



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

President Duterte approves limited face-to-face classes in low-risk areas starting 2021

July 21, 2020 – As several local government units and private schools are requesting to hold limited face-to-face classes in low-risk areas, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on Tuesday approved its conduct starting next year.

This development came after the Department of Education (DepEd) received queries from local chief executives, legislators, private and international schools, and other education stakeholders on the possibility of conducting limited face-to-face classes in areas where it is deemed safe to do so by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and the Department of Health (DOH).

Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones noted that limited face-to-face classes will **ONLY** be allowed upon the request of the LGU and school concerned and can only happen January 2021 under conditions set by the DOH, DepEd and IATF.

Moreover, it can only be considered in low-risk areas or in areas at least under Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) or in the transition phase between GCQ and the New Normal.

“Hindi para sa lahat ang face-to-face classes, [dahil] meron tayong standards. Hindi lahat ay pinipilit mag-[limited] face-to-face classes. Apat na agency ang magde-decide kung papayagan ba. Sa Metro Manila, medyo may kahirapan [mag-conduct ng limited face-to-face classes]. Kasi GCQ ngayon sa Metro Manila. Although ang mga international schools, sabi nila, kaya nila 'yong mga requirements ng departamento at ng IATF. Pero, sabi namin, kailangang inspeksiyunin namin 'yong facility nila.” Secretary Briones said.

The Education chief emphasized that decisions to allow limited, localized face-to-face classes will be made with due coordination between DepEd, the LGUs concerned, and the local health authorities.

According to Briones, limited face-to-face classes will still be strictly regulated with the priority on the health and safety of learners, teachers, and personnel following stringent health measures such as the following:

- No mask, no entry policy in school premises;
- Hand washing and hand hygiene;
- Regular disinfection in school premises;
- Checking for temperature and respiratory symptoms;
- Reduction in class size to 15 to 20 maximum, and physical arrangement of seats conforming to required distances;
- Intermittent attendance to school only, to complement distance learning;
- Controls of flow of learners and personnel in entrance and exit;
- No mass gatherings;
- Visible instructions, signages and markings; and
- Preparedness and case management system in coordination with LGUs and local health for contact tracing, testing, isolation and treatment.



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In addition, host local government unit must be ready to support financially as well as in other ways the requirements for limited face to face learning.

A small number of private schools which have started limited face-to-face classes last June will be allowed to continue however.

Briones also stressed that before any face-to-face classes will be greenlighted in January next year, there will be pilot testing and inspection to be done jointly with the National Task Force Against COVID 19 to ensure that the required health standards and protocols are working, and possible glitches are addressed.

END

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