

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd reiterates guidelines on typhoon season

Education Secretary Br. Armin Luistro FSC has reiterated the typhoon advisory to be used as a guide by the public and local decision makers in the event of a typhoon which frequents the country at this time of the year.

“We have existing policies that allow DepEd officials and local government executives to suspend classes at their level. This will avoid leaving our children on the streets when heavy rains and strong winds hit certain areas,” Luistro said.

According to DepEd Order number 28 series of 2005 if signal number 1 is raised by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical & Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), classes in pre-school are automatically suspended or cancelled in the affected areas. If signal number 2 is raised, classes from pre-school, elementary and high school are automatically suspended or cancelled.

In the absence of storm signals, localized suspension is allowed by the order. The decision may be made by the school principal, division superintendent or local government executive. The final decision to let the child go to school or not is also left with the parents. “Local suspension and parental decision are allowed since parents and officials on the ground have a better idea about the situation in their areas,” explained Luistro.

Meantime, school heads are being asked to prepare for the coming storms, three of which are expected to enter the country this month alone.

According to DepEd School Engineering Chief, Engineer Oliver R. Hernandez DepEd has engineers and physical facilities coordinators at the regional and division levels who monitor the state of schools. Funds for the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of typhoon damaged school buildings are immediately being requested if the need arises.

Asked about schools in flood-prone areas, Hernandez said, “We are working with the local executives in securing better locations for our schools. It is particularly difficult to move a school site in areas where the whole city or municipality is flood prone. Our personnel and those from the LGU instead look for means to ensure immediate resumption of classes in the event of class disruption.”

During times of calamities not only brought by typhoons but also by other natural causes such as volcanic activities and earthquakes, public schools are used as evacuation centers. On the sanitation concern and the need for make up classes, Hernandez replied, “This is when the bayanihan spirit comes alive. Water and food is supplied by the local government and non-government organizations including water and health workers to maintain sanitation. Our school heads on the other hand find means to resume classes in their schools.”

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One scheme that DepEd is implementing is that evacuees leave the classrooms during the day so classes can be conducted. They return after classes end in the afternoon. Children of evacuees who are from another school may attend classes in their host school as long as the teacher is informed. The child's attendance is recorded in the host school and forwarded to his own school once they are allowed to return home.

"We cannot let disruption of classes last long and we must resume classes as soon as we can," Luistro said.

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