

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Keep Off Politics in Schools

Keep politics and campaign materials off public schools.

This was contained in Department of Education Order No. 10 which bans all election materials in public schools as the campaign season starts.

The order which DepEd calls "Clean Schools, Clean Elections Programs is aimed at protecting the schools from the pressures of politics.

DepEd Order No. 10 is in effect for the entire election campaign period beginning February 9 until the final outcome of the elections at the national and local events.

Earlier, the Commission on Elections has come out with Resolution No. 8758 in which Sec. 21 specified that "the posting of campaign materials in public places outside of the designated common poster areas such as streets, bridges, public structures or buildings, trees, electric posts or wires, schools, shrines, main thoroughfares and the like is prohibited."

"I appeal to all politicians to spare the schools from any political propaganda and pressure," added Lapus.

Even before the official start of the campaign period, the department has already been getting complaints from principals, parents and media about tarpaulins and posters that mar school premises.

"The 2010 National Election merits the highest degree of national discipline. These guidelines must be observed so as not to compromise the integrity of this political exercise," added Lapus.

Based on the new DepEd Order, election related activities such as political rallies and public meetings using school premises must not be scheduled during school days while classes are going on.

Organizers of any election-related activity must first secure the necessary permit from proper authorities and must follow local ordinances on the issuance of permits. Similarly, the event organizers shall be responsible in ensuring the cleanliness of the school grounds after the activity.

Election related preparatory meetings and seminars for teachers and other personnel involved in the conduct of the elections shall be so scheduled to avoid any disruption in classes and held in an appropriate venue within the school.

No campaign materials (posters, tarpaulins, billboards and the like) are allowed to be posted or hung within the school premises, including grounds in front of the schools and the areas around it (walls, fence, sidewalk).

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The order also spelled out that school heads shall immediately remove illegally posted campaign materials within their school premises.

To preserve the non-partisan nature of DepEd, school personnel should not be involved in distributing campaign materials particularly within school premises. Distribution of campaign materials by representatives of political parties or candidates must be undertaken only outside the school premises.

“The only election materials to be allowed to be posted or distributed within the school premises are those specifically authorized under election laws and only for the period prescribed,” the order emphasized.

**END**

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