



REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON, KULTURA AT SPORTS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
DPCS Complex, Alabang Avenue
Makati City, Philippines



Tunggapan ng Kalihim
Office of the Secretary

Sama-sama
sa DECS

November 24, 1999

DECS ORDER
No. 123, s. 1999

AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DECS ORDER NO. 13, S. 1998
(Revised Rules and Regulations on the Teaching of Religion in Public
Elementary and Secondary Schools)

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Directors
Regional Directors
School Superintendents
District Supervisors
Private Elementary and Secondary School Principals

Declaration of Policy. - It is the declared policy of the State in conformity with the mandate of the Constitution, to encourage and promote the teaching of religion to children in public elementary and high schools within the regular class hours. For the State is cognizant of the vital role that the teaching of religion assumes in citizen formation, particularly the molding of our youth. Hence, the State recognizes the necessity of religious instruction not only in the private school but also in public schools. For these purposes, this Department shall provide hereunder the mechanics to enable the teaching of religion in all public elementary and high schools over the country, fully aware in this process that the Constitution prohibits the government from favoring a particular establishment or religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Furthermore, the implementation of this Order should not entail additional cost to the government.

Coverage. - This Order shall apply to all public elementary and high schools in the Philippines.

Defining of Terms. - As used in this Order, the following terms shall mean:

1. Religion - an institutionalized systems of beliefs, attitudes and practices;
2. Values education - the integration into the school curriculum of universally accepted as well as Filipino, human, social, moral, political, economic and cultural values;
3. Optional religious instruction - refers to the religion classes conducted in the public elementary and high schools for students or pupils whose parents opted to exercise their right to request religious instruction for their children or want. The optional character of religious instruction in

public schools pertains as prerogative of choice of the parents or guardians of the children, who are free to request or not to request that the children under their care be instructed in the religion of their choice. The principal or school head shall accommodate said request by providing or assigning the needed teacher/instructor. However, in the event said teacher/instructor for the chosen denomination or religion should be unavailable, Sec. 7, below, shall apply.

- C. Regular class hours - refers to the regular or normal scheduled periods of instruction or laboratory work for a student.
- D. Class period - the average length of time scheduled for one session or instructional period in a course.

4. The Teachers/Instructors - The religious teachers/instructors who teach religion classes in the public elementary and high schools shall be formally sourced or recruited by the respective principal or school head in accordance with the corresponding request for optional religious instruction. After their designation or nomination by their respective religious authorities, said teachers/instructors shall submit to the principal or school head their proper authorization papers and request for time allocation and schedule for the optional religious instruction. Ordinary teachers teaching in a certain school may also teach religion in the same or another school during the periods when they are free from their ordinary teaching loads, and provided they are authorized to do so by the competent religious authority of their denomination.

5. Recipient of Religious Instruction - The teachers/instructors of religion as referred to in Paragraph 4 shall be allowed to teach those pupils/students whose parents or guardians have opted to request that their children or wards be taught the religion of their choice. The option to request that their children or wards learn religion in school shall be expressed in writing by the parent or guardian who shall likewise accomplish in full the necessary application form. No student/pupil shall be allowed or permitted to attend religious instruction classes without the said written application and duly accomplished request of his/her parent or guardian.

6. The Application - The application referred to in the next preceding paragraph shall clearly indicate the faith or religious instruction the student/pupil should receive from the authorized religion teachers/instructors, and the preferred schedule for religious instruction.

7. Non-recipient of Religious Instruction - Students not receiving religious instruction or those with request but there is no available teacher/instructor for the particular denomination requested should be under the supervision of their respective class adviser during the time religion classes are going on.

8. Size and Scheduling of Religious Classes - The optional religious instruction shall be taught during regular class hours only and not before or after class time, nor during recess time. Religious classes should not transmit more than fifty students of the same level and of the same religion, except where the religious authority certifies that his teachers/instructors can allow for a bigger number due to its practicality, availability of time slot/schedule, instructors/teachers, class room/materials and related matters.

The principal or school head shall fix the schedule of the religious class hours taking into account the number of the teacher-instructors that can be fielded by the different denominations at one time.

9. Duration of Religion Classes - The optional religious instruction shall be allotted at least eighty minutes a week, spread over at least two (2) but not more than three (3) meetings in one week. In no case shall the class periods be allotted less than ninety (90) minutes per week.

10. Optional Religious Instruction and Values Education - The optional religious instruction and the values education of this Department are separate, distinct and different subjects. As such they shall be allotted separate class hours and in no case shall they be taken together by the students in one and the same class period; PROVIDED, however, that if the principal or school head cannot find any available time slots for the optional religious instruction in the weekly class schedule, in the conformity of the religious teachers or instructors, the optional religious instruction shall be allotted at least two (2) of the present two (2) time slots assigned every week to Values Education.

11. Administrative Sanctions - Any principal, school head, or teacher who violates any provision of this Order shall, under due process, be subjected to appropriate disciplinary sanctions.

2. Immediate and wide dissemination of the contents of this Order is directed.

Andrew Gonzalez
ANDREW GONZALEZ, CSC
Secretary

Reference:
DECS Order (No. 13 s. 1998)

ALLOTMENT OF CLASS HOURS

To be indicated in the Perennial Index
Under the following subjects:

CHANGE
CLASSES
POLICY
RELIGION