



**GUIDELINES ON THE CANCELLATION OR SUSPENSION OF CLASSES
AND WORK IN SCHOOLS IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS
AND OTHER NATURAL CALAMITIES**

I. RATIONALE

The Department of Education (DepEd) upholds the principle of promoting the welfare, safety, and security of learners and personnel at all times. Accordingly, in times of disasters and calamities, safeguarding the learners and personnel from unnecessary physical dangers that they may be exposed to, and protecting their constitutional rights to life, health, safety, and property, remain to be department's paramount consideration.

In line with the existing policies of the department in ensuring the safety and security of our learners and school personnel, it recognizes the need to suspend or cancel classes and work in schools during emergencies brought about by natural disasters and calamities.

Thus, this Order is being issued to provide guidance on the suspension of classes due to disasters or calamities to spare the pupils, students, teaching and non-teaching personnel in schools from unnecessary dangers to their lives and limbs.

II. SCOPE

The following guidelines shall be observed in all levels of governance within the Department of Education (Central Office, Regional, Division, and School) for all teaching and non-teaching personnel. This will also cover the learners under the jurisdiction of the DepEd in the public schools.

Private schools and community learning centers, as well as state/local universities and colleges (SUCs/LUCs) have the option to abide by the provisions of this DO.

Provisions in previous DepEd issuances inconsistent with this Order and its enclosure are hereby modified accordingly.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Department upholds the principle of promoting the welfare, safety, and security of learners and personnel at all times, which remains the DepEd's paramount consideration.
2. This policy aims to protect the physical and psychosocial welfare of learners, personnel, and their families by providing guidance on the following:
 - a. suspension of classes and work in schools during times of calamities, natural disasters and/or emergencies,

- b. interventions needed to address the impacts of disasters, and
- c. the roles and responsibilities of all concerned.

IV. GUIDELINES ON THE CANCELLATION OR SUSPENSION OF CLASSES AND WORK IN SCHOOLS

1. Typhoon

In-person and online classes in all levels are automatically cancelled in schools situated in Local Government Units (LGUs) issued with Tropical Cyclone Wind Signals (TCWS) 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

If the TCWS is issued at a time when classes have already begun, the school shall immediately suspend the classes and work and send everyone home, if it is safe to do so. However, schools are obligated to keep the students and personnel safely in school if travelling has become unsafe.

Local Chief Executives shall decide on the cancellation or suspension of classes in cases where there are strong winds in specific or all areas of the LGU but is not due to a typhoon.

2. Heavy Rainfall

In-person and online classes in all levels are automatically cancelled in schools situated in LGUs issued with Yellow, Orange and Red Rainfall Warning by the PAGASA.

If the Warning is issued at a time when classes have already begun, the school shall immediately suspend the classes and work and send everyone home, if it is safe to do so. However, schools are obligated to keep the students and personnel safely in school if travelling has become unsafe.

Local Chief Executives shall decide on the cancellation or suspension of classes in cases where there are torrential rains in specific or all areas of the LGU but is not issued a Heavy Rainfall Alert by PAGASA.

3. Flood

In-person and online classes in all levels are automatically cancelled in schools situated in LGUs issued with a Flood Warning by the PAGASA.

If the Flood Warning is issued at a time when classes have already begun, the school shall immediately suspend the classes and work and send everyone home, if it is safe to do so. However, schools are obligated to keep the students and personnel safely in school if travelling has become unsafe.

Local Chief Executives shall decide on the cancellation or suspension of classes in cases where there is flooding in specific or all areas of the LGU but is not issued a Flood Warning by PAGASA.

4. Earthquakes

In-person and online classes in all levels are automatically cancelled in schools situated in LGUs where the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHILVOCS) declare an earthquake with PHILVOCS Earthquake Intensity Scale (PEIS) V or above.

Local Chief Executives shall decide on the cancellation or suspension of classes in cases where the PEIS is IV and below.

School Principals can cancel classes at any Intensity Scale if in their assessment, building and other structures are seen to be in danger of collapsing or is found to have major damage.

The School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Team Head should clear the return of students and personnel in buildings and other structures.

5. Adjustments to Learning Delivery Due to Suspensions/Cancellations of Classes

In the event of cancelled or suspended classes, distance learning or make up classes shall be implemented to ensure that learning competencies and objectives are still met.

In adherence to the provision of DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2021, learners who miss learning activities due to class suspensions brought about by various disruptions like disasters and/or emergencies due to natural or human-induced hazards shall be accorded due consideration in the completion of their learning tasks.

6. Maintenance of Workforce and Activation of DRRM Teams

Teaching school personnel, including ALS teachers, and non-teaching school personnel in schools, Division Offices, Regional Offices, and the Central Office, shall not be required to report to work, except those who are mandated to render security, safety, finance, engineering, sanitation, health, and disaster response duties.

Schools, on the other hand, must always be ready to implement remote work with measured output.

Central, Regional, and Schools Division Offices, and schools shall activate their DRRM Teams to prepare, monitor, and respond to the situation. DRRM Team members, particularly DRRM Coordinators and Engineers, shall be required to report to work in the aftermath of the disaster to

continue undertaking response, early recovery, and reporting based on established DRRM protocols (e.g., an inspection of school facilities to vet damages as reported by School DRRM Coordinators, detailed assessment of damaged facilities for purposes of developing the Program of Works for infrastructure costing in rehabilitation and recovery plans, and participation in coordination meetings with LDRRMCs). Other DRRM Team members may likewise be required to report to work, as needed.

Officials of private schools shall exercise discretion relative to the work arrangement of their DRRM personnel.

7. Use of schools as Evacuation Center or COVID-19 Quarantine and/or Isolation Facility/Vaccination Center

Schools shall not be used as quarantine and/ or isolation facilities or vaccination centers. The authority given to Regional Directors in allowing schools to be designated as quarantine and/or isolation facilities/vaccination centers under Office Memorandum OM-Osec-2020-004 (*Guidance to Regional Directors for Action Requests by Local Government Units to Use DepEd Schools and Engage DepEd Personnel in Activities Related to COVID-19*), is hereby lifted. Office Memorandum OM-OSEC-2021-03-003 (*Use of DepEd Classrooms and Other Facilities as Vaccination Centers*) is likewise hereby repealed.

In cases of other disasters, schools may be used as an immediate evacuation site which should not last for more than fifteen days. LGUs should not use schools as long-term shelters for evacuees.

8. Conduct of Psychological First Aid

As the maintenance of a conducive learning environment requires addressing the immediate needs of affected learners and personnel in the aftermath of disasters, all Schools Division Offices, with the support of Regional Offices, shall assess Mental Health and Psychosocial Support needs and services, and lead the conduct of Psychological First Aid (PFA). This shall include the mobilization of trained PFA providers and partners, and if needed, referral pathways for learners and personnel identified for further specialized psychological support services. Required health standards shall be always applied.

9. Responsibility of Parents or Guardians

The DepEd still maintains that parents or guardians have the ultimate responsibility for determining whether their children should attend classes in consideration of their physical and/or mental health during disaster and calamities. This applies even if no order for cancellation or suspension of classes has been issued.

However, it is also the responsibility of the parents or guardians to ensure that their child is able to catch up with the needed competencies that the learners should master.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS), in coordination with relevant DepEd Central (CO) offices and affected regions and divisions, shall continue leading the implementation of existing mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and responding to the impacts of disasters on DepEd offices and schools. This includes the suspension of classes and work, the activation of DRRM Teams, and the delivery of PFA.

As part of the response operations during and in the aftermath of a disaster and/or emergency, the DRRMS monitors the suspension and resumption of classes which is being reported by the affected division offices. The reports on class suspension and resumption form part of the situation report and education cluster updates that the DRRMS submits to the DepEd Executive Committee, Management Committee, affected field offices, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and partners.

The Bureau of Learning Delivery under the Curriculum and Instruction Strand shall continue leading the monitoring, reporting, and response to needed adjustments to learning delivery strategies due to suspensions.

VI. REPEALING CLAUSE

All DepEd orders, memoranda, and other related issuances, rules, regulations, and provisions, which are inconsistent with these guidelines are repealed, rescinded, or modified accordingly.

VII. EFFECTIVITY

This order shall take effect immediately after its publication on the DepEd website as well as its filing with the Office of the National Administrative Registrar (ONAR) at the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center, UP Diliman, Quezon City.