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Republika ng Pilipinas
Kagawaran ng Edukasyon
Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim

AIDE MEMOIRE

23 June 2020

**ON EXERCISING PRUDENCE IN ADOPTING
ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

The Department of Education (DepEd) **emphasizes the utmost importance of protecting the health, safety, and well-being of all learners, teaching and nonteaching personnel**, and supporting the overall effort of the Philippine government to prevent further transmission of COVID-19, while ensuring that we continue the delivery of quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education.

Pursuant to **DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2020 or the Revised Guidelines on Alternative Work Arrangements in the Department of Education During the Period of State of National Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**, this Office respectfully makes the following recommendations to the members of the ExeCom and ManCom for their consideration:

- a. That personnel who have previously been able to perform their tasks under the work-from-home (WFH) arrangement before June 22, 2020 **be retained under such arrangement**, pending the release of the required health standards, and the completion of the necessary preparations and putting in place of the necessary control measures;
- b. That the number of personnel physically reporting to work per given day **be further reduced, if possible**, and that the 50% of the total workforce of the office allowed to physically report to work during the General Community Quarantine (GCQ) **not necessarily be maximized**.
- c. That the offices requiring the allowed maximum number of personnel (i.e., 50% of the workforce during GCQ) to physically report to work (e.g., Finance Service, Cash Division, etc.) **set up applicable engineering control and administrative control measures** that will guarantee physical distancing between and among the reporting personnel at all times.



These recommendations are being raised in view of the following considerations:

- a. DO 11, s. 2020 provides that personnel who meet the following criteria shall be under WFH arrangement, except when their services rendered physically in the office are indispensable:
 - i. personnel who are 21 years old and below;
 - ii. personnel who are 60 years old and above;
 - iii. personnel who are at high risk of infection, including but not limited to pregnant women, those with immunodeficiency, comorbidities, or other health risks, illnesses and/or pre-existing medical condition; and
 - iv. personnel who encounter difficulty reporting to office due to... limited or no access to any available modes of transportation options....
- b. If the personnel who have been under the WFH arrangement before June 22, 2020 meet the abovementioned criteria, and the office has been operational given the said setup, it is **strongly recommended that they continue to remain under WFH.**
- c. Given the limitations on the capacity of DepEd to provide transportation services to personnel physically reporting to work, it is best that physical reporting to the office be made only when extremely necessary (i.e., the task cannot be performed at home and will affect the delivery of an essential service in DepEd, as defined by DO 11, s. 2020). Please refer to OUA Memorandum on the Implementation of Transportation Arrangements in CO during GCQ.
- d. The Administrative Service (AS) has expressed that **at most one (1) month is needed** to complete the preparations, including the setup of the control measures compliant with the [draft] required health standards at the Central Office (e.g., installing temporary barriers between cubicles and tables; social distancing markings; ensuring the provision of shuttle services to personnel who will be required to work, etc.).
- e. Regardless of the work arrangement adopted by an office, it is **strongly recommended** that the number of people physically reporting to work be kept at a minimum. Existing guidelines provide for the maximum—**not the minimum**—allowable percentage of the workforce (50%) to physical report in the office every day. If the office has been able to operate and fulfill its mandate under this setup before June 22, 2020, the office is highly encouraged to continue doing the same, and not require to physically report in the office those who have been able to perform their tasks while on WFH.
- f. If possible, offices are encouraged to **further reduce the number of people physically reporting to work each day**, by assigning those physically reporting at work in different workdays. The lesser the people physically reporting at work is more ideal as it will better



guarantee the observance of physical distancing in the office. This will also minimize the interaction and subsequently limit the “exposure” of the individual who is physically reporting in the office to only the same small group of people. In case someone becomes infected with COVID-19, only that small group will be quarantined, and the other groups reporting uniquely each day can continue reporting at work in lieu of those who will be quarantined.

- g. To make this possible, all offices are advised to adopt the **“mirroring” of task assignments** among their personnel who are reporting physically at work. This means that two to three personnel reporting on different days and therefore do not physically meet each other are in charge of the same daily onsite task in the office. While a group is scheduled to work from home, or in case they are forced to quarantine at home due to possible exposure to COVID-19, the other group(s) can continue the onsite tasks.
- h. Limiting the interaction of an individual only to the same small group of other personnel can also be ensured by **setting up measures that will “direct” physical distancing behaviors** among them. For instance, offices, especially those that will require up to 50% of their workforce to physically report in the office, are advised to split the reporting personnel into groups which will be assigned to different designated rooms, so that the members of one group do not interact with the members of the other group(s), even when they all physically report in the office on the same days. (Note: Conference rooms may be converted into workspaces for this purpose.)
- i. The Central Office Task Force COVID-19 (COTFC), particularly the School Health Division and the General Service Division, may be asked to undertake readiness inspection and analysis for every office at the CO. They can assist in setting up measures mentioned above.

For consideration.



ALAIN DEL B. PASCUA
Undersecretary



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