

[DEPED ORDER NO. 57, S. 2017, March 15, 2018]

**POLICY ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ARMED
CONFLICT**

Adopted: 21 November 2017

Date Filed: 15 March 2018

1. For the information and guidance of all concerned, the Department of Education (DepEd) issues the enclosed copy of the Policy on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict.
2. This DepEd Order shall take effect immediately upon its issuance.
3. All existing Orders, Memoranda, and other related issuances inconsistent with this policy are rescinded.
4. Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this Order is directed.

(SGD) LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES
Secretary

(Enclosure to DepEd Order No. 57, s. 2017)

POLICY ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. RATIONALE

The Department has the vital role of ensuring that learners are protected and their rights respected and upheld. The protection of children during armed conflict is enshrined in the following:

- A. Section 3, Article XV of the 1987 Constitution, which states the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development;
- B. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict;
- C. Republic Act No. 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act, which declares children as zones of peace, prohibits the recruitment of children in armed conflict, and provides that public infrastructure such as schools shall not be used for military purposes;

- D. Republic Act No. 9851 or the Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes Against Humanity, which prohibits the conscription, enlistment or recruitment of children under the age of fifteen (15) into the national armed forces and children under the age of eighteen (18) into an armed force or group other than the national forces and using them to participate actively in hostilities;
- E. Executive Order No. 138, s. 2013, also known as, Adopting the Comprehensive Program Framework for Children in Armed Conflict, Strengthening the Council for the Welfare for Children and for Other Purposes, where the Department is a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Children in Armed Conflict (IAC-CIAC), and is required to work closely with other concerned agencies in the provision of services and monitoring the implementation of the plans and programs of the Committee;
- F. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UN SCR) Nos. 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), which requests State Parties to develop Action Plans on the recruitment and use of minors and mandates the establishment of a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Child Rights Violations in Situations of Armed Conflict;
- G. UN SCR No. 1882 (2009), which requires a time-bound Action Plan to address the conflict resulting to killing and maiming of children, as well as rape and other sexual violence against children;
- H. UN SCR No. 1998 (2011), which calls upon State Parties to take decisive and immediate action against recurrent threats and attacks on schools and associated personnel, as well as to refrain from actions that impede children's access to education; and
- I. The 2017 Report of the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which welcomes the steps undertaken by the Philippine government to better protect children in armed conflict, through the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Children in Armed Conflict (IAC-CIAC) and the monitoring, reporting, and response system on children affected by armed conflict to provide assistance, service responses, and investigation of violations against children.

Section 2. **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Recognizing the negative impact of armed conflict, the Department of Education reaffirms the child's right to education and the role of the education sector in strengthening the protection of its learners and school personnel during situations of armed conflict. In

addition, the Department recognizes the need to continue the provision of education during times of armed conflict and the implementation of concrete measures to prevent the use of schools and attack on schools.

Section 3. **SCOPE**

The policy shall apply to the following:

1. DepEd Central, Regional, and Schools Division Office personnel;
2. School heads and administrators;
3. Teaching and non-teaching personnel; and
4. Learners in public and private elementary and secondary schools and alternative learning centers.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Section 4. LEARNERS AS ZONES OF PEACE

All concerned shall adopt the following principles, in due recognition of learners as zones of peace:

- A. Respect for the human rights of children in situations of armed conflict from all forms of abuse, violence, neglect, cruelty, discrimination, and other conditions prejudicial to their development;
- B. Consideration of the best interest of children, respecting their dignity as human beings, and treating all of those involved in, affected by, or displaced by armed conflict;
- C. Recognition and respect of the rights of children in armed conflict, such as:
 - a. Right to survival, protection, development and participation as they need a protective, secure and stable environment in which to grow and develop their moral, psychological, social, and spiritual development needs;
 - b. Right not to be recruited or used by any party in armed conflict;
 - c. Right to have a childhood and to grow up in an environment free from conflict;
 - d. Right to be protected from any negative consequences of armed conflict, such as physical and psychological effects;
 - e. Right to assistance, recovery and rehabilitation from the effects of conflict, to reunite with their families, and to receive relief as a priority; and
 - f. Right to live in peace and express their views, even in times of conflict.
- D. Guarantee protection under the CRC, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and all other human rights treaties, other pertinent international instruments and protocols ratified by the Philippines, the rights guaranteed by the Philippine Constitution, and all existing laws, rules, and regulations relevant thereto.

III. GRAVE CHILD RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Section. 5. Grave Child Rights Violations or GCRV

Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution Nos. 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), and 1998 (2011), these refer to the offenses committed against