

ON NON-MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR S.Y. 2022-2023

by:

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"School Uniforms will not be required for S.Y. 2022-2023" - Sarah Duterte

This statement of our incumbent DepEd Secretary & Vice President created debate and confusion among the parents, learners, and teachers. She reiterated this on the notion that it will help Filipino families to lessen the economic burden brought about by the pandemic.

Wearing school uniforms has been a practice for centuries and not wearing one confuses different stakeholders. A school uniform signifies the belongingness of a student to a certain school or institution. It also serves as their identity as a student. Others also claim that it can serve as security or protection of the school from unruly persons who wish to cause trouble within the school. To some, wearing school uniforms is also a way of instilling discipline among the learners.

Aside from this, many are afraid that students will wear inappropriate and aesthetic clothes such as crop tops and skirts.

In addition, different youth organizations also claimed that not making school uniforms mandatory will not solve the economic problems of the students and their parents, but will only cause discrimination and bullying between the rich and poor students.

However, not requiring school uniforms was already practiced in public schools since 2010 as stipulated in Department of Education Order No. 065, s. 2010. It was only

intensified now due to the effect of the pandemic. Moreover, this is not only an issue in our country but all over the world.

In Ohio, a researcher named Asari (2021) found that school uniforms don't seem to have any effect on young students' behavior or attendance overall despite the beliefs of many parents & teachers.

In fact, they claimed that it improves the attendance of the poor students as they need not worry to be absent because they don't have school uniforms.

Truly, school uniforms serve a sense of identity and belongingness but schools can still use identification cards to serve the purpose. This ID can also be used to strengthen school security against civilians.

Not wearing school uniforms doesn't mean that teachers cannot impose discipline and proper quorum, even if students aren't wearing school uniforms, they have to observe proper dress codes appropriate for school as mandated in DepEd order no. 45, s. 2008.

Uniforms are good, but children's education is more important. Besides, it is not the only way to improve students' behavior, sense of belongingness, discipline, and engagement. More importantly, the department should focus on bridging the learning gaps brought by the pandemic rather than making school uniforms mandatory.

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