

# 12 years' jail and 12 strokes for man who sexually abused boy

29-year-old paedophile has been preying on young boys since Sec 2

BY SELINA LUM

A 29-year-old paedophile who sexually abused a six-year-old boy in a library toilet was yesterday sentenced by the High

Court to 12 years' jail and 12 strokes of the cane, the mandatory minimum number for the offence.

Chan Kok Weng has regularly sought out little boys since he was in Secondary 2, said a psychiatrist from the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) who testified on whether Chan's paedophilia could be successfully treated.

On Thursday, the boyish-looking delivery driver pleaded guilty to one charge of performing oral sex on a six-year-old boy

inside a cubicle in the men's toilet at Yishun Community Library.

He was caught on the spot after the boy told his mother, who was waiting outside, what had happened and she sought help from the library's staff. The incident happened on April 27 last year.

It is not known how many children he has preyed on.

During his two-week remand at the IMH after he was charged in court, Chan told Dr Stephen Phang that he had sought out young boys and performed oral sex on them since he was a teenager.

Chan told the psychiatrist that he himself had been abused in the same way by an older schoolmate when he was in Primary 1.

He said he always went for boys younger than 10 years old "because it's the easiest target". After spotting a "target" and

making sure the boy was not accompanied by an adult, he would plan his move.

He told the psychiatrist that he found his actions enjoyable and did not think that he caused harm to the children.

Dr Phang concluded that Chan was a paedophile who went only for boys.

Chan once had a girlfriend, but he admitted it was just a "cover-up".

In his report to the court, the psychiatrist stressed that Chan - who has been in custody since his arrest - represents a real danger to potential victims, who are selected at random.

Yesterday, Dr Phang said there was a "predatory" quality to the way Chan sought out his victims, which was as often as once every two months.

He concluded that Chan's deep-seated sexual deviance would be very difficult to treat. The only recognised treatment is ar-

duous psychotherapy that only two IMH psychiatrists are trained to carry out.

And the odds of his getting better are not good, as he has engaged in deviant thoughts and behaviour for years.

"This is the first time I have seen a sex offender in the mood to entertain sexual fantasies even while in remand," said the psychiatrist, who has more than a decade's experience.

In custody, Chan was given anti-depressants that have the side effect of decreasing libido, but Dr Phang said it was a stopgap measure, not a panacea.

Defence psychiatrist Tommy Tan argued that Chan was a good candidate for treatment: He is young, forthcoming about his condition and has been taking his medication.

But he conceded that the success rate for treating paedophiles is "fairly low".

He said: "Generally, paedophilia is a very difficult condition to treat, but it does not mean it cannot be successfully treated."

Chan's lawyer, Mrs Christine Sekhon, argued that her client had volunteered incriminating information about his past only because he wanted Dr Phang to help him overcome his condition.

In passing sentence, Justice Kan Ting Chiu said some credit must be given to Chan for coming clean, but he poses a real danger to young boys.

Chan could have been jailed for between eight and 20 years.

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