

# '580,000 kids have caught Covid'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Nearly 580,000 children aged 18 and under have been infected with Covid-19 since the pandemic hit the country.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said of the total, 269,773 involve children aged 5 to 11.

At a press conference at the Parliament building yesterday, he said although children would only experience minor symptoms from an infection, some might suffer from serious illnesses and require hospitalisation or intensive care.

"There have been 144 deaths due to Covid-19 among those aged

18 and under. Of this, 31 were aged 5 to 11. There has also been an increase in cases among children since school reopened this year."

Khairy said the Pfizer-BioNTech Cominarty paediatric dose, which is a smaller dose of the vaccine approved for children aged 5 to 11, was proven to be 90.7 per cent effective in increasing immunity against Covid-19.

The dose for children, which was given conditional approval by the Drug Control Authority on Jan 6, is one-third of the dosage given to individuals aged 12 and above.