



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Education  
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE OF MUNTINLUPA CITY

Office of the Schools Division  
Superintendent

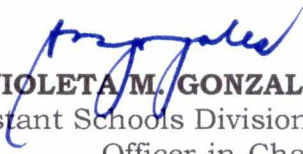
JAN 26 2026

MEMORANDUM

**REITERATION OF UPHOLDING AND RESPECTING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

TO: Assistant Schools Division Superintendent  
Chief Education Supervisor, Curriculum Implementation Division  
Chief Education Supervisor, School Governance and Operations Division  
Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Heads / OICs  
All Others Concerned

1. Attached is Memorandum DM-OUOPS-2026-12-08134 from USEC Malcolm S. Garma, Undersecretary for Governance and Operations & Jocelyn DR Andaya, Regional Director, NCR, Concurrent Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Governance and Operations, dated January 20, 2026, reiterating the Department of Education's commitment to upholding and respecting the religious beliefs, convictions, and practices of learners and school personnel in accordance with the 1987 Philippine Constitution and existing DepEd policies, and a letter addressed to Hon. Juan Edgardo "Sonny" M. Angara, Secretary, Department of Education, dated November 12, 2025, regarding the Respect for Religious Freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses and Other Faiths. for the information of all concerned.
2. Attention is invited to paragraph 2, which states that public schools must respect learners' diverse religious beliefs and non-belief, and that personnel participation in any religious activity shall be strictly voluntary, Additionally, these issuances must emphasize that religious activities conducted on school premises must not disrupt regular classes or infringe on the rights and convictions of others.
3. Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this memorandum are hereby directed.

  
**VIOLETA M. GONZALES CESO VI**  
Assistant Schools Division Superintendent  
Officer-in-Charge  
Office of the Schools Division Superintendent

Encl.: as stated  
References: as stated  
To be indicated in the Perpetual Index  
Under the following subjects:

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY LEARNERS EMPLOYEES TEACHERS SCHOOLS

alloasds/Reiteration of Upholding and Respecting Religious Diversity in Schools

032 / January 23, 2026

UN-2026-032



Student Center for Life Skills Bldg., Centennial Ave, Brgy. Tunasan, Muntinlupa City  
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[sdo.muntinlupa@gmail.com](mailto:sdo.muntinlupa@gmail.com)  
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032



Republika ng Pilipinas

Department of Education

OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

MEMORANDUM

DM-OUOPS-2026-12-08134

TO : ALL REGIONAL DIRECTORS
ALL SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
ALL SCHOOL HEADS
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

FROM : MALCOLM S. GARMA
Undersecretary for Governance and Operations



JOCELYN DR ANDAYA
Regional Director, NCR
Concurrent Officer-in-Charge, Office of the
Assistant Secretary for Governance and Operations

SUBJECT : REITERATION OF UPHOLDING AND RESPECTING RELIGIOUS
DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE : JAN 10 2026

This Memorandum is issued to reiterate the Department of Education's commitment in upholding and respecting the religious beliefs, convictions, and practices of learners and school personnel, in accordance with the 1987 Philippine Constitution and existing DepEd policies.

In line with these constitutional principles, DepEd Order (DO) No. 53, s. 2001, DepEd Memorandum No. 3, s. 2010, and DO No. 105, s. 2010 provide that public schools shall respect the diverse religious beliefs and non-belief of learners and personnel, participation in any religious activity shall be strictly voluntary, and no individual shall be compelled, coerced, or pressured to participate in religious practices or be subjected to discrimination for declining to do so.



16th floor, Techzone Building, 213 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., San Antonio Village, Makati, Metro Manila, 1203
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Table with 4 columns: Doc. Ref. Code, DM-ENDORSE, Rev, 01; Effectivity, 03.23.23, Page, 1 of 2



Certificate No. P9P QMS 22 93 0085

All DepEd officials, school heads, teachers, and personnel are hereby enjoined to **foster an inclusive, respectful, and non-discriminatory school environment** where the religious beliefs, convictions, and practices of all members of the school community are recognized and protected. Schools are further directed to exercise prudence in the planning and implementation of school activities to ensure that no act, policy, or practice directly or indirectly undermines the freedom of religion of learners and personnel.

Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this Memorandum are hereby directed.



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Doc. Ref. Code	DM-ENDORSE	Rev	01
Effectivity	03.23.23	Page	2 of 2



Certificate No. PFP-0183  
27.11.2022

**JORIC MOSENDE CASPE**

Bahay, San Policarpo

Eastern Samar, 6821

[joric.caspe@deped.gov.ph](mailto:joric.caspe@deped.gov.ph)

November 12, 2025

**Hon. Juan Edgardo "Sonny" M. Angara**

Secretary

Department of Education

DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue

Pasig City

**Subject:** Respect for Religious Freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses and Other Faiths

Dear Secretary Angara,

Good day, Secretary Angara.

I am writing to respectfully bring to your attention the importance of upholding and promoting religious freedom among students and teachers, particularly those belonging to the Jehovah's Witnesses faith. Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for their respect for authority and their adherence to the laws of the land. We fully support education and encourage our young people to be diligent, respectful, and law-abiding learners who contribute positively to their schools and communities.

However, due to our Bible-based beliefs, we conscientiously refrain from participating in certain activities such as the flag salute and pledge, fiesta celebrations, birthday observances, Christmas festivities, and the giving of monetary donation to priests or ministers during school religious services.

This decision is not rooted in disloyalty or disrespect, but in sincere religious conviction and a conscientious effort to live in harmony with what we believe the Bible teaches. We deeply respect the rights of others to participate in these activities, and we humbly request that the same respect and understanding be extended to us in return.

It is also worth noting that the Supreme Court of the Philippines, in the landmark **case *Ebralinag v. The Division Superintendent of Schools of Cebu (G.R. No. 95770, March 1, 1993)***, affirmed the right of Jehovah's Witnesses students and teachers to abstain from the flag ceremony on religious grounds. *The ruling emphasized that freedom of religion is protected under our 1987 Constitution, particularly Article III, Section 5, which guarantees that "no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."*

In the case of *Alejandro Estrada v. Soledad Escritor (A.M. No. P-02-1651, June 22, 2006)*, the **Supreme Court of the Philippines** upheld the right to **religious freedom** of Soledad Escritor, a court interpreter and a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, who was charged with **immorality** for living with a man without being legally married. The Court ruled in her favor, applying the **benevolent neutrality** approach, which respects sincere religious beliefs unless a compelling state interest is proven. ***This landmark decision affirmed that religious freedom can, in certain cases, exempt individuals from general laws when such exemptions do not harm public welfare.***

In the case of *Denmark S. Valmores v. Dr. Cristina Achacoso*, the **Supreme Court** ruled in favor of Denmark Valmores, a Seventh-day Adventist student who was denied graduation honors because he refused to attend Saturday classes and activities, as his religion observes the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The Court held that Valmores' right to freedom of religion under the Constitution must be respected and that schools should make reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs. Citing the **principle of benevolent neutrality**, the ***Court emphasized that the State must protect religious exercise unless a compelling reason justifies otherwise, thereby reaffirming the right of students to practice their faith without academic penalty.***

In *DepEd Memorandum No. 3, s. 2010* and *DepEd Order No. 105, s. 2010* were issued by the Department of Education to uphold and protect the constitutional right to freedom of religion in schools. These directives remind all public and private educational institutions to respect the religious beliefs and practices of students, especially those who, for reasons of faith, cannot participate in certain school activities such as flag ceremonies, holiday celebrations, or similar observances. Both issuances aim to ensure that no student and teachers are coerced to act against their religious convictions, promoting an inclusive and respectful learning environment in line with the Philippine Constitution.

Despite the existence of clear statutory and constitutional mandates, instances persist wherein students and teachers experience misunderstanding or coercion to conform, particularly during school activities involving religious or cultural observances. Teachers who are members of Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular, have been subjected to situations where their conscientious decisions are misunderstood or disrespected, at times resulting in embarrassment when they are compelled to repeatedly explain their non-participation in such activities to school authorities.

In view of the foregoing, I respectfully request that your esteemed office consider the issuance or reinforcement of a Department of Education memorandum reiterating the policy of upholding and respecting the religious beliefs, convictions, and practices of Jehovah's Witness students and personnel, as well as those of other faiths who may have similar conscientious objections. The promulgation of such directive would serve to

reaffirm the Department's commitment to the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and belief, and to ensure that all learners and educators are treated with fairness, dignity, and understanding – free from any form of discrimination or administrative reprisal.

Thank you very much, Secretary Angara, for your time and kind attention to this matter. Your continued dedication to inclusive and compassionate education is deeply appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

  
**JORIC MOSENDE CASPE**  
Teacher I

Copy furnished:  
Civil Service Commission  
Commission on Human Rights



**Fw: Reiteration of Upholding and Respecting Religious Diversity in Public Schools**

**From** DEPED NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION <ncr@deped.gov.ph>

**Date** Thu 1/22/2026 2:21 PM

**To** SDO VALENZUELA <sdovalenzuela@deped.gov.ph>; SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE QUEZON CITY <sdo.quezoncity@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED MANILA <sdo.manila@deped.gov.ph>; SDO MARIKINA <sdo.marikina@deped.gov.ph>; SDO MANDALUYONG <sdo.mandaluyong@deped.gov.ph>; OSDS PASIG CITY <osds.sdopasigcity@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED NAVOTAS CITY <navotas.city@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED MALABON CITY <malabon.city@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED MAKATI CITY <makati.city@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED LAS PINAS CITY <laspinas.city@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED PASAY CITY <deped.pasay@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED CALOOCAN CITY <caloocan.city@deped.gov.ph>; SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE SAN JUAN CITY <sdosanjuacity@deped.gov.ph>; SDO MUNTINLUPA <sdo.muntinlupa@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED PARANAQUE <deped.paranaque@deped.gov.ph>; SDO TAPAT <sdo.tapat@deped.gov.ph>

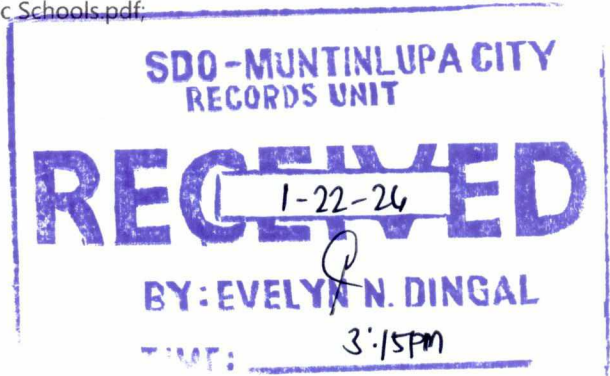
1 attachment (3 MB)

Reiteration of Upholding and Respecting Religious Diversity in Public Schools.pdf

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Good Day!

Please see attached file, for dissemination.  
Kindly acknowledge receipt of this email.



Thank you and best regards.

**From:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Operations <asec.ops@deped.gov.ph>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 22, 2026 11:22 AM

**To:** DEPED I ILOCOS REGION <region1@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED II CAGAYAN VALLEY <region2@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED III CENTRAL LUZON <region3@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED REGION IV-A CALABARZON <region4a@deped.gov.ph>; MIMAROPA REGION <mimaropa.region@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED V BICOL REGION <region5@deped.gov.ph>; DepEd VI Western Visayas <region6@deped.gov.ph>; DepEd Region VII Central Visayas <region7@deped.gov.ph>; REGION VIII EASTERN VISAYAS <region8@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED IX ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA <region9@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED X NORTHERN MINDANAO <region10@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED XI DAVAO REGION <region11@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED XII SOCCSKSARGEN <region12@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED REGION XIII CARAGA <caraga@deped.gov.ph>; Negros Island Region (NIR) <nir@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION <car@deped.gov.ph>; DEPED NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION <ncr@deped.gov.ph>; Tolentino Aquino <tolentino.aquino@deped.gov.ph>; Benjamin Paragas <benjamin.paragas@deped.gov.ph>; Ronnie Mallari <ronnie.mallari@deped.gov.ph>; Alberto Escobarte <alberto.escobarte@deped.gov.ph>; Nicolas Capulong <nicolas.capulong@deped.gov.ph>; Gilbert Sadsad <gilbert.sadsad@deped.gov.ph>; Cristito Eco <crisito.eco001@deped.gov.ph>; Anthony Liobet <anthony.liobet@deped.gov.ph>; Salustiano Jimenez <salustiano.jimenez@deped.gov.ph>; Ronelo Al Firmo <ronelo.firmo@deped.gov.ph>; Ruth Fuentes <ruth.fuentes@deped.gov.ph>; ARTURO BAYOCOT <arturo.bayocot@deped.gov.ph>; Allan Farnazo <allan.farnazo@deped.gov.ph>; Carlito Rocafort <carlito.rocafort@deped.gov.ph>; MARIA INES ASUNCION <maria.asuncion003@deped.gov.ph>; Estela Carino <estela.carino@deped.gov.ph>

**Subject:** Reiteration of Upholding and Respecting Religious Diversity in Public Schools

**Dear Regional Directors,**

Respectfully transmitting the **Memorandum DM-OUOPS-2026-12-08134** on the **Reiteration of Upholding and Respecting Religious Diversity in Public Schools.**

The Department of Education remains committed in upholding and respecting the religious beliefs, convictions, and practices of learners and school personnel, in accordance with the 1987 Philippine Constitution and existing DepEd policies. Participation in religious activities shall be strictly voluntary, and no individual shall be compelled, coerced, or discriminated against for their religious beliefs or non-beliefs.

Consistent with DepEd Order No. 53, s. 2001; DepEd Memorandum No. 3, s. 2010; and DepEd Order No. 105, s. 2010, schools are enjoined to ensure that religious activities, if any, do not disrupt classes nor infringe upon the rights and convictions of others, and that an inclusive and respectful school environment is maintained at all times.

Immediate dissemination of and strict compliance with this Memorandum are hereby directed.

Kindly see the attached Memorandum for your reference.

Thank you very much.

**Respectfully,**



Office of the Assistant Secretary for Operations

Field Operations

Department of Education

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