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Republika ng Pilipinas
Kagawaran ng Edukasyon
Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim

DepEd Task Force COVID-19
MEMORANDUM No. 1
8 March 2020

For: **Regional Directors**
Schools Division Superintendents
2020 NSPC and NFOT Organizers and Participants
All Health and Nutrition Officers and Coordinators
All Concerned

Subject: **HEALTH-RELATED INSTRUCTIONS**
FOR NSPC AND NTOT

As per DepEd Memorandum No. 19, s. 2020, the DepEd Task Force COVID-19 is issuing the following instructions to all concerned officials, participants, and attendees of the ongoing National Schools Press Conference (NSPC) and National Festival of Talents (NFOT) to minimize the risk of contracting the virus:

1. Strictly observe the following safety precautions and protocols.

- a. Proper hand and respiratory hygiene, safe food practices, and related precautions are enjoined:
 - i. Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
 - ii. When coughing and sneezing, maintain distance and cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – immediately throw away tissue into a closed bin and wash hands.
 - iii. Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough.
 - iv. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care as soon as possible.
- b. Airflow in activity venues should be improved by opening windows and doors as much as possible.
- c. Wearing of medical mask



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[Administrative Service (AS), Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS), Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS), Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS), Baguio Teachers' Camp (BTC), Central Security & Safety Office (CSSO)]

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- i. Wearing of medical mask is indicated for an individual exhibiting or feeling symptoms of respiratory infections, in order to contain respiratory secretions.
 - ii. The World Health Organization (WHO), in its advice on the use of masks, states that a medical mask is not required for non-sick persons. However, in crowded places where one is unsure of any possible exposure, one may resort to wearing a mask.
 - iii. WHO provides guidelines in the proper wearing, removal, and disposal of masks, including proper hand sanitation:
 - (1) If medical masks are worn, appropriate use and disposal are essential to ensure they are effective and to avoid any increase in risk of transmission associated with the incorrect use and disposal of masks.
 - (2) The following information on correct use of medical masks derives from the practices in health-care settings:
 - (a) Place mask carefully to cover mouth and nose, and tie securely to minimize any gaps between the face and the mask;
 - (b) While in use, avoid touching the mask;
 - (c) Remove the mask by using appropriate technique (i.e. do not touch the front but remove the lace from behind);
 - (d) After removal or whenever you inadvertently touch a used mask, clean hands by using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water if visibly soiled
 - (e) Replace masks with a new clean, dry mask as soon as they become damp/humid;
 - (f) Do not re-use single-use masks;
 - (g) Discard single-use masks after each use and dispose of them immediately upon removal.
 - (h) Cloth (e.g. cotton or gauze) masks are not recommended under any circumstance.
2. Refrain from physical contact such as handshakes, hugs, and kisses (including *beso-beso*).
 3. Ensure the presence of members of the concerned DepEd Regional and Division Task Forces on COVID-19.
 4. Ensure the availability of medical personnel 24/7 to attend to the needs of all involved.
 5. Ensure that no learner and/or teacher who has close contact with a

confirmed case of COVID-19 is allowed to travel and/or participate in the activities.

6. Screen all participants and attendees (learners, personnel, organizers, guardians, chaperones, spectators etc.) prior to the event (those experiencing fever or respiratory symptoms such as cough and colds should not be allowed to participate).
7. In events, limit attendance to participants and relevant stakeholders, and preclude the attendance of individuals from vulnerable groups such as infants, children less than 5 years old, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases.
8. Ensure that all delegates submit individual info-sheets providing personal information, travel details, and travel history, with consent of collection and use of personal information for medical and public health purposes.
9. Ensure comprehensive and detailed documentation (e.g., full list of attendees, updated contact details, room assignments, schedules, daily check-up logs, etc.).
10. Ensure provision of supplies of masks in case anyone gets sick during the event, soap and water in handwashing areas, hand sanitizers and isopropyl alcohol in areas with limited or no access to wash areas with soap and water, and information materials on COVID-19 to be posted around the premises.
11. Ensure that all participants and attendees (learners, personnel, organizers, guardians, chaperones, spectators etc.) are thoroughly informed of the guidelines on COVID-19 case management (patients under investigation, persons under monitoring, positive cases, and facility and home quarantine, among others) prescribed by health authorities.
12. Ensure daily cleaning and disinfection of activity venues and participants' accommodations and ensuring the availability of hand sanitizers in strategic areas.
13. Ensure observance of hygienic food handling practices during meal and snack break times, including ensuring that buffet is strictly assisted to limit the number of persons who will touch serving utensils, and practical measures such as discouraging talking in areas where food is served.
14. Provide constant reminders of precautionary measures to participants in the course of the event.
15. Use infrared thermometers before allowing guests to enter events areas.
16. Ensure daily monitoring/screening by medical personnel and delegation heads for any signs of fever and respiratory symptoms among members of their delegation.

17. Ensure that there is protocol for isolation and coordinated management by a local medical team; and
18. Connect with local government units and local health authorities, especially with the regional DOH Center for Health Development (CHD) for close coordination of possible COVID-19 events that may occur during the course of the activities.

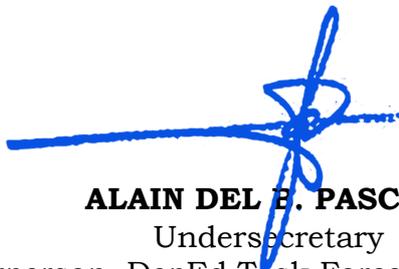
All involved are enjoined to ensure heightened precautions based on the policy directives and measures that have been issued so far by the DepEd:

1. DM 034, s. 2020 titled Fifth Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force COVID-19;
2. DM 031, s. 2020 titled Fourth Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force COVID-19;
3. DM 023, s. 2020 titled Third Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force COVID-19;
4. DM 021, s. 2020 titled Second Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force nCoV; and
5. DM 015, s. 2020 titled First Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force nCoV.

Supplemental funding to implement these heightened precautionary measures by the host regional and division offices is now being processed by the Finance Strand of the Central Office.

DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Vice Chairperson Assistant Secretary Salvador Malana III will strictly enforce and monitor the implementation of these measures in both events. He will be assisted by Cagayan Valley Regional Director Estela Carino and all DepEd Regional and Division Task Forces on COVID-19.

DepEd Task Force COVID-19 is monitoring the situation closely and is ready to make informed, coordinated, and proportionate response based on any updated guidelines or advisory by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IAFT-EID) headed by the Department of Health (DOH).


ALAIN DEL E. PASCUA
Underscretary
Chairperson, DepEd Task Force COVID-19





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