CHILD PROTECTION TOOL

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The primary goal of the education system is to teach. To achieve this, it is sometimes necessary to remove barriers that impede a child's ability to learn. Students may experience two sides in the school setting which may be positive like having friends and acquaintances, gaining confidence in answering and reciting, being assertive in different conditions and situations; or it may be negative which may include abuse, negligence, exploitation, discrimination, and violence. Having been affected by the negative side of learning in schools, the time of the 21st century offered different perspectives and policies that may benefit the affected students. Child-friendly schools minimize these frequent abuse, negligence, and other types of violence happening in and around schools and learning spaces. Child protection programs and policies are being implemented in schools and these may prevent and respond to the exploitations and discriminations the students may face in their environment. These protection programs aim to protect students from physical, emotional, and mental damage.

Negative behaviors of students and/or teachers may affect other students not only in their socialization, but also in the way they would learn in the academic setting. Since learners spend most of the time of their learning in school, this allows more children to have access to educators. While educators facilitate children's learning, children cannot learn effectively if their attention or energy is sapped by the conflicts inherent in being maltreated. Filipino children are protected by various statutory provisions and state laws against harassment, mistreatment, aggression, and discrimination. Child protection programs implemented by the government are very particular and keen to those students who are involved.

Discipline. Children should be first taught to have self-discipline, since all other good characteristics would come after being disciplined on their own. The guidelines on rules and regulations within school grounds should be strictly observed by the students, as well as the educators and other professionals. Discipline may not only of help in having good manners and right conduct, but also has an impact with learning and in their academic performance. School violence, (inclusive of disrespect for authority and school procedures) fighting, gang-like behaviors, and bringing weapons or drugs to school, are catalysts to disciplinary actions. The perceptions and ideas of teachers, administrators, and parents about effective school discipline practices could possibly communicate new answers to the question of why students misbehave at school.

Child Abuse. Any form of maltreatment, aside from physical violence, by an adult to a child is considered as child abuse. This form of abuse is violent and very threatening to the child. Educators have a vital role in identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse and neglect. Research on the prevalence of child maltreatment is especially problematic when school personnel are underprepared to address reports and suspected cases. Teachers are usually the first school personnel to suspect cases of child maltreatment, and school counselors are usually the school personnel who most often make the reports (Altafim & Linhares, 2016). Dealing with child abuse and neglect should be a community effort. A variety of formal programs involving the schools and the community have been especially effective in addressing the difficult and self-destructive behavior in youth that often is an aftereffect of child abuse.

Anti-Bullying. During the school years, bullying is one of the most common expressions of violence in the peer context. It is often defined as systematic abuse of power by peers. Also, it is globally recognized as a complex and serious problem. Bullying presents special risks for vulnerable children, such as children with disabilities; refugees, or children affected by migration; children who are excluded; children who belong to a minority group, or simply children that differ from the peer group. Bullying

comprises verbal attacks (e.g., name calling, threats), physical behaviors (e.g., hitting, kicking, damaging victim's property), and relational/social aggression (e.g. social exclusion, rumor spreading) (Monks & Smith, 2006; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2014) up to the most recent forms of attacks through Internet and new technologies (also referred to as cyberbullying).

Implementation of Safeguarding Standards and Guidelines for Learners and School Personnel. Schools must set their priorities and create a specific policy delegating roles and duties to all staff. These practices should be regularly checked with school staff to remind everyone of the local school policy and program protocols and policies, and to ensure that they are revised and compliant with existing laws and DepEd's order. School personnel have a unique opportunity to advocate for children, as well as provide programs and services that can help children and strengthen families. It is important to realize that a positive relationship with a supporting adult may enhance the resiliency of children who have been abused.

Children who are subjected to violence may experience physical injury, sexually transmitted infections, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal thoughts. They may also begin to exhibit risky, aggressive, and anti-social behavior. Children who grow up around violence have a greater chance of replicating it for a new generation of victims. Violence in school can reduce school attendance, lower academic performance, and increase drop-out rates. This has devastating consequences for the success and prosperity of children, their families, and entire communities. This should not be the norm among schools, may it be public or private.

Recognizing and reporting cases of maltreatment is important to prevent it from recurring. School counselors and teachers who work directly with the students should be actively involved in working with responsible agencies (i.e., child advocacy centers) to prevent maltreatment from ever occurring. It is also important to provide social support to children and their families. Schools can also offer self-protection programs that are

meant to help children defend themselves against all forms of maltreatment. This might involve developing a curriculum that is focused on child maltreatment. Child protection programs and policies should be spread and raise awareness not only to students, but also to their parents, educators, and other people that surround them. Schools can participate in community public-awareness programs through different community organizations. Increasing public awareness to child maltreatment helps in the development of concerned individuals who will press for resources and programs for child abuse and neglect prevention because the school and the community can serve as powerful advocates for children.

References:

Altafim & Linhares, 2016

(Monks & Smith, 2006; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2014

Parent-Teacher Partnership in Attaining Quality Education, Slideshare