

## ENSURING SCHOOL SAFETY DURING FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

*by:*

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With the Philippine government's decision to reopen schools for physical classes, the country is now faced with the challenge of ensuring the safety of its students and teachers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure a safe learning environment, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued guidelines for the reopening of schools, which include the following:

1. Physical distancing must be observed at all times.
2. Appropriate face masks and face shields must be worn by students and staff.
3. Temperature checks must be conducted before entering the school premises.
4. Frequent handwashing and sanitation must be observed.
5. Physical contact between students and staff must be avoided.
6. Strict health protocols must be followed.
7. Online classes must be offered as an alternative to traditional face-to-face classes.

In addition to following the guidelines, schools should also take measures to ensure the safety of its students and staff. Schools can take the following steps to ensure safety:

1. Contact Tracing – Schools must have a system for contact tracing in place to monitor and track possible infection cases. This will help the school identify and isolate any infected individuals, thus preventing the further spread of the virus.
2. Health Education – Schools must provide health education to its students and staff to help them better understand how to stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus. This can include information on proper handwashing, physical distancing, and the use of face masks and shields.
3. Cleaning and Sanitation – Schools must make sure that their premises are regularly cleaned and sanitized to reduce the risk of infection.
4. Health Check-ups – Schools must also provide regular health check-ups for its students and staff to ensure that everyone is healthy and free of the virus.
5. Emergency Protocols – Schools must also have an emergency protocol in place to ensure that any suspected cases are immediately reported and isolated.

These measures will help ensure the safety of everyone in the school and help minimize the risk of infection. It is also important for parents and teachers to cooperate with the school's safety measures to ensure the utmost safety of everyone involved.

Ensuring school safety during face-to-face classes amidst the pandemic is a challenge, but it is achievable if the necessary steps are taken. The guidelines issued by the DepEd should be strictly followed, and schools should also take additional measures such as contact tracing, health education, cleaning and sanitation, and emergency protocols to ensure the safety of its students and staff. With everyone's cooperation and support, we can ensure the safety of our students and teachers and create a safe learning environment.

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