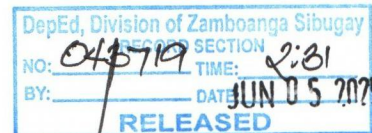




Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION IX – ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY



05 June 2025

DIVISION MEMORANDUM

No. 250 s. 2025

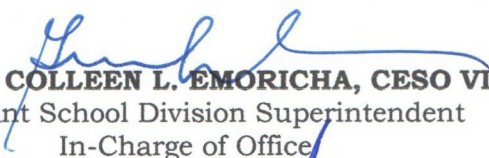
CONDUCT OF ANTI-BULLYING SESSIONS DURING THE BRIGADA ESKWELA PROGRAM

To: Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
CID and SGOD Chiefs
Public Schools District Supervisors
Public Elementary and Secondary School Heads
All Others Concerned
This Division

1. Consistent with DepEd MEMORANDUM No. 042, s. 2025, 2025 Brigada Eskwela Implementing Guidelines on the School Calendar and Activities), the Department of education will conduct the 2025 Brigada Eskwela Program on June 9-13, 2025, as part of the annual initiative to ensure schools are safe, resilient and well-equipped for the opening of classes on June 16, 2025.
2. In support to the Nationwide Brigada Eskwela Kick Off on June 9, 2025, this office disseminates the enclosed Memorandum OM-OUOPS-2025-11-03287 Learner Rights and Protection Division's Proposed Anti-Bullying Session Guides for the Brigada Eskwela Program. This shall be conducted in the afternoon session in all public schools (please refer to page 7-8 of DepEd Memorandum No. 042, s. 2025).
3. For immediate and widest dissemination.

VIRGILIO P. BATAN, JR., CESO V
Schools Division Superintendent

For the Schools Division Superintendent:


DR. MA. COLLEEN L. EMORICHA, CESO VI
Assistant School Division Superintendent
In-Charge of Office

Encl. As stated
Reference:

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index under the ff. subjects:
ANTI-BULLYING SESSION

ZS-DM-SGOD-YFU-2025-06-133-0
NDA-2025-06-05



📍 Pangi, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, 7001
☎ 0968-520-9123
✉ zamboanga.sibugay@deped.gov.ph
🌐 depedzamboangasibugay.ph
📌 DepEd Tayo Zamboanga Sibugay Division



Republika ng Pilipinas
Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR OPERATIONS

DepEd, Division of Zamboanga Sibugay
RECORD SECTION
NO: _____ TIME: _____
BY: _____ DATE: JUN 04 2025
RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM

OM-OUOPS-2025-11 - 03287

Department of Education
Office of the Schools Division Superintendent
RECEIVED
BY: _____ DATE: 6.4.25

TO : GRACIELA E. MENDOZA
Director IV
External Partnership Service

FROM : MALCOLM S. GARMA
Assistant Secretary, Officer-in-Charge
Office of the Undersecretary for Operations

SUBJECT : LEARNER RIGHTS AND PROTECTION DIVISION'S
PROPOSED ANTI-BULLYING SESSION GUIDES FOR THE
BRIGADA ESKWELA PROGRAM

DATE : May 21, 2025

This is to respectfully submit the enclosed response on Office Memorandum No. CO-EPS 04-208, s. 2025, relative to the request for guidance on the conduct of their anti-bullying sessions to be integrated in the 2025 *Balik Eskwela* Program, with the theme "*Nagkakaisa para sa Handa at Ligtas na Pagbalik Eskwela*."

Accordingly, this Office, through the Learner Rights and Protection Division (LRPD), submits the session guide used for bullying prevention in schools, which may be used as a reference for our discussants in the simultaneous *Balik Eskwela* Program.

Enclosed is a copy for the Director's review and appropriate action.

Thank you very much.



Room 101, Rizal Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City 1600
Telephone Nos.: (02) 8638-1782; (02) 8631-8492
Email Address: ouops@deped.gov.ph | Website: www.deped.gov.ph

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Effectivity	03.23.23	Page	1 of 1



BULLYING PREVENTION SESSION GUIDE

Module Outline

- **Session 1: The Rights of the Child** – overview of child rights and an introduction to children's rights to protection.
- **Session 2: Definition of Child Protection** – discussion on child protection and the importance of creating a protective environment
- **Session 3: Overview of Relevant Child Protection Laws in the Philippines, particularly on Bullying Concerns**
- **Session 4: Measures to Address Bullying Concerns based on the DepEd issuances** – protocols to be observed, including classroom-based management
- **Session 5: Learner Rights and Protection (LRP) in Action and the Role of LRP Specialists**

Session 1: The Rights of the Child

Objectives:

After this session, the participants should be able to:

1. Identify the four main categories of children's rights.
2. Define the child's right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

Discussion: Overview of the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) is an international treaty designed to protect the rights of children worldwide. human rights treaty adopted in 1989 focused on the civil, political, economic, and social rights of children. State Parties to the Convention must ensure that **all** children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment, have access to basic services such as education and healthcare, have the space to develop their personalities and grow to their full potential, benefit from special protection measures and assistance, and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible manner.

The UN CRC defines a child as any person below the age of eighteen (18) years old unless the age of majority is attained earlier under the law applicable to the child. In Philippine law, this definition is expanded to include not just persons below eighteen (18) years old but also those over the age of eighteen (18) but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition. (R.A. 7610, sec. 3(a).

The UN CRC is guided by four basic principles: **non-discrimination (Art. 2)**, **best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Art. 3)**, **the inherent right to survival and development (Art. 6)**, and **child participation (Arts. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17)**.

These guiding principles should be kept in mind in interpreting the rights as well as in developing measures to safeguard them. The rights under the UN CRC can be divided into four categories: **the right to survival, the right to protection, the right to development, and the right to participation.**

The *right to survival* means that children should be able to live. It includes the right to life and identity. Children must be given a name and a nationality. They must be cared for and protected by their parents or families. The government must safeguard these rights and provide basic services for children to survive – healthcare, clean drinking water, safe place to live. Children need to be protected to live, and they should also lead a life that will allow them thrive.

The *right to protection* means that all children should be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. Abuse is the deliberate act of ill-treatment (physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional) that can harm a child's safety, well-being, dignity, and development. Neglect is failing to care and provide for the physical safety of a child, whether deliberately or through careless negligence. Exploitation is the use of children for someone's advantage or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel, or other harmful treatment. Child exploitation can be sexual in nature (child prostitution, sexual abuse, child pornography, etc.) or economic (child labor). Violence is all forms of physical or mental violence, or the intentional use of force or power against a child that would cause, or likely cause, harm to the child's health, survival, and development.¹

The *right to development* includes rights that allow children not only to live, but also to thrive – to realize their potential so they can meaningfully participate in society. The right to development includes access to early childhood development services, quality education, and information.

The *right to participation* safeguards children's voices. Children are also members of society, and they must have the opportunity to share their thoughts, views, and opinions. They have the right to participate in matters that affect them.

All rights under these categories should be interpreted according to the four general principles of the UN CRC: non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the right to survival and development, and the right to participation.

¹ (Save the Children and Child Protection)

Session 2: Definition of Child Protection

Objectives:

After this session, the participants should be able to:

1. Define child protection
2. Identify the stakeholders in child protection

Discussion: Definition of Child Protection²

Save the Children defines child protection as the measures and structures established to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence affecting children in all settings. Basically, child protection is intended to safeguard the child's right to protection. It includes the measures and systems used by an institution to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence affecting children. It is the means through which stakeholders and responsible parties can secure a child's right to protection.

Child protection requires a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach. It cannot be accomplished by just one government agency or one organization. It also requires working with families, communities, and the children themselves. When different sectors work together, a holistic approach to child protection can be achieved. Child protection involves responsive action, remedial action, and environmental building.

Child protection measures involve:

1. Reducing risks to children's well-being,
2. Making children's rights a reality,
3. Restoring hope and dignified living where abuse has occurred, and
4. Creating an enabling environment.

Discussion: Creating a Protective Environment

A protective environment is an important factor in child protection. A protective and enabling environment will ensure that protection rights are fulfilled through prevention, responsive action, and remedial measures. A protective environment will allow children to survive and thrive. Save the Children has developed 10 elements that society must address before one can say that a child is protected or is in a protective environment.

1. A country's attitudes, traditions, behaviors, practices respect children.
2. The government is committed to fulfilling protection rights.
3. Governments have created protective legislation and have ensured its enforcement for the safeguarding and protection of children.
4. Children feel free to speak openly about issues that concern them and they are aware of their right not to be abused.

² The discussion in this section is based on Save the Children, Definition of Child Protection <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/save-childrens-definition-child-protection/> and What is Child Protection? Training Module 1

5. Local resources are tapped into and community structures and families understand and are committed to the protection of children.
6. There is open discussion, engagement, and advocacy initiatives on child protection issues.
7. Organizations and their staff can understand and respond to child protection problems.
8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting systems are in place.
9. Support systems are established for assisting in recovery and reintegration.
10. Society recognizes children's positive development and resilience

Session 3: Overview of Relevant Child Protection Laws in the Philippines

Objectives:

After this session, the participants should be able to:

1. Identify the four main categories of children's rights.
2. Define the child's right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

Discussion: Summary of Child Protection Laws in the Philippines

One of the elements of a protective environment is creating protective legislation that will cover acts of violence. Child protection measures are present in the Philippine legal framework and is acknowledged even in the Constitution. The 1987 Constitution provides that the "State shall defend... the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and **special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development**", (1987 Constitution, Sec. 3(2)).

To carry out this provision from the Constitution, the Philippines has enacted several laws for child protection. A summary of laws responding to particular child protection issues are as follows:

A. Republic Act No. 7610 – Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992.

R.A. 7610 defines a child as a person below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition.

It also defined child abuse as the maltreatment of a child, whether habitual or not, which includes any of the following:

1. Psychological and physical abuse, neglect, cruelty, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment;
2. Any act by deeds or words which debases, degrades, or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being;

3. Unreasonable deprivation of his basic needs for survival, such as food and shelter; or
4. Failure to immediately give medical treatment to an injured child resulting in serious impairment of his growth and development or in his permanent incapacity or death.

R.A. 7610 provides a general framework on protection children from all forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination. The prohibited acts in this law (child prostitution and other sexual abuses (Art. 3, 5), child trafficking (Art 4), child labor (Art. 8), and other acts of child abuse (Art. 6)) are covered by other laws specifically designed for these acts. R.A. 7610 also provides for the special protection of indigenous children (Art. 9) and children in situations of armed conflict (Art. 10).

In Art. 10 of R.A. 7610, children are declared as Zones of Peace. With this declaration, children should not be the object of an attack. In DepEd D.O. 32, s. 2019, DepEd also declared learners and schools as Zones of Peace.

B. Republic Act No. 9262 – Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004.

R.A. 9262, more commonly known as the Anti-VAWC law, combines the protection of women and their children against all forms of violence – physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic abuse.

R.A. 9262 defines a child as a person below eighteen (18) years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves as defined under R.A. 7610. Under this law, a child refers to the biological children of the victim and other children under her care.

It covers any “act or a series of acts committed by any person against a **woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate**, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.” (R.A. 9262, Sec. 3 (a))

C. Republic Act No. 10627 – Anti Bullying Act of 2013

Bullying refers to any severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of **actually causing or placing the latter in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his property; creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; infringing on the rights of**

the other student at school; or materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school; such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Any unwanted physical contact between the bully and the victim like punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, tickling, headlocks, inflicting school pranks, teasing, fighting and the use of available objects as weapons;
- b. Any act that causes damage to a victim's psyche and/or emotional well-being;
- c. Any slanderous statement or accusation that causes the victim undue emotional distress like directing foul language or profanity at the target, name-calling, tormenting and commenting negatively on victim's looks, clothes and body; and
- d. Cyber-bullying or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means.

This law also requires all elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to address the existence of bullying in their respective institutions. The policies should prohibit:

- a. Bullying on school grounds; property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds; at school bus stops; on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by a school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school;
- b. Bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related and through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school; and
- c. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying;

D. Republic Act No. 9344 as amended by Republic Act No. 10630 -Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act

These laws define and children at risk and children in conflict with the law. It also sets the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

A child fifteen (15) years of age or under at the time of the commission of the offense shall be exempt from criminal liability. However, the child shall be subjected to an intervention programs.

A child above fifteen (15) years but below eighteen (18) years of age shall likewise be exempt from criminal liability and be subjected to an intervention program, unless he/she has acted with discernment, in which case, such child shall be subjected to the appropriate proceedings under the law.

Session 4: Measures to Address Bullying Concerns based on DepEd issuances

Objectives:

After this session, the participants will be able to:

1. Describe the different measures to address bullying concerns.
2. Reflect on possible areas where a Child Protection Specialist can intervene or participate.

Preventive Measures to Address Bullying Concerns

Preventive measures are just as important, if not even more so, than protective or remedial measures. Preventive measures are intended to prevent abuse from happening in the first place. When preventive measures are effective, no children will experience any form of abuse or harm.

The DepEd Child Protection Policy focuses on capacity-building as its main form of preventive action. The policy highlights building the capacity of key stakeholders in the school and the community to understand and deal with different forms of child abuse through sessions, trainings, and seminars on positive peer relationships and enhancement of social and emotional competence. Training on positive non-violent discipline and classroom management, including anger and stress management, is envisioned for the teachers.

Section 11 of the Child Protection Policy states:

All public and private elementary and secondary schools shall build the capacities of school personnel, pupils, students and learners, parents and guardians to understand and deal with child abuse, exploitation, violence and discrimination cases, bullying and peer violence by conducting sessions, trainings and seminars on positive peer relationships and enhancement of social and emotional competence.

They shall use training modules which include positive and non-violent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management and gender sensitivity. They shall likewise employ means which enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom.

The programs that are intended to promote Positive and Non-Violent Discipline include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in the initiatives of the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs);
2. Capacity-building programs for school administrators, teachers and non-academic personnel focused on children's rights, child development and positive and nonviolent approaches in teaching and classroom management, to enable them to incorporate positive discipline messages in parent-teacher conferences and family counseling, and integrate messages on children's rights and corporal punishment in classroom discussions;
3. Encouraging and supporting the formation and initiatives of support groups among teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents and caregivers;
4. Implementing specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers and other activities;
5. Implementing school activities or events that raise awareness on children's rights, corporal punishment and positive discipline, fostering the active involvement of and providing venues for bringing together parents, families and children;
6. Encouraging and supporting student-led initiatives to raise awareness on children's rights, corporal punishment and positive discipline; and
7. Setting up child-friendly mechanisms for obtaining children's views and participation in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of school rules and policies related to student discipline.

Department Order No. 55, s. 2013: Anti-Bullying Policy

D.O. 55, s. 2013 or the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 10627, Otherwise Known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, covers bullying and measures that can be implemented to prevent or respond to incidents of bullying.

The procedure for handling cases of bullying can be found in Sec. 12 of the DepEd Child Protection Policy. It is also covered by Department Order No. 55, s. 2013.

D.O. 55 requires all kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools to have a procedure against bullying. The procedure must have two phases – immediate response and reporting, and investigation.

Immediate responses to bullying include: calling the attention of school personnel when bullying is happening, stopping the bullying or retaliation immediately,

separating the students involved, ensuring the victim's safety, and bringing the offending student to the Guidance Office or designated personnel.

Reporting follows a lengthier procedure.

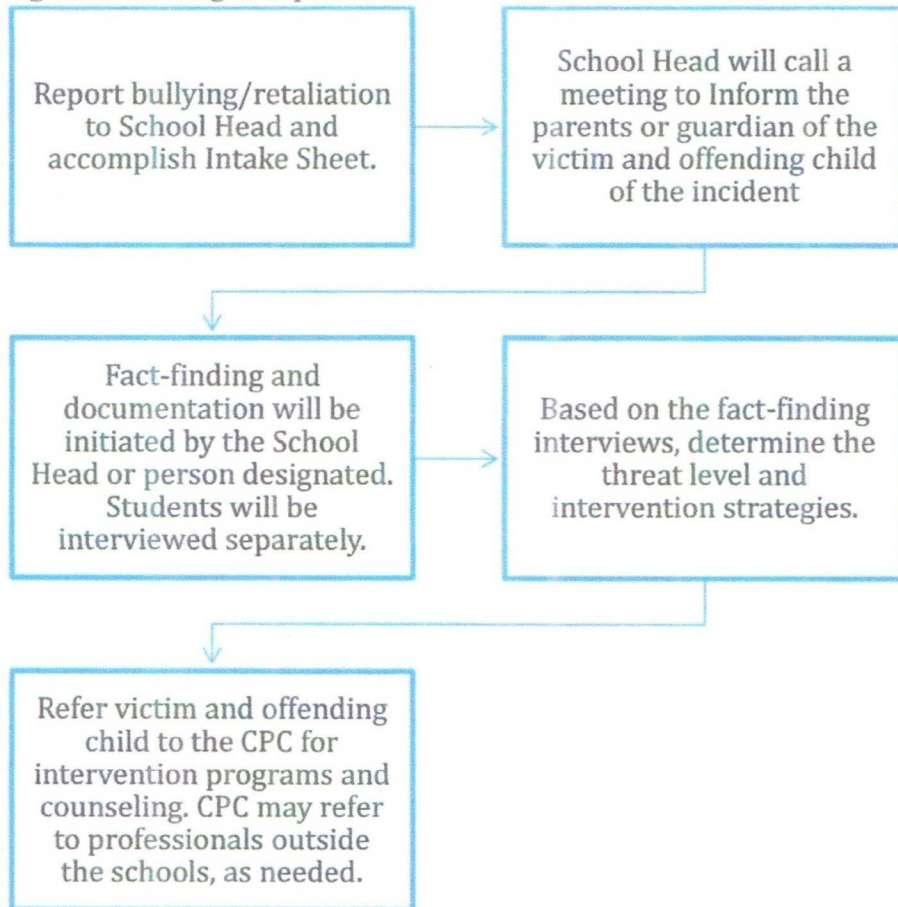


Figure 1 Reporting Incidents of Bullying

The diagram above shows the procedure in handling bullying cases. The offending child may be given to the offended child if warranted. However, for second or subsequent incidents involving the same offending child, suspension may be imposed. The school may also impose other non-punitive sanctions, depending on the gravity of the bullying acts. Parents or guardians may also be required to attend further seminars and counseling. The School Head shall also ensure that appropriate interventions, counseling and other services, are provided for the victim/s.

If bullying results in serious physical injuries or death, whenever appropriate, the case shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of R.A. 9344.

In all cases where the imposable penalty on the offending child is suspension, exclusion, or expulsion, the following minimum requirements of due process must be followed:

- a. The child and the parents or guardians must be informed of the complaint in writing;
- b. The child shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing, with the assistance of the parents or guardian;
- c. The decision of the school head must be in writing, stating the facts and the reasons for the decision;
- d. The decision of the school head may be appealed, as provided in existing rules of the Department.

D.O. 55 also covers prevention measures and requires the creation of such measures for different levels. **School-wide initiatives** focus on creating a positive environment, periodic assessment and monitoring of behaviors of the student body, periodic assessment and review of the school manual and code of conduct, conduct of activities for students on raising awareness about bullying. **Classroom-level initiatives** focus on reinforcing school-wide initiatives, creating an inclusive and caring environment, helping learners build a positive sense of self, learn empathy, develop interpersonal skills, discussing issues related to bullying, and teaching positive online behavior. **Parents (or guardians)** should also be involved in anti-bullying activities by discussing the anti-bullying policy of the school with them and by encouraging them to join education sessions to learn, teach, model, and reinforce positive social and emotional skills. (D.O. 55, s. 2013 sec. 6)

Intervention Programs are a series of activities designed to address issues that influence the student to commit to bullying, factors that make a student a target of bullying, and effects of bullying. Interventions may include programs such as counseling, life skills training, education, and other activities that will enhance the psychological, emotional and psycho-social well-being of both the victim and the bully. (D.O. 55, s. 2013 sec. 7)

For reference, the LRPD partners with the Stairway Foundation Inc., in developing Case Management Protocols where our teaching and non-teaching personnel can refer to the steps to be taken in addressing various child protection issues, especially bullying cases. Educators may scan the QR code below:



Session 5: Learner Rights and Protection (LRP) in Action and the Role of LRP Specialists

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, the participants will learn about the role of the Learner Rights and Protection (LRP) Specialist, identify the duties and responsibilities attached to this role, and practice the application of their knowledge on child protection as they fulfill their roles as LRP Specialists. It will also help them identify opportunities and challenges as they take on the role of a LRP Specialist.

Discussion: Learner Rights and Protection Specialists

A LRP Specialist provides technical advice to the schools and their respective divisions on complex or serious child protection cases brought to their attention. The LRP Specialist is also expected to recommend actions to address these cases based on existing Child Protection laws and child protection laws and relevant DepEd issuances. It shall also assist in referring the cases to another agency, whether to the government or non-government agencies, for appropriate intervention.

The responsibilities and tasks of the LRPS are divided into four main categories: network-building, providing technical assistance, monitoring of actions taken, and other special assignments. D.O. 131, s. 2016 lists the responsibilities of LRPS, as follows:

A. Network Building

The LRPS shall network and liaise with the different government and nongovernment agencies involved in Learner Rights and Protection for the referral of complex and serious child protection cases. The LRPS, in coordination with the Division Focal Person for Child Protection (DFPCP), shall likewise develop and update a directory of resources which can easily be accessed and used by the parties in the referral of cases. In particular, the CPS shall:

- a. identify the different government agencies, nongovernment institutions or organizations and local government entities (e.g. Barangay Councils for Child Protection (BCPCs), Women and Children's Protection Desks (WCPDs), Local/City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDOs/CSWDOs/MSWDOs), Child Protection Units (CPUs), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and child-focused nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and introduce themselves and their role as CPS. The CPS shall gather relevant contact information of the concerned agencies, as well as provide their own contact information for case referral and effective coordination; and
- b. coordinate with the DFPCP for the creation of a directory of resources of the different agencies and institutions where services and various

forms of assistance may be provided to the affected children. The directory shall specify the contact persons of the agency, the services offered and the requisites to avail the same. The directory shall be regularly updated and shall be made readily available to all schools and the schools division offices at all times.

B. Providing Technical Advice and Referral of Cases

The LRPS shall provide timely advice to the school or schools division relative to complex and serious child protection cases such as, but not limited to, child abuse, discrimination against children, child exploitation, violence against children in school, corporal punishment, bullying or peer abuse and similar acts of violence or abuse defined in DO 40, s. 2012 and DO 55, s. 2013. The CPS shall likewise assist in the referral of Children-at-Risk (CAR) or Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) to the proper agency for further assessment or intervention, in accordance with DO 18, s. 2015. Child protection cases shall be referred to the designated CPS from the school division where the case occurred.

For purposes of this policy, **complex child protection cases** are those which involve two or more victims or two perpetrators, while serious child protection cases shall be those which result in serious physical injuries or death, those which involve any kind of sexual abuse, or those which require professional or medical intervention.

The LRPS shall:

- a. recommend actions to be taken by the school head (SH) or the schools division superintendent (SDS) or assistant schools division superintendent (ASDS) in line with the different child protection laws and appropriate DepEd child protection issuances;
- b. assist the SH, SOS or ASDS in the referral of the case to the proper agency or institution for further assessment, case management, or availment of services; and
- c. coordinate with the DFPCP in the development of a unified procedure for case referral and extension of services within their respective school divisions.

C. Monitoring of Actions Taken

The LRPS shall follow up with the SH, SDS or ASDS on the recommended actions and the actual actions taken on the cases reported to them. The LRPS shall likewise assist in the monitoring of the cases referred to other appropriate agencies for further assessment or case management. The CPS shall:

- a. coordinate with the SH, guidance counselors or designated guidance teachers (GC/Ts) or Child Protection Committees (CPCs), whenever appropriate, on the implementation of the recommended actions on the cases referred to the CPS. The CPS shall monitor the progress of the victim and the child-perpetrator with respect to the actions actually taken to address the incident. The CPS may request for status updates

on the cases from the SH, GC/Ts, CPCs or the DFPCP as necessary; and

- b. coordinate with the different government agencies and nongovernment organizations on the actions taken and the status of the cases referred for further assessment, intervention and case management; and
- c. submit an annual report of cases handled or referred to the region-based CPS. The regional office shall consolidate the reports from the CPS within their region and a consolidated report to the Office of the Undersecretary for Legal and Legislative Affairs 30 days after the end of each school year.

D. Special Assignments

The CPS shall perform such other tasks as may be assigned by the DepEd Undersecretary for Legal and Legislative Affairs, their respective regional directors and SDSs, in urgent child protection cases and whenever necessary.

Discussion: Guide for Handling Cases of Abuse and Violence in Schools

Guided by the case management framework and learning from the previous lectures on the protocols outlined in the various DepEd issuances on child protection, the following is a step-by-step guide for Child Protection Specialists in handling child protection cases in schools:

1. From the receipt of a report, the CPS works together with the CPC. The CPS will keep a separate record of pertinent information. He/she reviews the Intake Sheet accomplished by the school to check if it has been properly filled-up and contains accurate and relevant information related to the case.
2. Using this preliminary information, the CPC and the CPS shall assess the nature of the case. It is essential to consider the context surrounding the incident. This may involve the child's social history, how the child understands the situation presented, and the factors that led to the incident that transpired. By analyzing the context, the CPS can identify further risks the child may face outside of the presented situation. The immediate protection needs of the child or children involved shall be first taken into consideration.
3. From the initial assessment, the CPS recalls and reviews the appropriate DepEd policy and protocol that is applicable to the case. The CPS will advise the CPC, as necessary.

If the case is simple and needs only in-school-management, the CPS shall take note of the actions and interventions provided by the school, as well as the timeline and school personnel involved.

4. If the case is complex, the CPS shall use the knowledge in implementing rules and procedures in relevant child protection laws and DepEd protocols. The CPS reviews the information gathered by the school together with the CPC, its compliance with the pre-existing reporting protocols, as well as the fulfilment of reportorial requirements for case referral to Local Social Welfare and

Development Office (LSWDO) or DSWD Regional Office (Crisis Intervention Units and in some cases where they exist, the Child Protection Units).

5. If the victim needs support services beyond what DepEd can provide, the CPS shall utilize the network of government and non-government agencies to provide the appropriate and essential interventions and services in instances of complex and serious child protection cases.

The CPS can work with the CPC in the school on the referral of cases to the following service providers: the barangay, law enforcement agencies - Philippine National Police (PNP) and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), LSWDO, Women and Children Protection Units (WCPU) in hospitals, non-government organizations, and other relevant agencies, as needed.

6. The CPS shall also document, monitor, and follow-up actions that have been mutually agreed by the concerned parties and referring institutions.

The aim of the monitoring is to:

- a. Provide support and guidance to the child and their carers on how to develop and maintain a healthy and protective relationship;
 - b. Ensure that the child and his/her family are accessing services and community resources in line with the needs of the child;
 - c. Monitor and mitigate further risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
 - d. Ensure that the service providers to whom the child has been referred to are able to provide assistance in a safe, collaborative environment; and
 - e. Obtain information regarding tracing and contact arrangements.
7. To make the CPS' advisory role more effective, he/she should also ensure that timely and complete information on resources and services for affected children are available for the school's easy access and retrieval. He/she is encouraged to prepare and regularly update a directory of government and non-government agencies where services and various forms of assistance may be accessed by affected children. The document should detail all relevant information about these institutions - name, location, mandate of the organization, contact information, types of services offered and guidelines for accessing these services. If feasible, the information contained in this directory should be stored in an easily accessible and retrieval format by the school.