

ARD Dulangon enjoins school heads to implement mitigation measures for natural disasters

The Department of Education (DepED) Region VII Assistant Regional Director (ARD), Dr. Carmelita T. Dulangon, enjoined all public and private school heads of elementary and secondary schools in the 19 Schools Divisions of the Region to implement mitigation measures for natural calamities like typhoons, flooding, landslides, and tornadoes, among others.

Quoting DepED Order No. 83, s. 2011 on “Disaster Preparedness Measures for Schools”, ARD Dulangon stressed its aim at addressing underlying drivers of disaster risk which include poorly built school structures, little knowledge of teachers about risks and skills in risk reduction, low capacity of teachers and administrators in disaster preparedness and response, and lack of warning mechanisms and absence of risk assessments.

ARD Dulangon issued Regional Memorandum No. 751, s. 2011, directing all school heads to implement mitigation measures to prevent major damages that these natural calamities will bring about in public schools.

At the school level, ARD Dulangon advised all School Heads to do the following: 1) ensure that the school building can withstand heavy rain and strong winds. Single level schools built at ground level may be anchored by guy wires to strengthen the stability of the structure; 2) store textbooks, teaching manuals school records and school equipment (fax machine, laptop, photocopier, TV, VCR, and science equipment, etc.) at a safe place, preferably on an elevated room to ensure protection from rain or flood; 3) learn about typhoon and other weather disturbances, their signs and warnings, effects and dangers, and how to protect the school children, records, and other properties; 4) educate school children on preparedness for tropical cyclones; 5) regularly conduct school disaster response drills or simulations; and 6) observe strictly the DepED policies on the suspension of classes or invoke school-based decisions in coordination with the local government units (LGUs).

The full involvement of students, families, communities, and stakeholders is one effective strategy that ARD Dulangon mentioned in the said directive. She encouraged the Regional and Division Offices through the all-out support of the Schools Division Superintendents to conduct monitoring and evaluation and provide technical assistance to schools in implementing their disaster mitigation activities.