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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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MEMORANDUM

TO : REGIONAL DIRECTORS
ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTORS
SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
ASSISTANT SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

FROM : 
ATTY. FATIMA LIPP D. PANONTONGAN
Undersecretary and Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

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SUBJECT : SCHOOL CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING
ACTIVE SHOOTERS

DATE : AUGUST 5, 2026

Pursuant to Part VI(C)(2) of DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2019 or the “National Policy Framework on Learners and Schools as Zones of Peace,” schools shall be recognized and respected as places for learning, caring and nurturing – a true second home for the learners, where children can receive utmost peace and security. Thus, to ensure the safety of learners and all teaching and non-teaching personnel while in school, all learning institutions, public and private, are hereby directed to adopt and use the “School Contingency Plan for Incidents for Active (Shooters) Attack” (School Contingency Plan) as part of their School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan.

The School Contingency Plan shall provide directions on the proper handling of incidents involving armed threats within school premises and nearby areas. It shall guide teaching and non-teaching personnel, as well as learners, on pre-incident preparedness, activation of the school Incident Management Team, lockout and lockdown procedures, emergency communication, coordination with law enforcement, post-incident recovery, psychosocial support, reunification, and learning continuity.

All learning institutions shall contextualize the School Contingency Plan in their school setting, taking into consideration the site conditions, available resources, learner population, local risk profile, and existing coordination arrangements with Local Government Unit (LGU), law enforcement, local health and social welfare offices, Parent-Teacher Associations, and other relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, all school heads are directed to ensure compliance with the following:

1. Incorporate the School Contingency Plan as part of the existing School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan and other school safety related measures;
2. Provide periodic orientation to teaching and non-teaching personnel, parents, and learners, including security personnel and other stakeholders on the School Contingency Plan, emphasizing their respective duties and responsibilities in cases of armed threats;
3. Identify and update emergency contact numbers, school maps, evacuation routes, lockdown areas, lockout procedures, off-site reunification points, and parent or guardian release protocols;
4. Ensure open coordination with the Philippine National Police (PNP), LGUs, Local health and social welfare offices, and other stakeholders on school-level preparedness and response arrangements;
5. Conduct age-appropriate simulations, tabletop exercises, or drills on lockout, lockdown, evacuation, emergency communication, and reunification procedures, with due care to prevent fear, distress, or harm among learners;
6. Review access control, visitor management, perimeter security, gate security, emergency alarms, and classroom security measures within the bounds of existing laws, policies, and available resources;
7. Submit incident reports, drill reports, and other required documentation through established DepEd reporting channels; and
8. Conduct post-drill and post-incident assessments to identify gaps and provide appropriate remedial measures to address the same by updating the School Contingency Plan.

By way of policy, the primary objective in cases of armed threats within school premises and nearby areas is to ensure the safety and well-being of teaching and non-teaching personnel, learners, and other parties concerned until such threat is neutralized by the PNP and other competent authorities. Accordingly, other concerns, such as learning continuity, protection of school property, and other regular school operations, shall remain secondary until such time that the PNP or other competent authority has declared that regular school operations may resume.

During the existence of an armed threat, the PNP and other competent authorities shall have the sole responsibility of neutralizing the threat through tactical intervention, arresting the perpetrators, and handling the relevant evidence material for investigation and prosecution of the case. Teaching and non-teaching personnel shall coordinate with the PNP and other competent authorities as soon as they become aware of the armed threat; and shall prioritize the safety and well-being of learners until such threat is neutralized.

Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Schools Division Superintendents, and Assistant Schools Division Superintendents, in coordination with the LGUs, the PNP, and other competent authorities, shall provide technical assistance to the Public and Private Primary and Secondary School Heads in the contextualization of the School Contingency Plan in their respective schools, and shall monitor compliance therewith.

For more information, you may read the attached School Contingency Plan for Incidents for Involving Active (Shooters) Attack, or watch the explainer video through: <https://bit.ly/ActiveThreatPlan>

Immediate dissemination of this Memorandum is directed.



Republika ng Pilipinas
Department of Education

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Annex A

**SCHOOL CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR INCIDENTS FOR ACTIVE
(SHOOTERS) ATTACK**

Incidents involving active shooters are characterized by individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in confined and populated areas. Within the Department of Education (DepEd) framework, these are classified as major school violence or armed threats, necessitating the implementation of specialized defensive protocols.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) emphasizes that the safety of learners and personnel is the paramount objective during these crises. Response efforts must utilize a Whole-of-DepEd and Whole-of-Community Approach, seamlessly merging preventive measures with immediate tactical response. Consequently, the DRRMS strongly advocates for the institutionalization of this contingency plan across all learning centers, including the regular conduct of mandatory simulations and drills.

Policy Foundations and Core Objectives

Policy Basis	DRRM Service Framework (DO 37 s. 2015), Schools as Zones of Peace, (DO 32 s. 2019), Learning Continuity in Emergencies (DO 14 s. 2026), and the DepEd Child Protection Policy.
Primary Goal	TO SAVE LIVES. All other actions, including preserving property or continuing education, are secondary until life safety risks are stabilized.
Scope	Applies to all learners, personnel, visitors, and stakeholders across all DepEd-recognized learning environments and activities.

Part 1: Pre- Incident - Preparation & Prevention

Prevention is the most critical phase. Schools must prioritize creating a secure environment through physical hardening, establishing a culture of vigilance, and ensuring all stakeholders are thoroughly oriented on their roles.

A. Incident Management Team (IMT) Roles

In the event of an active threat, the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (SDRRM) Committee is immediately reconstituted as the Incident Management Team (IMT). While school leadership maintains control over internal response operations, established active attack protocols dictate that law enforcement holds exclusive authority over tactical threat neutralization.

Role	Responsibility During Active Attacks
School Head (Incident Commander)	Functions as the lead coordinator with higher DepEd offices and PNP/LGU; maintains a presence at a protected remote site or the Command Post to oversee all critical tactical choices.
Security Guard(s)/ Team	Ensure access points are secured if safety permits, preserve entry routes for emergency responders, and provide guidance to arriving police units.
Assigned Teachers (Floor/Wing Captains)	Verifies the successful lockdown of adjacent classrooms and offices; ensures hallways are clear of learners and visitors; monitors designated zones for potential security breaches.
School Nurse/ PFA Team	Prepared to provide immediate Psychological First Aid (PFA) and medical triage once an "All Clear" is officially declared; coordinates with local health units for surge capacity.
Non-Teaching Personnel/ Admin	Manages all emergency communication channels (dialing 911/PNP, create the incident management reports via the IMRS; maintains documentation logs of incident timelines.

B. Physical Site Hardening & Procedures

- Access Control: All external school gates must be lockable. Visitors must report to a single, designated entrance for screening and must be always escorted by authorized personnel. Classrooms must be equipped with internal locks or approved barricading devices that allow occupants to secure the room from within.
- Fencing: Adequate perimeter fencing must define school boundaries and deter intruders. This physical barrier must be regularly inspected for vulnerabilities or breaches.
- Security Guards/ School Marshals: Personnel must be trained specifically on armed intruder protocols focusing on immediate perimeter securing, initiating alarms, and acting as the first point of contact for responding law enforcement units.
- Early Warning System: Establish a simple, recognizable duress code or unique alarm system, such as a special bell pattern or specific PA announcement. Avoid codes that can be confused with fire alarms to prevent staff and students from inadvertently evacuating into danger zones.

C. Training and Drills

- Mandatory Drills: Lockout, lockdown, and evacuation drills must be conducted at least twice per school year for all learners and staff to build muscle memory.
- Behavioral Awareness: Train teachers and staff to recognize behavioral signs of potential violence and pre-attack indicators, while fostering an environment that encourages students to report concerning behaviors or threats.

Part 2: During Incident - Protective Actions

To guarantee the safety of everyone present, this survival mentality necessitates an immediate shift from routine operations to tactical response (protective actions).

A. Threat is OUTSIDE the building (LOCKOUT/SECURE)

A lockout is activated when violence occurs in the neighborhood or outside school walls.

Signal: "Lockout! Secure the perimeter."

Action: Upon activation, security personnel are required to immediately secure all perimeter gates, halting all movement in or out of the campus. Standard classroom activities may proceed as security teams conduct perimeter patrols. Students should remain alert and prepared for potential evacuation as the situation develops.

B. Threat is INSIDE the building (LOCKDOWN) (Teacher- Led Decision Making)

Should an intruder penetrate the school grounds, a lockdown is initiated. Once a threat is verified, staff and students must promptly adopt the RUN, HIDE, FIGHT protocol for situational decision-making, tailored to their specific surroundings:

C. Internal Threat Response: LOCKDOWN (Teacher-Led Protocols)

If an intruder breaches the campus, a lockdown must be triggered. Upon threat verification, all personnel and learners are required to employ the RUN, HIDE, FIGHT situational response framework, adapted to their immediate environment:

- a. RUN (AVOID): Evacuate immediately if a clear and safe path is available. Note: Teachers should identify the threat location by auditory cues like gunfire. Prioritize speed over belongings, keep hands visible, and proceed to the designated off-site reunification zone.
- b. HIDE (DENY): LOCKDOWN, SILENCE, AND CONCEAL. If evacuation is impossible, secure the room by locking and barricading doors, extinguishing lights, and silencing devices. Note: In Philippine settings, curtains or blinds are necessary to cover glass windows. Stay low, maintain distance from others, and ignore all door requests until police breach the area.
- c. FIGHT (Last Resort): Commit to this only under direct confrontation when life is at risk. Utilize maximum aggression and improvised tools (e.g., fire extinguishers, chairs) to disable the attacker. Note: This is reserved for capable adults or older learners; for younger students, focus on teacher-directed protection.

D. Communicating with Emergency Services

Once life-safety actions (Run or Hide) are established and it is safe to do so, call 911 or the local PNP station duress line. Remain on the line and clearly provide:

- a. Specific Location: exact school address, building name, hallway, and classroom or room number.

- b. Number of Attackers/Shooters: State the number of individuals involved (if known).
- c. Physical Description: Clothing, height, and the types of weapons (e.g., handguns, rifles) being used.
- d. Number of Victims: Estimated number of victims and types of injuries observed.

Concurrently with local emergency calls, the School Head must notify the Schools Division Office (SDO) an online report via the Incident Management Report System (IMRS).

Part 3: Law Enforcement Response

Philippine National Police (PNP) forces arriving at the scene have one priority: STOP THE SHOOTER. They will not stop to help injured persons or provide medical aid until the threat is eliminated and the scene is secured.

How Personnel and Learners Must React to the PNP

To prevent misidentification during a high-stress tactical intervention, everyone must strictly adhere to the following behavioral protocols:

- Remain calm and quiet. Avoid any sudden, aggressive, or unexpected movements.
- Keep hands visible. Hands must be empty, open, and raised high above your head always.
- Do not distract officers. Do not shout, point, scream, or grab at officers.
- Obey immediately. Follow all verbal commands without question. Expect officers to be loud, forceful, and direct as they clear the area.

EMS Response and Mass Casualty Plan

Effective emergency medical response during an active shooter event is secondary only to the immediate neutralization of the threat. This phase focuses on life-saving interventions and organized triage following the arrival of professional medical services.

A. Integration with Law Enforcement

Medical responders will not enter "Hot Zones" where a threat is active. School personnel must be aware that EMS personnel will typically operate in "Warm Zones" - areas secured by the Philippine National Police (PNP) but where a potential threat may still exist-to provide rapid life-saving care such as hemorrhage control.

B. Medical Triage and Stabilization

Once an "All Clear" is declared or a "Warm Zone" is established, the School Nurse and PFA Team will coordinate with local health units to perform the following:

- Immediate Life-Saving Care: Utilization of trauma kits to address severe bleeding and airway obstructions.
- Casualty Collection Point (CCP): Establishment of a designated area where the injured are gathered for stabilization before transport to hospitals.

- **Surge Capacity Coordination:** Communication with nearby medical facilities to ensure they are prepared for a sudden influx of multiple trauma victims.

Assembly and Evacuation: Everyone must remain in their secured location until law enforcement arrives to escort them to the designated Off-Site Reunification Point.

These locations must be predetermined and communicated only to authorized personnel and parents to maintain security, as they are not necessarily the same as Assembly Areas used in earthquake drills.

Reunification and Accountability: The Incident Management Team (IMT) will utilize the latest class rosters and assembly point logs to account for every learner and staff member. Learners will be systematically released only to parents or guardians whose photo IDs are verified against the school's official authorized pick-up lists and database.

Family Reunification and Parent Communication Controls

- **Designated Reunification Areas:** Schools must establish primary and alternate off-site locations to ensure a safe distance from the active scene. The site will include a waiting area for parents and a secure supervision area for students.
- **Reunification Team Staffing:** Staff will be assigned specific roles, including ID Verification, Student Release, and Student Supervision to maintain order and ensure comfort and safety.
- **Communication Channels:** The Communications Liaison will disseminate instructions via pre-determined channels such as SMS alerts, social media, and local radio. Template messages will be prepared to provide clear situation updates and instructions on where to report.
- **Parental Notification:** Parents must be informed pre-event about the reunification process and the vital importance of maintaining updated contact information.

Part 4: Post- Incident - Recovery and Learning Continuity

The transition to recovery begins only after the PNP has officially declared an "ALL CLEAR."

A. Immediate Post- Incident Management

Psychological First Aid (PFA): The SDRRM PFA Team and School Nurse will initiate immediate supportive care to stabilize survivors at the reunification site while awaiting long-term professional services.

B. DepEd Learning Continuity Response (DO 14 s. 2026)

Following the incident, the School Head will activate the appropriate level under the 4H Learning Continuity Framework to manage education delivery:

4H Level	Status	Learning Continuity Response
HINTO (Stop)	Dangerous scene, investigation ongoing.	Immediate Halt: Academic demands stop. Priority is safety, basic needs, and mental health support. School grounds are closed.
HINGA (Check-in)	Safety secured, high stress, recovery phase.	Prioritize Well-being: Academics are reduced or optional. Focus on counseling, check-ins, and light learning kits. Asynchronous/home-based learning.
HINAY (Ease-in)	Disruptions exist, recovery ongoing.	Flexible Pace: Slow return to learning. Reduced subjects, modified schedules, combination of remote and limited in-person. Mindfulness is key.
HAYO (Continue)	Stakeholders are safe and ready.	Full Resume: Standard in-person learning returns. Full curriculum delivery.

C. Counseling, Remediation, and Review

- a. Mental Health Support: In coordination with the DOH, DSWD, and LGU, DepEd will provide mandatory professional long-term psychosocial support and monitoring for affected learners, staff, and families
- b. Facility Remediation: The school administration will prioritize physical site remediation, including physical site cleanup, clearing of debris, and structural repairs to restore a sense of safety and normalcy before reopening.
- c. Plan After-Action Review: Within two weeks of the incident, the SDRRM committee must conduct a comprehensive debrief to analyze the tactical response, identify operational gaps, and update this Contingency Plan to address specific vulnerabilities discovered during the event.