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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
REGION III-CENTRAL LUZON

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REGIONAL MEMORANDUM
No. 056 s, 2022

To: The Assistant Regional Director
Schools Division Superintendents
Heads of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

**REITERATION OF THE REQUIRED HEALTH STANDARDS, VACCINATION
AND ON-SITE WORK REQUIREMENTS**

1. Memorandum Circular No. 94, s. 2022 dated January 7, 2022 acknowledges the need to balance health consideration and the delivery of public services even in situation where cases of COVID-19 suddenly increase. The growing number of COVID-19 cases in the Region necessitates a collective and strengthened effort to protect the workforce but ensure the continuous delivery of basic education services.
2. To do this, the following health protocols and standards are reiterated to be strictly observed in all offices and public schools in the Region:
 - 2.1 All personnel reporting on-site, regardless of their vaccination status, are reminded to **strictly observe the required health standards at all times.**
 - 2.1.1 This entails wearing of masks, practicing proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette, observing physical distance, ensuring airflow, and avoiding crowded and enclosed spaces.
 - 2.1.2 Personnel are strongly enjoined to use properly fitted surgical masks instead of cloth masks. For personnel who may not be able to use surgical masks, 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.
 - 2.2 Practically speaking, this translates to the following examples of expected behaviors:
 - 2.2.1 Natural ventilation shall be maximized through open windows or repositioning workspaces. Even in air-conditioned spaces windows, doors and other openings shall be frequently opened

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(for a few minutes every hour) to bring fresh air from outside;

- 2.2.2 The use of electric fan in an enclosed space is not recommended because it may increase the spread of the virus. When inevitable, it is important to open windows and doors to replace indoor air with outdoor air. The fan can be placed in front of an open window to increase air flow and push indoor air outside. If using a pedestal fan, minimize as much as possible how much air blows from one person (or group of people) to another person (or group of people);
- 2.2.3 Masks shall be worn even when attending virtual activities, if another personnel is physically present in the same room;
- 2.2.4 Personnel shall eat their snacks/lunch alone in their desks, avoid chatting with officemates while eating, and immediately mask up as soon as they are done. Pantries or areas where people can meet up *maskless* may also be closed down;
- 2.2.5 Where physical distancing may be compromised, offices shall ensure installation of physical barriers such as sneeze guards (acrylic plastic sheets), glass panels, theater ropes and stanchions, hazard warning tape;
- 2.2.6 Only one person shall use the bathroom sink at a time, especially when washing their faces or brushing their teeth, because this will mean that they will be standing closely next to each other without their masks on;
- 2.2.7 Meetings in closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings shall be avoided. If inevitable, such as when in public transportation, all are reminded to mask up;
- 2.2.8 Adequate ventilation should be strictly enforced in the shuttle services/service vehicles. The opening of windows, with at least three (3) inches of opening, while in transit should be practiced whenever possible. Proper disinfection before and after each use of the vehicle is likewise mandatory;
- 2.2.9 When face-to-face meetings are warranted, organizers shall opt not to serve drinks or snacks during the meeting so that no one may be compelled to take off their masks. Instead, drinks or snacks may be served



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after the meeting, which personnel can consume in their respective desks;

- 2.2.10 As much as possible, physical distancing shall still be observed, and masks still worn even during necessary photo-ops in face-to-face activities;
 - 2.2.11 Existing prohibition on smoking in the office/school premises shall be strictly enforced. Such activity does not only pose health risks, but also involves the removing of masks and usually entails unnecessary congregation of personnel; and
 - 2.2.12 Similar applicable health standards are expected to be observed by personnel when in transit or on travel, at home and in mingling with family members. Likewise, personnel are advised to encourage family members to take extra care in doing activities outside of home especially in crowded, enclosed places.
- 3 While all offices shall adhere to the minimum on-site work capacity for government agencies under the Alert Level System pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. 93 and 94 (i.e., at least 60% for government agencies in areas under Alert Level No. 3), the following exemptions as to who shall be expected to report on-site are reiterated:
- 3.1 Personnel who are not fully vaccinated shall be discouraged from reporting on-site, but be strongly encouraged to be vaccinated immediately, unless validly disqualified for medical reasons.
 - 3.1.1 Unvaccinated and/or partially vaccinated personnel reporting on-site are required to present a negative RT-PCR/antigen test result from accredited sources at least once every two weeks, subject to the provisions of IATF Resolution No. 148-B and IATF Resolution No. 149.
 - 3.1.2 This requirement applies only in areas where there are sufficient supply of COVID-19 vaccines as determined by the National Vaccines Operation Center. For this purpose, DepEd Task Force COVID 19 Memorandum No. 586 dated December 28, 2021 instructed DepEd offices and schools to coordinate with their Regional/Local Vaccine Operation Center on the availability of vaccines for their personnel.





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- 3.2 The following are reminded **not to report on-site** but instead explore work-from-home arrangements, if applicable, unless otherwise cleared to report to work by the Office Medical Officer/Health Officer, upon presentation of necessary documents, as may be required (e.g., completion of quarantine):
- 3.2.1 Personnel who have tested positive on COVID-19 whether through antigen test or RT-PCR;
 - 3.2.2 Personnel who are probable or suspect cases, including those who have pending test results;
 - 3.2.3 Personnel who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of possible explanation (e.g., *"I usually get a cough after riding an airconditioned vehicle so this must be normal of me to be coughing"*); and
 - 3.2.4 Personnel who are close contacts of confirmed, probable, and suspect cases (these include personnel who are exposed to persons who have symptoms of COVID-19 or are waiting for their COVID-19 test results).
- 3.3 Personnel who experience COVID-19 symptoms are advised to report to their attending physicians, if applicable, their respective Chief/Section Supervisor and the Medical Officer/Health Officer, for appropriate evaluation and assessment of need of testing, and monitoring.
- 3.4 All personnel shall be subjected to a temperature check prior to being allowed entry into the workplace, or the designated vehicle for those availing of transportation service, both when out-bound and when homeward bound. Only those with temperature below 37.5°C shall be allowed entry. Those whose temperature is 37.5°C and above, when out-bound, shall be advised to return home, and when homeward bound, shall be advised to stay at the waiting area, and report to the Medical Officer/Health Officer immediately.
- 3.5 As an extra precautionary measure, personnel who are exposed to close contacts of confirmed cases (second-generation close contacts), may be advised to work from home, if practicable, until the status of the first-generation close contacts is confirmed. Should the second-generation close contacts report onsite, they shall be expected to strictly observe the required health standards.





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- 3.6 It is reiterated that quarantine/isolation shall not be deducted from existing leave credits for permanent positions, while Contract of Service (CoS) / Job Order (JO) personnel shall not be considered absent during their quarantine/isolation, as long as they produce expected work deliverables. The Personnel Section/Unit of the concerned Office shall provide proper guidance on handling the attendance records of abovementioned personnel.
- 4 Regular disinfection of facilities is required, however, temporary closure of office premises merely for disinfection purposes shall not be allowed.
 - 5 Offices are encouraged to transact with clients via online, whenever possible. However, the setting-up of one-stop reception/receiving and releasing area near the entrance gate, complete with basic hygiene supplies, is reiterated to minimize entry of clients within the office premises. Personnel who need to transact with the visiting client shall proceed to the reception/waiting area, instead of the visitor to go inside the office premises. The use of visitor's ID for proper identification and queuing number to avoid overcrowding in the reception area is encouraged.
 - 6 The "No Vaccine, No Entry Policy" in dealing with clients/visitors may be implemented, provided, clients/visitors were properly informed and that there is alternative mechanism to address the concerns of clients/visitors. For this purpose, the presentation of valid negative RT-PCR/antigen test result of clients/visitors taken from accredited sources shall suffice.
 - 7 The implementation of mandatory antigen testing of all personnel reporting on-site as recommended by the DepEd Task Force COVID-19 in a Memorandum No. 588 dated January 5, 2022 shall be subject to the readiness of the concerned Office, taking into consideration the percentage of cases, frequency of transmission, percentage of vaccinated personnel and availability of testing kits and medical staff to administer the testing. For this purpose, the use of Regular MOOE is authorized, subject to the DOH price cap on of antigen testing and the usual procurement, budgeting accounting and auditing rules and regulations.
 - 8 For the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned.


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Regional Director

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References:

1. DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memorandum No. 588 dated January 5, 2022
2. DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memorandum No. 587 dated January 3, 2022
3. Memorandum Circular No. 94, s. 2022 dated January 7, 2022
4. Memorandum Circular No. 93, s. 2021 dated December 17, 2021
5. Memorandum Circular No. 86, s. 2021 dated May 11, 2021
6. IATF Resolution No. 149, s. 2021 dated November 18, 2021
7. IATF Resolution No. 148-B, s. 2021 dated November 11, 2021



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