teacher and the 200th anniversary of the founder of scientific pedagogy in Russia - Konstantin Dmitrievich Ushinsky. The eminent educator appealed to the three "whales" of learning: the development of speech, the communication of knowledge, and the moral education of students. The Soviet pedagogy was also



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based on this, bringing up the world's best specialists in various fields of science and culture. Isn't it time today to bring together the positive experiences of the founders of pedagogical knowledge and bring education back to the high level at which it was in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union?

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