

THE SISTERS OF MARY SCHOOLS-PHILIPPINES



**CHILD PROTECTION &
ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES**

1st Edition

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FOREWORD

The Sisters of Mary Schools were founded by the Servant of God, Msgr. Aloysius Schwartz in 1985 in order to provide a high-quality of education to those children whose parents or guardians have less or even insufficient economic resources to further their secondary education. These students are provided for with their basic needs totally free-of-charge.

These schools are boarding schools, thus they have ample time to study and learn different technical-vocational courses. Highly qualified and dedicated teachers are hired and together with the Sisters of Mary, who administer these educational institutions, strive to give them integral education; that is: academic and technical as well as moral and spiritual formation in order to prepare them for a bright future.

The basic thrust of these schools is to give each one his dignity as God's child, thus, each student is encouraged to follow these two basic rules and regulations: to love God above all things and to love one another as God has loved each one.

Everyone strives to live in the presence of God, the Creator, to pray and to always be grateful for the myriad blessings given to each individual and to treat each one as his/her brother and sister in the Lord. Each student is responsible for the growth and development of one another.

In this light, the school's CHILD PROTECTION and ANTI-BULLYING POLICY is hereby being formulated to protect the students from any form of violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse prejudicial to their development.

May every member of the faculty and personnel of these educational institutions will be well guided on how to prevent and intervene in cases which will arise from unavoidable circumstances that will result to any form of abuse.

The Sisters of Mary

ARTICLE I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title

This policy shall be known as the **Sisters of Mary Schools' Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policy**.

Section 2. Statement of the Policy

In accordance to the mandate of Department of Education (DepEd) in its Memo No. 68, s. 2014, all schools (public or private) are mandated to formulate and submit school-based child protection and anti-bullying policies. This is in connection to its previous orders as stated in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013 known as DepEd Child Protection Policy and Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 10627 otherwise known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, respectively.

Thus, in compliance to the mandate of DepEd the school has adopted a special policy as a form of preventive measure if there are cases of abuse which will spring from unavoidable and uncontrolled circumstances.

The school in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders shall ensure that the school environment is safe and secure, conducive to the education of the children. The best interest of every child is of utmost consideration in all decisions and actions by the school management.

Each member of the school administration, faculty and staff is expected to discharge his/her duties and responsibilities with utmost care and dedication towards all the students inside the campus, protecting them from any harm and any forms of violence.

The school also recognizes that cases of abuse may arise as a result of the difficult situations faced by the students, teachers, other officials and other personnel within and outside the school. Thus, the school empowers its administrators, teachers, other personnel, or any individual concerned to fulfill the school's mission-vision to exercise the special parental authority

and responsibility over the children, while under their supervision, instruction, care and custody.

In this light, the school hereby promulgates this policy.

Section 3. Definition of Terms

- A. "Child" – refers to any person below eighteen (18) years of age or above under the Sisters of Mary custody.

- B. "Children in School" – refers to bona fide students or learners who are enrolled in the school.

- C. "Student or Learner" – means a child who regularly attends classes in any level of the basic education system, under the supervision and tutelage of a teacher or facilitator.

- D. "School Personnel" – means the persons, singly or collectively, working in the school. They are classified as follows:

- 1) "Local Superior" refers to the head of the community.
- 2) "School Principal" refers to the chief executive officer or administrator of the school.
- 3) Guardians or mother-sisters are those who take care of the children while they are at the Sisters of Mary Schools.
- 4) "Other School Officials" – include other school officers, including teachers, who are occupying supervisory positions or positions of responsibility, and are involved in policy formulation or implementation in a school.
- 5) "Academic Personnel" includes all school personnel who are formally engaged in actual teaching service or in research assignments, either on a full-time or a part-time basis, as well as those who possess certain prescribed academic functions directly supportive of teaching, such as

registrars, librarians, guidance counselors, researchers, and other similar persons. They may include school officials who are responsible for academic matters, and other school officials.

6) "Other Personnel" includes all other non-academic personnel in the school, whatever may be the nature of their appointment and status of employment.

E. "Child Protection" – refers to programs, services, procedures and structures that are intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and violence.

F. "Parents" - refers to biological parents, step-parents, adoptive parents and the common-law spouse or partner of the parents.

G. "School Visitor or Guest" – refers to any person who visits the school and has any official business with the school, and any person who does not have any official business but is found within the

premises of the school. This may include those who are within the school premises for certain reasons, e.g. student-teachers, catechists, service providers, suppliers, bidders, parents, guardians of other children and school benefactors.

H. "Child Abuse" – refers to the maltreatment of a child, whether habitual or not, which includes any of the following:

- 1) Psychological or 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 the child's 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 or her growth and development or in the child's permanent incapacity or death (Sec. 3 [b], RA 7610).

- I. "Discrimination against children" – refers to an act of exclusion, distinction, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as age, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, being a child with disability or other status or condition, and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.

- J. "Child exploitation" – refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in an unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities disrupt the child's normal physical or mental health, education, moral or social emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.

- K. "Violence against children committed in schools" – refers to a single act or a series of acts

committed by school administrators, academic and non-academic personnel against a child, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or other abuses including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes, but is not limited to the following acts:

- 1) Physical violence – refers to acts that inflict bodily or physical harm. It includes assigning children to perform tasks which are hazardous to their physical well-being.

- 2) Sexual violence – refers to acts that are sexual in nature. It includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body;
 - b. Forcing the child to watch obscene publications and indecent shows or forcing the child to do indecent

sexual acts and/or to engage or be involved in, the creation or distribution of such films, indecent publication or material;

c. Acts causing or attempting to cause the child to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm or coercion, or through inducements, gifts or favors.

3) Psychological violence – refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the child, such as but not limited to intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, deduction or threat of deduction form of punishment, and repeated verbal abuse.

- 4) Other acts of violence of a physical, sexual or psychological nature which are prejudicial to the best interest of the child.
- L. 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 another 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:
- i. 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;
 - ii. Any act that causes damage to a victim’s psyche and/or emotional well-being;

- iii. 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;
- iv. "Cyber-bullying" or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means. The term shall also include any conduct resulting to harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through the use of other forms of technology, such as, email, instant messaging, chatting, internet, social media, or other platforms or formats as defined in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012; and
- v. Any other form of bullying as may be provided in the school's child protection or anti-bullying policy, consistent with the RA 10627 and its IRR.

The term "bullying" shall also include:

1. "Social bullying" – refers to any deliberate, repetitive and aggressive social behavior

intended to hurt others or to belittle another individual or group.

2. "Gender-based bullying" – refers to any act that humiliates or excludes a person on the basis of perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

M. "Bully" – refers to any student who commits acts of bullying.

N. "Bullied" or "Victim" – refers to any student who experiences the acts of bullying or retaliation.

O. "Bystander" – refers to any person who witnesses or has personal knowledge of any actual or perceived acts or incidents of bullying or retaliation.

P. "Other acts of abuse by a student or learner" – refers to other serious acts of abuse committed by a student or learner upon another student or learner of the same school, not falling under the definition of "bullying" in the preceding provisions, including but not limited to acts of a physical, sexual or psychological nature.

Q. "Corporal Punishment" – refers to a kind of punishment or penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offense, which is carried out or inflicted, for the purpose of discipline, training or control, by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority or responsibility for punishment or discipline. It includes physical, humiliating or degrading punishment, including, but not limited to the following:

- 1) Blows such as, but not limited to, beating, kicking, hitting, slapping, or lashing on any part of a child's body, with or without the use of an instrument such as, but not limited to a cane, broom, stick, whip or belt;
- 2) Striking of a child's face or head, such being declared as a "no contact zone";

- 3) Pulling hair, shaking, twisting joints, cutting or piercing skin, dragging, pushing or throwing of a child;
- 4) Forcing a child to perform physically painful or damaging acts such as, but not limited to, holding a weight or weights for an extended period;
- 5) Deprivation of a child's physical needs as a form of punishment;
- 6) Deliberate exposure to fire, ice, water, smoke, sunlight, rain, pepper, alcohol, or forcing the child to swallow substances, dangerous chemicals, and other materials that can cause discomfort or threaten the child's health, safety and sense of security such as, but not limited to bleach or insecticides, excrement or urine;
- 7) Tying up a child;
- 8) Confinement, imprisonment or depriving the liberty of a child;

9) Verbal abuse or assaults, including intimidation or threat of bodily harm, swearing or cursing, ridiculing or denigrating the child;

10) Forcing a child to wear a sign, to undress or disrobe, or to put on anything that will make a child look or feel foolish, which belittles or humiliates the child from others; and

R. "Positive and Non-Violent Discipline of Children" – is a way of thinking and a holistic, constructive and pro-active approach to teaching that helps children develop appropriate thinking and behavior in the short and long-term and fosters self-discipline. It is based on the fundamental principle that children are full human being with basic human rights and need proper guidance and fraternal correction to form right conscience. Positive discipline begins with setting the long-term goals or impacts that teachers want to have on their students' adult lives, and using everyday

situations and challenges as opportunities to teach life-long skills and values to students.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. Duties and Responsibilities of Local Superior

The local superior shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Ensure that the community has the effective child protection policies and procedures and monitor and supervise the compliance thereof;
- b. Ensure that all the members of the community, visitors and guests are made aware of the child protection policy;
- c. Organize and convene the child protection committee for the community;
- d. Take part in the capacity building activities for the members of the Child Protection Committee and Guidance Counselors/Teachers;

- e. Take part in the disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by students or learners;
- f. Ensure that the participatory and other rights of children are respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare;
- g. Ensure that the community adopts a student Code of Discipline to be followed by every student or learner while in their homes or when traveling to and from other places, whether in or off campus;
- h. Coordinate with the appropriate offices and other agency or instrumentality for appropriate assistance and intervention, as may be required in the performance of its functions;
- i. Ensure that all incidents of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts are addressed in accordance with the provisions of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013.

Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities of School Principal

The school principal shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Ensure that the school has the effective child protection policies and procedures and monitor and supervise the compliance thereof;
- b. Ensure that all the members of the school, visitors and guests are made aware of the child protection policy;
- c. Organize and convene the child protection committee for the school;
- d. Conduct capacity building activities for the members of the Child Protection Committee and Guidance Counselors/Teachers;
- e. Conduct disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by students or learners;
- f. Ensure that the participatory and other rights of children are respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare;
- g. Ensure that the school adopts a student Code of Discipline to be followed by every student or learner while in their school or when traveling to and from other places, whether in or off campus;
- h. Coordinate with the appropriate offices and other agency or instrumentality for appropriate assistance and intervention, as may be required in the performance of its functions;

- i. Ensure that all incidents of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts are addressed in accordance with the provisions of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013.

Section 3. Duties and Responsibilities of School Personnel

Article 218 of the Family Code of the Philippines provides the following responsibilities of school administrators, teachers, academic and non-academic and other personnel:

- a. Exercise special parental authority and responsibility over the child while under their supervision, instruction and custody. Authority and responsibility shall apply to all authorized activities whether inside or outside the premises of the school, entity or institution.

Articles 220 and 233 of the Family Code of the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 603, and other related laws enumerated the following duties and responsibilities of the abovementioned persons and

personnel over the children under their supervision, instruction and custody:

- b. Keep them in their company and support, educate and instruct them by right precept and good example;
- c. Give them love and affection, advice and counsel, companionship and understanding;
- d. Enhance, protect, preserve and maintain their physical and mental health at all times;
- e. Furnish them with good and wholesome educational materials, supervise their activities, recreation and association with others, protect them from bad company and prevent them from acquiring habits detrimental to their health, studies and morals;
- f. Represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- g. Inculcate the value of respect and obedience;
- h. Practice positive and non-violent discipline, as may be required under the circumstances; provided, that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted upon them;

- i. Perform such other duties as are imposed by law upon them, as substitute parents or guardians;
- j. Participate and cooperate in all prevention, intervention and other measures related to child protection and bullying implemented by the school;
- k. Report to school authorities any incident of violence/bullying; and
- l. Strictly comply with the school's child protection and anti-bullying policy.

Section 4. Duties and Responsibilities of Students or Learners

- a. Comply with the school's regulations, as long as they are in harmony with their best interests. Students and learners shall refrain from:
 - i. Engaging in discrimination, or leading a group of students to discriminate another, with reference to one's physical appearance, weaknesses and status of any sort such as mimicking of one's person's disability, taunting of one's disability or appearance, setting-up others for fun/ridicule, excluding

- others from the group because of appearance, gender issues or disability, and other similar acts;
- ii. Doing any act that is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
 - iii. Participating in behavior of other students that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
 - iv. Marking or damaging school property, including books and things provided by the school, in any way;
 - v. Engaging in fights or any aggressive behavior;
 - vi. Possessing prohibited articles like pornographic materials, deadly weapons; and
 - vii. Performing other similar acts that cause damage or injury to oneself and to others.
- b. Conduct themselves in accordance with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other persons;
- c. Respect another person's rights regardless of opinion, status, gender, ethnicity, religion, as well as everyone's moral and physical integrity;

- d. Participate and cooperate in all prevention, intervention and other measures related to violence/bullying implemented by the school;
- e. Avoid or refrain from any act of violence/bullying;
- f. Intervene to protect the victim, unless it will jeopardize his safety and security;
- g. Report to school authorities any incident of violence/bullying; and
- h. Observe the Code of Discipline for students or learners as stated in the Students Handbook.

Section 5. Duties and Responsibilities of Child Protection Committee

- A. The Child Protection Committee (CPC) shall be composed of the following:
 - 1. School Principal – Chairperson
 - 2. Academic/JHS Coordinator – 1st Vice Chairperson
 - 3. PS/SHS Coordinator – 2nd Vice Chairperson
 - 4. Guidance Counselor
 - 5. Activity Coordinator

6. Class Adviser
 7. Mother Sister
 8. Student representative
- B. The CPC shall perform the following functions:
1. Review the school child protection policy every three (3) years to ensure that the policy is adaptive to the current environment and situation;
 2. Initiate information dissemination programs and organize activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying or peer abuse;
 3. Develop and implement a school-based referral and monitoring system;
 4. Establish a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional or behavioral signs;
 5. Identify, refer and, if appropriate, report to the appropriate offices cases involving child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying;
 6. Coordinate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Local Social Welfare and

- Development Office (LSWDO), other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as may be appropriate;
7. Monitor the implementation of positive measures and effective procedures in providing the necessary support for the child and for those who care for the child; and
 8. Ensure that the children's right to be heard are respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare.

ARTICLE III

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING AND OTHER ACTS OF ABUSE

Section 1. Prevention Programs

To build the capacities of the school personnel and students to understand and deal with child abuse, exploitation, violence and discrimination cases, bullying and peer violence, the school shall be conducting the following activities:

1. Trainings and seminars about positive and non-violent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management and gender sensitivity;
2. Trainings and seminars on positive peer relationships and enhancement and emotional competence;
3. Integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom;
4. Conducting recollections to all members of the community;
5. Conducting school activities or events to raise awareness on children's rights, corporal punishment and positive discipline which include but not limited to:
 - a. Role playing
 - b. Film viewing
 - c. Slogan and poster making
 - d. Essay writing competitions

- e. Poem and Song composition
 - f. Dance Interpretation
 - g. Painting Competitions
 - h. Choral Reading
 - i. Speech Choir Competitions
 - j. Other analogous activities
6. School wide and classroom level initiatives centered on positive school climate and environment conducive to the attainment of the learning objectives, development of healthy relationships and understanding of and respect for individual differences.
7. Integrating an anti-bullying component into the existing curriculum areas through the children's Revitalized Homeroom Guidance Program

Section 2. Code of Conduct

To prevent any forms of violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse prejudicial to the children's development, the school believes in and advocates children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation. This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate and expected

standards of behavior of adults towards children, and also of children towards other children. It has been developed with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration and should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense.

A. Appropriate Standards of Behavior

Adults should:

1. Treat everyone with respect, recognizing their right to personal privacy;
2. Be aware of situations that may present risks and manage these;
3. Plan and organize any events involving children so that risks are minimized;
4. Recognize that caution is required in all one-on-one situations;
5. Provide access for children and young people to talk to authorized persons about any concerns they have;
6. Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behavior they do not like at the same time for them to accept positively corrections given to them;

7. Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development;
8. Encourage and respect children's voices and views and vice-versa, that they too should respect other's views;
9. Be inclusive and involve all children without selection or exclusion on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other status;
10. Be aware of the potential for peer abuse;
11. Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse;
12. Be aware of high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children and possibilities of discrimination against minors);
13. Develop clear rules to address specific physical safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a project;
14. Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position when meeting with children (e.g. being alone with a child in any circumstances which might potentially be questioned by others);

15. Meet with a child in a central, public location whenever possible;
16. Immediately report the circumstances of any situation which occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation to the Child Protection Officer; and
17. Report suspected or alleged abuse to the designated Child Protection Officer.

B. Inappropriate Standards of Behavior

Adults should not:

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault a child;
2. Use language that will mentally or emotionally abuse any child;
3. Act in any way that intends to embarrass, shame, humiliate, or degrade a child;
4. Show discrimination of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, political persuasion or any other status;
5. Develop an amorous relationship with a child;
6. Touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way;

7. Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for him/herself, including dressing, bathing, and grooming;
8. Encourage any crushes by a child;
9. Initiate physical contact (e.g. holding hands);
10. Suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind;
11. Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other;
12. Show favoritism to any child;
13. Make suggestive remarks or gestures, even if it's only a joke; and
14. Naming a child with funny names.

Section 3. Intervention Programs

The school has intervention programs to promote continuity of comprehensive child protection and anti-bullying policies. Intervention refers to a series of activities which are designed to address the following:

1. Triggering factors of any forms of abuse and violence towards children
2. Issues that influence the child to commit bullying

3. Factors that make a student a target of bullying;
and
4. Effects of any forms of violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse.

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 of abuse and bullying and the bully. Such programs may:

1. Involve activities that will address any forms of violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse;
2. Emphasize formative and corrective measures rather than punishment;
3. Help the victim, the bully and the bystanders understand the bullying incident and its negative consequences; and
4. Provide opportunities to practice pro-social behavior.

ARTICLE IV

PROTECTIVE AND REMEDIAL MEASURES TO ADDRESS CHILD ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING AND OTHER ACTS OF ABUSE

Section 1. Procedures in Handling Bullying Incidents in School

In handling bullying incidents in school, the following should be taken seriously:

A. Immediate Responses

1. The victim or anyone who witnesses or has personal knowledge of a bullying incident or retaliation shall immediately call the attention of any school personnel.
2. The school personnel who was notified of a bullying incident or retaliation shall intervene, by:

- i. Stopping the bullying or retaliation immediately;
- ii. Separating the students involved;
- iii. Removing the victim or, in appropriate cases, the bully or offending student, from the site;
- iv. Ensuring the victim's safety, by:
 - Determining and addressing the victim's immediate safety needs; and
 - Ensuring medical attention, if needed, and securing a medical certificate, in cases of physical injury.
- v. Bringing the bully to the Principal's Office or the designated Anti-Bullying Officer.

B. Reporting the Bullying Incident or Retaliation

1. A victim or a bystander, or school personnel who receives information of a bullying incident or retaliation, or any person, who witnesses or has personal knowledge of any incident of bullying or retaliation, shall report the same to the teacher, guidance counselor or any person designated to handle bullying incidents.

2. The bullying incident or retaliation shall be immediately reported to the school principal. The designated school personnel shall fill up the intake sheet as provided in ANNEX B. The school principal or the designated school personnel shall inform the local superior of the victim and the bully about the incident.
3. Reports of incidents of bullying or retaliation initiated by persons who prefer anonymity shall be entertained, and the person who reported the incident shall be afforded protection from possible retaliation; provided, however, that no disciplinary administrative action shall be taken against an alleged bully or offending student solely on the basis of an anonymous report and without any other evidence.

C. Fact – Finding and Documentation

The Child Protection Committee who will also serve as the Anti-Bullying Committee designated to handle bullying incidents shall:

1. Separately interview in private the bully or offending student and the victim.

2. Determine the levels of threats and develop intervention strategies. If the bullying incident or retaliation or the situation requires immediate attention or intervention, or the level of threat is high, appropriate action shall be taken by the school within twenty-four hours (24) from the time of the incident.
3. Inform the victim and the local superior of the steps to be taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and
4. Make appropriate recommendations to the Child Protection Committee on proper interventions, referrals and monitoring.

D. Intervention

The CPC shall determine the appropriate intervention programs for the victim, the bully and bystanders. The School Principal shall ensure that these are provided to them.

E. Referral

The school principal or the Child Protection Committee may refer the victims and the bully to

trained professionals outside the school, such as social workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, or child protection specialists, for further assessment and appropriate intervention measures, as may be necessary. The school principal or the designated school personnel shall notify the Women and Children's Protection Desk (WCPD) of the local Philippine National Police, if he believes that appropriate criminal charges may be pursued against the bully or offending student.

F. Disciplinary Measures

This Policy provides a range of disciplinary administrative actions that may be taken against the perpetrator of bullying or retaliation in accordance with the existing rules and regulations of the school and in closed reference to the IRR of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 as stated in DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013.

Bullying incidents or retaliation shall be treated according to their nature, gravity or severity and associated circumstances.

1. The school principal, considering the nature, gravity or severity, previous incidents of bullying or retaliation and associated

circumstances may impose reasonable disciplinary measure on the bully or offending student that is proportionate to the act committed.

2. Written reprimand, community service, suspension, fines for any property damages, exclusion or expulsion, in accordance with existing rules and regulations of the school will be imposed, if the circumstances warrant the imposition of such penalty, provided that the requirements of due process are complied with.
3. In addition to the disciplinary sanction, the bully shall also be required to undergo an intervention program which shall be administered or supervised by the school's Child Protection Committee. The mother sister or if necessary the parents of the bully shall be encouraged to join the intervention program.

G. Due Process

In all cases where a penalty is imposed on the bully or offending student, the following minimum requirements of due process shall be complied with:

1. The student and the local superior or the parents if necessary shall be informed of the complaint in writing;
2. The student shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing, with the assistance of the mother sister or parent if necessary;
3. The decision of the school principal shall be in writing, stating the facts and the reasons for the decision; and
4. The decision of the school principal may be appealed to the Division Office of the DepEd, as provided in existing rules of the Department.

H. Applicability of RA 9344, as Amended, and Other Related Laws

If the bullying incident or retaliation resulted in serious physical injuries or death, the case shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act

9344 or the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act," as amended, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, in connection with other applicable laws, as may be warranted by the circumstances associated to the bullying incident.

I. False Accusation of Bullying

If the student, after an investigation, is found to have knowingly made false accusation of bullying, the said student shall be subjected to disciplinary actions or to appropriate interventions in accordance with the existing rules and regulations of the school.

J. Confidentiality

Any information relating to the identity and personal circumstances of the bully, victim, or bystander shall be treated with utmost confidentiality by the Child Protection Committee and the school personnel, provided, that the names may only be available to the school principal, teacher or guidance counselor designated by the school principal, and the local

superior, mother sisters or parents of the students who are or have been victims of bullying or retaliation.

Any school personnel who commit a breach of confidentiality shall be subject to appropriate administrative disciplinary action in accordance with the existing rules and regulations of the school without prejudice to any civil or criminal action.

Section 2. Rules and Procedures in Handling Child Abuse, Exploitation, Violence and Discrimination

The following acts, as defined in Article I, Section 3 of this Policy, are hereby prohibited and shall be penalized in accordance to the faculty manual and non-teaching staff manual depending on the gravity of the act and its consequences, under existing laws, rules and regulations:

1. Child abuse;
2. Discrimination against children;
3. Child Exploitation;
4. Violence against Children in School;
5. Corporal Punishment;

6. Any analogous or similar acts.

The conduct of investigation and reporting of cases of child abuse, exploitation, violence or discrimination, shall be done expeditiously, as herein provided.

A complaint for child abuse, violence, exploitation or discrimination in the school shall be filed with the School Principal and shall be acted upon pursuant to the school's rules of procedures on administrative cases. The penalty shall be that which is provided by the rules of the school, subject to the requirements of due process. The administrative case shall be without prejudice to any civil or criminal case that may be filed.

The school shall submit a report as provided in ANNEX A to the Division Office of DepEd after each school year.

In all cases involving child abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other acts of abuse, the CPC shall accomplish the Intake Sheet as provided in ANNEX B. The School Principal may refer, if necessary, the victims and offenders in cases involving child abuse, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or peer abuse and other acts of abuse, to the LSWDO for

assessment. The LSWDO shall determine the appropriate intervention.

The School Principal and in coordination with the members of the CPC, shall immediately remove the victim, or in appropriate cases the offender, from the place of the incident, if the victim is determined to be at risk. The child's family shall be informed of any action taken.

The School Principal may also refer, if necessary, to the LSWDO other students or learners who are victims of abuse at home, children at risk, children in especially difficult circumstances, children with special needs or at risk, children facing difficult situations, or those who are exhibiting signs of aggressive behavior, with a view to obtaining professional assessment, appropriate interventions and assistance from competent service providers.

ARTICLE V

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Legal Bases of the Policy

The promulgation of the policy on Child Protection and Anti-Bullying is in closed reference and in consonance to Article XV, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution, Articles 218, 220 and 233 of the Family Code of the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 603 also known as the Child and Youth Welfare Code, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 "DepEd Child Protection Policy", DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013 "Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10627 otherwise known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013", DepEd Memorandum No. 68, s. 2014 "Submission of School-Based Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies and Reports on Compliance", Students' Handbook and Faculty Manual.

Section 2. Effectivity

This Policy shall take effect immediately upon issuance.

ANNEXES

