

PRESS RELEASE**Briones bats for swifter resolution of bullying incidents**

PASAY CITY, November 29, 2019 – To curb the issue of bullying in schools and on social media, DepEd Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones said resolving bullying incidents in schools must be carried out more quickly by teachers and school officials.

“The pace of bullying on social media is accelerating and steps have to be undertaken,” Secretary Briones said in a press conference on Friday at the 1st National Summit on the Rights of a Child in Education (NSCREd).

“What we probably need improvement on is the immediate action. If bullying happens on a Friday, you cannot wait until Monday [for it to be resolved]. Instances like these can be very dangerous if we don’t take action immediately,” Briones emphasized.

Advocating for the right of the child to protection from all forms of violence and abuse, Briones said that even though anti-bullying policies are in place, school officials must act as quickly as possible to combat bullying cases among learners.

DepEd enjoins schools to enforce Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, issued through DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013. As per the DO, anti-bullying interventions should manifest primarily at the school level with school-wide and classroom-level initiatives, involvement of parents, and monitoring of at-risk children.

It was reiterated in DepEd Memorandum No. 5, s. 2017 for strict implementation.

“Our learners have to learn to respect each other, our teachers have to learn to discipline learners through positive means to prevent bullying. Teachers are in the best position to know when there are tendencies of bullying because they see the children everyday and how they relate to each other,” she said.

Briones also suggested that aside from learners, parents should also be aware of the policies and interventions needed to address bullying.

“Parents have to undergo exposure to what the law is, and the interventions that are desired to be able to address this problem. *Kailangan lang mas mabilis ang action,*” she said.

Teaching life skills against cyberbullying

OIC Undersecretary Atty. Josephine Maribojoc added that DepEd is advocating on equipping learners with life skills to fight against cyberbullying.

“The difficulty with cyberbullying is it happens in a borderless world and the children are not supervised 24/7 when they go in the internet world. So the best defense is not to build fences around them, because there are also benefits to the Internet, but to teach them life skills,” Usec. Maribojoc said.

Maribojoc said DepEd has a cyber-safety program that trains school heads, teachers, and guidance counselors in order for them to teach life skills to learners in dealing with cyberbullying. DepEd developed Cybersafe Lesson Plans for Grades 5-6 and Junior High School for this specific purpose.

Maribojoc added that the Summit attended by a variety of education stakeholders served as an apt venue to discuss improvement on the functioning of the Child Protection Committee since the committee involves various stakeholders. The CPC is in compliance with the Child Protection Policy as mandated by DepEd Order No. 40, s2012.

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