

PRESS RELEASE**Statement on preventing and addressing bullying incidents in schools**

PASIG CITY, December 24, 2018 – The Department of Education (DepEd) acknowledges the authority of schools to impose disciplinary sanctions, when necessary and consistent with law and DepEd’s policies, in addressing cases of child abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination and bullying.

The Department urges schools to conduct a thorough and complete review of their operations manuals, handbooks, regulations, and protocols in preventing and addressing cases of bullying. Private schools are enjoined to align their anti-bullying policies with that of the Department, as mandated by law, specifically Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, issued through DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013 and reiterated in DepEd Memorandum No. 5, s. 2017 for strict implementation. The Department further underscores compliance to the Child Protection Policy, issued through DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which requires all public and private kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools to create their own Child Protection Committee (CPC) to ensure that cases and instances of abuse and bullying are closely monitored and expeditiously investigated.

Let this be a wakeup call for everyone who believes in education and the protection of learners to take bullying in all its forms seriously. Bullying is a societal issue that demands the cooperation of teachers, parents, school administrators, community members, and even the media to instill among learners the culture of peace and the value of respect for one another.

DepEd hopes for strengthened coordination, consultation, and exchange of experiences between and among the public and private schools to address all forms of violence against children. Most importantly, the Department reiterates the role of peers and teachers in stepping in and anticipating possible incidents of violence against children, and in taking action as quickly as possible before matters get out of hand.

Only then can we truly nurture the learners and provide them a genuinely child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating environment.

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