

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Save the Children denounces death of 5th grade student from alleged physical violence by teacher; calls on the practice of Positive Parenting in school setting

Save the Children Philippines is saddened by the untimely demise of Grade 5 student Francis Gumikib from Antipolo who allegedly suffered from brain hemorrhage due to the slap of his teacher as punishment after reporting about his noisy classmates.

Using physical and humiliating or degrading punishments to discipline children has been known to have negative consequences on children in the short and long-term.

The World Health Organization's World Report on Violence (2002) stated that in the long-term, corporal punishment of children is "a significant factor in the development of violent behavior, and it is associated with other problems in childhood and later life." In the short-term, it "kills thousands of children each year and injures and handicaps many more." Francis' case shows how punitive forms of discipline can harm children and can even lead to death.

In the 2016 Philippine National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children, 66% of children experienced physical violence usually in the form of physical punishment in their childhood. Of those who attend school, 14% have experienced physical violence in school.

"The moment a child is enrolled in school, the teacher has special parental authority and responsibility to value, protect, and defend the child's life, at all times. Teachers, as substitute parents, should commit to the highest standards of ensuring that children are educated in a safe and nurturing learning environment," said Save the Children Philippines CEO Atty. Alberto Muyot.

Save the Children earnestly calls upon the Department of Education (DepEd) to strictly enforce zero tolerance for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse as declared in their Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40).

The child rights organization also calls on law enforcement agencies to expedite the investigation of the death of Francis as a result of the physical violence allegedly committed by his teacher.

Save the Children encourages teachers to take advantage of the free Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching (PDET) Online Course developed by Save the Children Philippines to guide them to use non-violent approaches in addressing the day-to-day challenges they encounter while teaching.

As signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Philippines is committed to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, while in the care of parents, legal guardians, or any other person who has the care of the child such as teachers.

At present, there is no policy that specifically protects children from physical, humiliating, and degrading acts as a form of punishment at home, in school, and in other settings where children are.

Thus, Save the Children leads the advocacy on Positive Parenting and calls on the government to prioritize the passage of the Positive Parenting Bill that will provide parents, teachers, and other persons responsible for the caring of a child with information, trainings, and other interventions that can help them perform their duty to care and educate children without inflicting physical or psychological harm on the child.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

MS. KAY I. YEBAN MAATUBANG

Save the Children Philippines

(M) 63 917 162 1503

(E) Felycora.Maatubang@savethechildren.org



Save the Children