



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education

26 MAR 2020

OFFICE MEMORANDUM
OM-O S E C-2 0 2 0-002

**GUIDANCE TO REGIONAL DIRECTORS FOR ACTION ON REQUESTS
BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO USE DEPED SCHOOLS
AS QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION AREAS FOR COVID-19**

1. The President issued Proclamation No. 922 dated March 8, 2020, *Declaring a State of Public Health Emergency Throughout the Philippines*, in view of the COVID-19 public health situation. Section 2 of Proclamation No. 922, s. 2020, states that "(a)ll government agencies and LGUs are hereby enjoined to render full assistance and cooperation and mobilize the necessary resources to undertake critical, urgent, and appropriate response and measures in a timely manner to curtail and eliminate the Covid-19 threat".
2. The Department of Education (DepEd) has received a growing number of requests by various Local Government Units (LGUs) for the use of DepEd schools as places for quarantine or isolation as part of their response to COVID-19.
3. DepEd is fully cooperating with the Office of the President, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), and the Cabinet on decisions concerning COVID-19. DepEd is committed to render full assistance and cooperation, and to mobilize the necessary resources to undertake critical, urgent, and appropriate response and measures in a timely manner to curtail and eliminate the COVID-19 threat, as enjoined by the President's Proclamation 922.
4. The matter of utilization of schools as quarantine or isolation areas has been discussed in the IATF. The agreement was that any decision concerning public schools should be made in consultation with DepEd, and in cooperation with DepEd officials on the ground and in compliance with the Department of Health (DOH) guidelines, with due consideration to specific conditions.
5. Consistent with this agreement, one of the provisions of Memorandum Circular No. 2020-062 (March 21, 2020) issued by the Department of Interior and Local Government states:
 - 5.1.10. LGUs shall not use DepEd schools as quarantine or isolation areas. As a general rule, LGUs must refrain from using schools as quarantine or isolation areas unless explicitly allowed by the Department of Education and strictly following the guidelines it may set.
6. DOH also issued Department Memorandum No. 2020-0123 (March 16, 2020) on *Interim Guidelines on the Management of Surge Capacity through the Conversion of Public Spaces to Operate as Temporary Treatment and Monitoring Facilities for the Management of Persons Under Investigation and Mild Cases of Coronavirus Disease*



2019 (COVID-19). Among the public spaces it identified are auditoriums, gymnasiums, classrooms, vacant hotels, courts, open fields with tents.

7. I hereby delegate to Regional Directors the responsibility to approve or deny requests by LGUs to use DepEd schools for quarantine and isolation purposes within their respective jurisdiction, based on evaluation of the request by the Schools Division Superintendent in consultation with the school heads and with the Department of Health.

8. In adherence to DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0123 and other applicable DOH and World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, the evaluation of the request shall be guided by the following:

- a. The LGU must state in its request the specific intended purpose or use for the school, and identify the particular facility in the school that will be used as well as the duration of their use, subject to extension, if necessary;
- b. The LGU must show that all other facilities have been duly assessed and were found to be inadequate. Schools can be recommended only when no other facilities are available;
- c. The LGU must present an assessment by the municipal, city, or provincial health officer that the facility within the school is suitable for the specific intended purpose;
- d. The LGU must present the planned management of the facility, which shall be under the supervision of the City/Municipal Health Officer, as stated in DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0123, and must conform to existing DOH standards and guidelines, including, but not limited to, patient management, safety standards within the facility and immediate community, waste management/disposal, and other similar/related health requirements; and
- e. The LGU request must include an undertaking: for the safekeeping of all property and valuables in the school premises during the operation of the facility; payment of utilities for the period; the conduct of the general cleaning and fumigation, and repair and/or replacement of damaged school facilities as a result of the use of the school; and, payment of expenses related to the setting-up, operation and clearing of the areas used.

9. When a request is granted by the Regional Director based on the recommendation by the concerned Schools Division Superintendent, the school heads must coordinate with the LGU on the following preparations before actual use of the facility for the intended purpose:

- a. Designation and vacating of the approved school spaces/structures to be used by the LGU as quarantine or isolation areas, including removal of all chairs, tables, furniture, equipment and other school properties. Such approved school spaces/structures to be used as quarantine or isolation areas shall be cordoned off from the rest of the school;
- b. Designation of sufficient number of comfort rooms and handwashing facilities to be used;

- c. Safekeeping and/or proper storage of all learning and education materials, resources, equipment, and school records;
- d. Documentation of the condition of school facilities and resources before use of the facility;
- e. Signing of the minimum Terms and Conditions (TAC) for the Use of DepEd Schools as Quarantine or Isolations Areas, as provided by the Regional Director; and
- f. All DepEd personnel involved in the preparation of the school premises shall strictly observe all existing health precautions and social distancing protocols of DepEd.

10. The LGU shall sign the TAC provided by the Regional Director. Should there be other terms to be agreed upon between the Schools Division Office (SDO) and the LGU, the SDO shall draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the SDO and LGU, detailing the roles and responsibilities of the parties, among others. The TAC shall be attached to the MOA as an Annex and shall form an integral part of the MOA. In case of conflict between the MOA and the TAC, the TAC shall prevail.

11. The following documents are hereto enclosed as reference to evaluate the health-related undertaking by the LGUs:

Enclosure No. 1 - *Interim Guidelines on the Management of PUMs suspected with COVID-19 for Home Quarantine* issued as DOH Memorandum No. 2020-0090

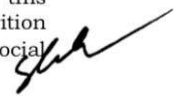
Enclosure No. 2 - *Interim Guidelines on the Management of Surge Capacity through the Conversion of Public Spaces to Operate as Temporary Treatment and Monitoring Facilities for the Management of PUIs and Mild Cases of COVID-19* issued by the Department of Health (DOH) as DOH Memorandum No. 2020-0123

Enclosure No. 3 - *Decontamination, Disinfection, and Sterilization practices issued by the DOH (Annex A4 of DOH Memorandum DOH Memorandum No. 2020-0072; which is also Annex A4 of DOH Memorandum No. 2020-0123)*

Enclosure No. 4 - *Considerations for quarantine of individuals in the context of containment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)* by the World Health Organization

Enclosure No. 5 - *Minimum Standards for Social Distancing/Baseline Protocols to be observed in the workplace, travel, and home and private space and time of deployed personnel during the enhanced community quarantine* by DepEd Task Force COVID-19

12. The Regional Directors shall devise an appropriate system for monitoring the use of schools within their jurisdiction as quarantine or isolation areas. For this purpose, DRRM coordinators shall provide support to the School Health and Nutrition personnel in monitoring the use of school facilities. In light of precautionary and social



distancing measures, offsite monitoring through close coordination with LGUs is encouraged; physical monitoring shall be done when deemed feasible.

13. For clarifications and concerns, contact the **DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Quick Response and Recovery Team** (DTF COVID-19 QRRT) at the Bureau of Learner Support Services through email at blss.shd@deped.gov.ph or at telephone number (02) 8632-9935.

14. For immediate dissemination and implementation.


LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES
Secretary