

ENSURE CHILD'S SAFETY IN SCHOOL DURING PANDEMIC

by:

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After two years of distance learning, schools are finally welcoming its students back in the Philippines despite the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Slowly, the Philippine education sector is adapting to the new normal of face to face classes without sacrificing the quality of education given to each students. As per Department of Education's (DepEd) record last April 2022, about 17,054 public and 425 private schools are ready for the progressive expansion of the face-to-face classes and those which are either fully compliant and with pending concurrence with their respective local government units for the Department's School Safety Assessment Tool (SSAT).

However, no matter how prepared the schools and teachers may be, parents remain anxious of their children's safety and security against the COVID-19 virus-- here are some reminders that schools should remember in order to convince parents to return their kids at school to ensure their health and safety while observing the minimum public health standards.

Ensure that students, teachers, and all other school staff are wearing masks at all times. World Health Organization (WHO) strongly recommends that adults as well as children should wear a well-fitted mask that covers the nose, mouth and chin to prevent the COVID-19 virus transmission; according to studies, wearing masks lowers the chance of transmission by up to 85%.

Physical distancing should always be observed. One-meter distance should always be observe inside and outside of the classrooms to prevent a possible transmission of COVID-19. It may be hard to implement given that classrooms are always an avenue for

children to learn and meet new friends, teaching them the consequences of such actions will help children understand the possible results of their actions.

Disinfect at all times. It is very difficult to fight an invisible opponent, in order to combat the threat of COVID-19 frequent disinfection of the classroom, school grounds, as well as our hands are one of the most effective way to prevent germs and virus transmission. It is also a chance to teach each pupil the proper way of washing their hands to avoid virus and germs, furthermore, it is also a chance to teach them the importance of proper hygiene at a very young age.

Lastly, encourage vaccination. This year, Department of Health (DOH) already rolled out the vaccination program for children ages 5 years old and above against the COVID-19 virus to ensure protection of the children now that we are slowly shifting back to the new normal. Although, it has garnered a lot of positive feedback, some parents are still hesitant to get their children vaccinated. As the second-parent of their children at school, it is our responsibility to encourage the parents of each pupils to get their vaccines in order to protect them from the virus, especially now that schools are reopening. Know that vaccines do not guarantee a 100% protection and immunity from the virus but it will serve as an additional protection against the virus aside from following the minimum public health standards set by DOH, mentioned above.

Going back to school after a two-year distance learning can be quite overwhelming and challenging for educators, parents, and children-- school procedures will never be the same as it was two-years ago. The pandemic has challenged not just the health sector but it affected the education sector greatly. As schools gradually opens, children starts coming to classes, and new guidelines on teaching is implemented us educators should gear up and fulfill our mandate in providing a quality education to every Filipino.

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