Republic of the Philippines

Department of Education

Region VI –Western Visayas

SCHOOLS DIVISION OF ILOILO CITY

August 5, 2021

To: Chief Education Supervisors
Education Program Supervisors
Public Schools District Supervisors
Elementary/ Secondary School Principals/Heads/OICs
Unit Heads
All Others Concerned

Subject: **REITERATION OF CORRESPONDING WORK – RELATED GUIDELINES PER COMMUNITY QUARANTINE CLASSIFICATION AND ENSURING OBSERVANCE OF STRICT HEALTH MEASURES IN WORK SETTINGS IN VIEW OF THE THREAT OF THE DELTA VARIANT TRANSMISSION**

Dear Sir/ Madam:

Enclosed is **DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memorandum No. 464** dated August 5, 2021, signed by Alain Del B. Pascua, Undersecretary and Task Force Chairperson regarding the guidelines and protocols that must be strictly observed in DepEd workplaces based on the community quarantine imposed over their respective localities, and in view of the threat of the transmission of the highly infections delta variant of COVID-19 in the country.

Immediate dissemination of the contents of this Letter is desired.

Very truly yours,

MA. LUZ M. DE LOS REYES
Schools Division Superintendent

Enclosure: As stated

DIVISION LETTER No. 48, s. 2021

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Republika ng Pilipinas

Kagawaran ng Edukasyon

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim

DepEd Task Force COVID-19
MEMORANDUM No. 464
5 August 2021

For: **Secretary LEONOR MAGTOLIS BRIONES**
Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries
Bureau and Service Directors
Regional Directors and BARMM Education Minister
Schools Division Superintendents
School Heads

Subject: **REITERATION OF CORRESPONDING WORK-RELATED GUIDELINES PER COMMUNITY QUARANTINE CLASSIFICATION AND ENSURING OBSERVANCE OF STRICT HEALTH MEASURES IN WORK SETTINGS IN VIEW OF THE THREAT OF THE DELTA VARIANT TRANSMISSION**

The DepEd Task Force COVID-19 (DTFC) issues this memorandum to guide everyone in the Department particularly on the guidelines and protocols that must be strictly observed in DepEd workplaces based on the community quarantine imposed over their respective localities, and in view of the threat of the transmission of the highly infectious delta variant of COVID-19 in the country.

Reports citing resource persons from the Department of Health (DOH) mention that the Delta variant is "60 to 100 percent more transmissible" than the original COVID-19 strain, such that the 15-minute exposure for one to be considered a close contact is no longer applicable. In just a matter of seconds, one can already be infected because the Delta variant carriers have "1,000 times more viral load" than other COVID-19 patients.[1]

A. As a guiding principle, the **safety of employees shall be the topmost priority** in any decision to be made by Heads of Offices regarding work arrangements, scheduling of official travel, conduct of meetings and other gatherings, and other work-related concerns during the pandemic, while setting up necessary mechanisms to ensure **uninterrupted delivery of public service**.

[1] More cities, provinces reporting increase in COVID-19 cases: DOH, https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/02/21/half-ph-cities-provinces-increasing-covid19-doh

B. DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2020 titled *Revised Guidelines on Alternative Work Arrangements in the Department of Education During the Period of State of National Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic* remains to be the major reference document in determining such decisions, except for provisions that are deemed amended as superseded by the more recent issuances of national authorities including the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease and the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

1. As indicated in DO 11, s. 2020, "provisions of these guidelines that become incompatible or inconsistent with any applicable future public health guidelines or directives by the DOH, IATF, or the Office of the President, shall be amended accordingly."

2. For the Central Office, the Secretary issued Office Order No. 14, s. 2021 titled *Supplemental Guidelines on the Alternative Work Arrangements in the Department of Education - Central Office during the Period of State of Public Health Emergency due to the COVID-19 Pandemic* which operationalizes existing DepEd AWA guidelines (DO 11, s. 2021), considering the most recent updates from the national government.

3. As agreed during ExeCom meetings and virtual ExeCom discussions, the Central Office and the Regional Offices are expected to ensure that the implementation of DepEd AWA guidelines in their respective jurisdictions is aligned with the most recent national policy directives as well the orders of their respective governing local authorities.

4. This DTFC memorandum provides guidance for such purpose.

C. In view of the foregoing, attention is directed to the relevant provisions of the latest Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines (with Amendments as of May 20, 2021) and IATF resolutions as presented in the comparative matrix published by the IATF on its website. In case of any further amendment of the IATF on these guidelines or any new order of the Office of the President, such amendment or order shall be automatically followed.

1. Operations of government instrumentalities and agencies

a. The IATF currently sets the following guidelines:

ECQ, MECQ	Agencies and instrumentalities of the government shall be fully operational, with **a skeleton workforce on-site** and the remainder under alternative work arrangements as approved by the head of agency unless a greater on-site capacity is required in agencies providing health and emergency frontline services, laboratory and testing services, border control, or other critical services, in

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

	accordance with the relevant rules and regulations issued by the CSC.
GCQ	Agencies and instrumentalities of the government shall be fully operational and shall operate at **a minimum of thirty percent (30%) up to full on-site capacity** as determined by the head of the agency, in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations issued by the CSC.[2]
MGCQ	Agencies and instrumentalities of the government shall be fully operational and shall operate at **a minimum of fifty percent (50%) up to full on-site capacity** as determined by the head of the agency, in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations issued by the CSC.

b. On 3 August 2021, the Office of the President issued Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 87 titled *Establishing the On-Site Capacity to be Observed by the Government Agencies and Instrumentalities in the National Capital Region for the Period of 06 to 20 August 2021*. The said MC reiterates the need to ensure the continuous delivery of public services while NCR is under ECQ. Section 2 of the said MC states that:

"Beginning 06 August 2021 until 20 August 2021, all government agencies and instrumentalities of the executive branch in the NCR, including government – owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs), shall only have a skeleton workforce on-site, the size of which shall be determined by the head of agency, taking into consideration the services that must be continuously provided by the agency even during ECQ.

"To ensure continuity of government services, the skeleton workforce shall not be less than 20% on-site capacity at any given time, with the remainder being under work-from-home arrangements. Nonetheless, agencies providing health and emergency frontline services, laboratory and testing services, border control, and other critical services shall be allowed up to full on-site capacity."

c. The reduced skeleton workforce who shall report on-site shall be determined as those personnel performing essential services as defined in Item Nos. 7 and 10 of DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2020.

d. For the Central Office, Heads of Offices shall follow the provisions of OSec Order No. 14, s. 2021 in determining their office AWA, as well as those who will report on-site whether as part of the minimum 50% for MGCQ, the minimum 30% for GCQ, or the skeleton workforce for MECQ and ECQ (not less than 20% for ECQ on 6-20 August 2021, per OP MC 87, s. 2021).

e. Field offices are enjoined to use OSec Order No. 14, s. 2021 as a

[2] The same provision is retained for areas under GCQ with heightened restrictions.

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

i. As much as possible, the activity shall be held outdoors, while also ensuring the safety of participants to avoid health risks associated with exposure to hot, humid environment, such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

ii. If held indoors, adequate ventilation shall be strictly enforced. Natural air flow exchange is highly encouraged—windows and doors shall be opened and air conditioning units shall be turned off to reduce air recirculation.

iii. For indoor spaces with inadequate ventilation, venues shall preferably have High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter as an option to improve air quality.

iv. No attendee/participant should be situated directly in the flow of air coming from fans and air-conditioners.

v. Activities shall not be held in venues that are accessible to the general public at the duration of the activity (e.g. restaurants).

vi. Activity organizers/secretariat shall ensure that the activity venue provides adequate access to handwashing facilities and disinfectants.

vii. The activity venue, especially the tables, chairs, and microphones, shall be disinfected before and after the activity.

D. Applicable health standards shall be strictly observed at all time whether in workplaces, venues for gatherings (where permitted and when the activity is not feasible to be held virtually), or when on travel.[6]

1. Personnel who have symptoms of COVID-19 shall not report on-site nor join any gathering or travel, but instead report to their respective clinic doctors, attending physicians, or barangay health units. All personnel shall be subjected to a temperature check prior to being allowed entry into the workplace, the activity venue, or the designated vehicle for official travel.

2. **Masks shall be worn at all times**, even when attending virtual activities (when another personnel is physically present in the same

[6] This section includes guidelines recommendations from: (a) the Workplace Handbook on COVID-19 Management and Prevention (v1) of the DOH; and (b) The Philippine COVID-19 Living Recommendations, a document of the Institute of Clinical Epidemiology, National Institutes of Health, UP Manila in cooperation with the Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases; s funded by the DOH Ahead Program through the DOST-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, https://www.psmid.org/philippine-covid-19-living-recommendations/

room) or during necessary photo-ops in activities.

a. Health personnel and other personnel with high risk of exposure to COVID-19 should use properly fitted surgical masks instead of cloth masks.

b. For personnel who may not be able to use surgical masks or those with low risk of exposure to COVID-19 in outdoor or indoor areas, cloth mask that fits snugly on the face and made of at least two layers of cotton (e.g., t-shirt fabric) or non-woven nylon with aluminum nose bridge may be used.

c. Wearing of full-face shields on top of face mask shall be required in offices where the local government unit requires such in workplace settings.

3. Circumstances in which more than one personnel will share the same room with another personnel and at least one of them will have to remove their masks (such as when brushing teeth in a communal bathroom or when recording a video message where the speaker is assisted by others who will take the video) shall be avoided.

a. Communal eating is discouraged at work.

b. Conversations between personnel who share the same room, especially when they are eating in their respective work stations, are likewise discouraged. Conversations in enclosed spaces in the workplace, including the elevator, shall also be avoided.

c. There shall be no communal dining before, during, or after a gathering.

d. When inside vehicles, personnel shall be required to avoid talking with each other, taking phone calls, eating, and removing their masks and shields. Signages of "No Talking," "No Eating," and "No Taking Phone Calls" should likewise be displayed or posted on the conspicuous areas in the vehicle.

4. In workplaces and activity venues, doors and windows are encouraged to be opened, and use of air filtration systems is encouraged wherever and whenever possible. Adequate ventilation should be strictly enforced in vehicles. The opening of windows, with at least three (3) inches of opening, while in transit should be practiced whenever possible.

5. Whether in the workplace or in activity venues, no personnel should be situated directly in the flow of air coming from fans and air conditioners.

6. Physical distancing shall be observed at all times regardless of setting.

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

The 1-meter distance is the minimum, and farther distance beyond 1 meter is encouraged where possible.

7. All personnel shall stay in their workstations, whenever possible. Movements between rooms, floors, buildings, and other offices shall be limited to necessary tasks.

8. Sharing of items such as ballpens and passing around of documents (e.g., attendance sheets, folders) whether at work, in gatherings, or in vehicles shall be avoided.

9. The following practices shall be discontinued due to low or very low quality of evidence to prevent or control COVID-19 transmission:
   a. Use of UV lamps or other UV devices in any place outside of a controlled clinic or hospital setting;
   b. Use of misting tents or disinfection chambers;
   c. Use of footbaths; and
   d. Use of ionizing air purifier.

10. All gatherings and related activities shall begin with a reminder of these protocols. The same shall be communicated through the invitations/correspondences to be sent for regarding the activity. Signages shall be posted in workspaces and vehicles, and emails shall be regularly sent to personnel to remind them of these protocols.

11. All are advised to regularly refer to the latest recommendations of the DOH or the Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (PSMID) on the required health standards. It shall be noted that provisions in DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2020 or the *Guidelines on the Required Health Standards in Basic Education Offices and Schools* that are no longer consistent with the DOH or the PSMID's recommendations (e.g., use of foot baths) shall be deemed amended. Such amendments will be included in the future issuance of updated health standards in DepEd.

E. The DTFC continues to underscore **the importance of vaccination** as an extra layer of protection against COVID-19, in addition the required health standards.

1. The following DepEd issuances provide guidance on vaccination in DepEd:

   a. DTFC Memorandum No. 372 titled *Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccination for DepEd Teaching and Non-Teaching Personnel*

   b. DepEd Memorandum No. 28, s. 2021 titled *Comprehensive Guidance on the Participation of the Department of Education in the Implementation of the Philippine National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 Vaccines*

   c. DTFC Memorandum No. 441 titled *Instructions to the Field*

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

Regarding the Operationalization of DM 28, s. 2021 Particularly on the Vaccination of DepEd Teaching and Non-Teaching Personnel [Approved by the Secretary]

2. All personnel are enjoined to report their vaccination status through the Self-Reporting for COVID-19 Vaccination Tracker, accessible through the DepEd Mobile App, available at the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android). Details about the tracker including the User Guide may be accessed through OUA Memorandum No. 00-721-0093 (Mass Dissemination on Self-Reporting for COVID-19 Vaccination Tracker).

For more information about this memorandum, contact the **DepEd Task Force COVID-19** through the Bureau of Learner Support Services-School Health Division (BLSS-SHD), 3rd Floor, Mabini Building, Department of Education Central Office, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City at telephone no. (02) 8-632-9935 or email at medical.nursing@deped.gov.ph.

ALAIN DEL B. PASCUA
Undersecretary
Chairperson, DepEd Task Force COVID-19

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reference in determining their respective AWA depending on the community quarantine classification of their respective localities.

f. Per OSec Order No. 14 s, 2021, the following personnel shall be exempted from reporting on-site, except when their functions are indispensable for the continuous delivery of services, and/or their services can only be rendered within office premises or in other on-site work locations permitted by the Head of Office:

   i. Personnel who belong to age groups that are required to remain in their residences at all times, per the existing IATF guidelines;[3]
   ii. Pregnant women and nursing mothers;
   iii. Personnel-at-risk, including but not limited to those with immunodeficiency, comorbidities, or other health risks, illnesses, and/or underlying medical conditions as enumerated in Item 4.b.ii of DM No. 043, s. 2020, as supported by a medical certificate issued by a licensed physician, and other health records;
   iv. Personnel who reside with vulnerable individuals or Most At-Risk Population as enumerated above; and
   v. Personnel who encounter difficulty reporting to DepEd CO or other onsite locations due to imposition of strict home and/or local community quarantine, curfew, limited or no access to any available modes of transportation options, and/or other regulatory limitations on inter-municipal/city travel.

g. Personnel who are identified as COVID-19 Suspect Case and COVID-19 Probable Case, and who are close contacts of Confirmed, Suspect, or Probable Case, as well as those exhibiting COVID-19 signs and symptoms (e.g., fever, colds, cough, headache, muscle and joint pains, tonsillitis, loss of taste, loss of smell, diarrhea), shall not be allowed to report on-site. Instead, they shall report to their Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT), and inform the DepEd clinic doctor and Head of Office for proper monitoring and management.

h. In view of the threat of further delta variant transmission, especially in ECQ and MECQ areas, the Central Office and field offices are enjoined to observe the following additional measures, particularly when determining which personnel shall form part of their skeletal on-site workforce:

   i. Personnel who have not been fully vaccinated shall not be prioritized for skeleton workforce on-site reporting.

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[3] OSec Order No. 14, s. 2021 specifies personnel who are 21 years old and above; personnel who are 60 years old and above

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

ii. Personnel who have been fully vaccinated but have comorbidity shall not be prioritized skeleton workforce for on-site reporting.

2. Official travel, mass gatherings, conduct of meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) in eligible venue establishments

a. The IATF currently sets the following guidelines:

ECQ	Gatherings outside of residences shall be prohibited. Gatherings at residences with any person outside of one's immediate household shall likewise be prohibited. However, gatherings that are essential for the provision of health services, government services, or humanitarian activities authorized by the appropriate government agency or instrumentality shall be allowed. Religious gatherings:[4] Religious ministers and their assistants may conduct religious services through online video recording and transmission Venues for MICE: Not allowed
MECQ	Gatherings outside of residences shall be prohibited. Gatherings at residences with any person outside of one's immediate household shall likewise be prohibited. However, gatherings that are essential for the provision of health services, government services, or humanitarian activities authorized by the appropriate government agency or instrumentality shall be allowed. Religious gatherings: Allowed up to 10% of the venue capacity; LGU may increase up to 30% venue capacity Venues for MICE: Not allowed
GCQ	Gatherings outside of residences shall be prohibited except for those permitted in GCQ. Gatherings at residences with any person outside of one's immediate household shall likewise be prohibited. However, gatherings that are essential for the provision of health services, government services, or humanitarian activities authorized by the appropriate government agency or instrumentality shall be allowed.

[4] Provisions on religious gatherings are presented in consideration of such gatherings usually held in DepEd workplaces (e.g., Friday Mass)

	Religious gatherings - Allowed up to 30% of the venue capacity; LGU may increase up to 50% venue capacity - Allowed up to 10% of the venue capacity; LGU may increase up to 30% venue capacity [for GCQ with heightened restrictions] - Only virtual religious gatherings shall be allowed [for GCQ with heightened restrictions, for NCR only, July 30-August 5, 2021] Venues for MICE -Allowed up to 50% venue capacity -Not allowed for GCQ with heightened restrictions
MGCQ	Gatherings shall be **allowed up to fifty percent (50%) of the seating or venue capacity**. Provided, that participants shall strictly observe the minimum public health standards, and the establishments or venues where the gatherings will take place shall strictly comply with ventilation standards as provided for under relevant issuances of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Venues for MICE: Allowed up to 75% venue capacity[5]

b. Interzonal and intrazonal travel and gatherings, while allowed by the IATF under provided conditions, shall remain highly discouraged in DepEd. Travel, gatherings and other face-to-face activities shall only be conducted if virtual meetings via online and teleconferencing platforms are not feasible for the intended participants.

   i. Conduct of face-to-face large gatherings and activities that will require close contact or where physical distancing may not be possible shall remain restricted, while face-to-face meetings shall remain limited.

   ii. Virtual platforms shall be maximized to accomplish the intended objectives of the supposed official travel or gathering. Where the objectives of a travel or gathering can be accomplished through a virtual activity, the conduct of the virtual activity shall be preferred.

c. If not feasible to be held virtually, permitted work-related gatherings in DepEd in areas under ECQ, MECQ, and GCQ shall be limited to those that are for the provision of essential services, as defined in existing DepEd Orders or any subsequent issuances. To date, these services are as determined in Item Nos. 7 and 10 of DO 11, s. 2020.

[5] DOT-DTI JMC No. 2021-001, Series of 2021, as presented in DTI MC 21-28

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON

d. The same criteria followed in determining who will report on-site shall be followed in determining participants to join in official travel or gatherings:

    i. Participants shall as much as possible not include those listed in Item C.1.d of this memorandum. They shall be prioritized for participation in virtual meetings.

    ii. Personnel who are identified as COVID-19 Suspect Case and COVID-19 Probable Case, and who are close contacts of Confirmed, Suspect, or Probable Case, as well as those exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, shall not be allowed to join travel, work-related gatherings and other face-to-face activities. They shall report their condition to their BHERT and inform their respective Head of Office and DepEd clinic doctor for proper monitoring and management.

    iii. Personnel who have not been fully vaccinated or those who have been vaccinated but have comorbidity shall preferably be prioritized for virtual participation in the activity.

e. Attendees shall be required to submit to the activity organizer/secretariat a health declaration form or a medical certificate as needed.

    i. If the activity will be held in the same office premises where majority of the attendees physically report for work, outsiders or attendees who are not part of those physically reporting for work shall submit a health declaration form.

    ii. If the activity will be held in a venue outside office premises and involve participants from various offices, organizations, or agencies, all participants shall submit a medical certificate.

    iii. Presentation of medical certificates and/or negative COVID-19 test result may also be required per existing local ordinances covering the locality where the activity will be held, or per recommendation by the medical officers assigned for an office.

3. Work-related gatherings and other face-to-face activities shall be kept as short as possible. Preliminary activities such as the review of the minutes of the previous meetings and introduction of participants may be done as pre-activity assignments. Parts of the program that will involve singing shall be omitted.

4. The following shall be observed in the selection of the venues for work-related gatherings and other face-to-face activities:

KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON