

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **11067**



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The safety and security of learners, teachers, and school personnel are essential to the delivery of quality education. Schools must remain safe and secure environments where children can learn, develop, and participate in school activities free from the threat of firearms, weapons, violence, and other preventable dangers.

The increasing complexity of school security concerns calls for a comprehensive and preventive approach. While existing laws, regulations, and Department of Education policies provide important safeguards, there is a need to institutionalize a coordinated framework that brings together schools, families, local government units, barangays, law enforcement agencies, and social welfare institutions.

This measure, to be known as the "S.A.F.E. (Secure and Firearm-Free Education) Schools Act," seeks to establish such a framework. It recognizes that school safety cannot depend solely on security personnel or law enforcement after an incident has occurred. Prevention, early identification of threats, responsible reporting, appropriate intervention, and secure school environments must form part of a unified school safety system.

The bill directs the Department of Education to establish national standards for school access control, security risk assessments, an Anonymous Digital Tip Line, behavioral threat assessment, conflict resolution, peace education, and de-escalation training. It likewise requires public and private basic education institutions to adopt appropriate access-control procedures, reasonable security inspections, parental engagement, incident reporting, and environmental safety measures.

The measure further strengthens the participation of local government units and barangays by providing for appropriate support for school security infrastructure, community coordination, school-zone safety, and preventive patrols. These measures are intended to complement, and not replace, the responsibilities of national government agencies and school authorities.

Recognizing that children require a distinct and protective approach, the bill expressly provides that interventions involving minors shall be undertaken in accordance with Republic Act No. 9344, otherwise known as the “Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006,” and other applicable child-protection laws and regulations. The objective is not merely to punish misconduct, but to prevent violence while ensuring that children are afforded appropriate intervention, rehabilitation, counseling, and family support.

The bill also promotes safe and responsible reporting of weapons and threats through confidential or anonymous mechanisms and encourages schools to establish controlled procedures for the voluntary surrender of prohibited items. These measures are intended to provide students with a safe avenue to prevent dangerous incidents before they occur, without diminishing accountability under existing laws.

At the same time, the proposed framework recognizes the importance of privacy, dignity, due process, and the protection of personal information. Security measures must therefore be implemented in a manner that is reasonable, non-discriminatory, child-sensitive, and consistent with existing laws on data privacy and the rights and welfare of children.

Ultimately, the S.A.F.E. Schools Act seeks to institutionalize a whole-of-community approach to school safety. By combining prevention, physical security, early intervention, responsible reporting, community participation, and child-sensitive measures, this Act aims to ensure that every school in the country remains a secure and supportive environment conducive to learning.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

**“AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY
AND WEAPON PREVENTION PROGRAM, MANDATING
THE COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF
PREVENTIVE MEASURES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AND
BARANGAYS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES”**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "S.A.F.E. (Secure and Firearm-Free Education) Schools Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to ensure that educational institutions are safe, secure, and conducive to learning. The State recognizes that preventing the entry of weapons into schools requires a whole-of-community approach involving national agencies, school administrations, local government units, and grassroots barangay institutions.

Security and safety measures under this Act shall be implemented in a manner that is child-sensitive, non-discriminatory, proportionate, and respectful of the dignity, privacy, and rights of learners, consistent with existing laws on child protection, juvenile justice, and data privacy.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:

- (a) **Weapons** shall refer to firearms, bladed or pointed instruments, explosives, improvised deadly devices, and other objects designed, intended, or used to cause physical injury, excluding ordinary tools and materials required for authorized academic, vocational, or extracurricular activities.
- (b) **School Zones** shall refer to the school campus and the immediate perimeter extending fifty (50) meter radius from the boundary of

the school or its principal entrances, as may be more particularly delineated by the Department of Education (DepEd) in coordination with the concerned local government unit.

- (c) **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)** shall refer to a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through the physical design of the school environment.
- (d) **Behavioral Threat Assessment** shall refer to a proactive, evidence-based process used to identify, assess, and manage the risk of violence posed by a student, while observing applicable child protection, confidentiality, due process, and data privacy standards.
- (e) **Anonymous Digital Tip Line** shall refer to a secure, confidential, and accessible SMS, mobile application, web-based, or similar reporting mechanism established or authorized by the DepEd to allow students, school personnel, parents, and other concerned persons to report, without fear of retaliation, weapons, bomb threats, explosive devices, threats of violence, or other school safety concerns.

SECTION 4. Mandates of the Department of Education (DepEd). - The DepEd shall serve as the lead agency in implementing this Act. It shall:

- (a) Formulate and enforce a National School Access Control Policy, requiring uniform security risk assessments across all school divisions and allowing reasonable variations based on the physical layout and assessed risk of each school.
- (b) Establish a national framework for an Anonymous Digital Tip Line, providing a secure SMS or app-based channel for students, school personnel, parents, and other concerned persons to report weapons, bomb threats, explosive devices, threats of violence, or other school safety concerns without fear of retaliation. The system shall protect the confidentiality of reports and the personal information of users in accordance with applicable data privacy and child protection laws.
- (c) Mandate the creation of Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams (BTATs) in all school divisions, composed of guidance counselors, trained teachers, and administrators, to proactively identify and intervene with at-risk students exhibiting credible indicators of a potential for violence. Such assessment shall be conducted in accordance with child protection, confidentiality, due process, and data privacy standards, and shall prioritize appropriate intervention and support.

The DepEd shall likewise establish minimum standards for a School Safety Committee in every school to coordinate school safety, emergency preparedness, threat reporting, and community coordination.

- (d) Integrate conflict resolution, peace education, and the legal consequences of weapon possession into the primary and secondary education curricula.
- (e) Provide mandatory annual De-escalation Training for school security personnel and teaching staff to safely manage incidents involving armed students. Such training shall also include emergency response, evacuation and lockdown procedures, crisis communication, and child-sensitive response to incidents of violence, including bomb threats and explosive incidents.

SECTION 5. Responsibilities of School Administrations. - All public and private basic education institutions shall ensure the conduct and implementation of the following:

- (a) **Access Control:** Designate specific, secured entry and exit points equipped with appropriate personnel and mechanisms. During class hours, enforce a Single Point of Entry policy by funneling all late arrivals and visitors through an appropriately staffed and monitored main gate, ensuring all other perimeters remain secure, where practicable and consistent with the school's physical layout and security risk assessment.
- (b) **Bag Inspections and Transparency:** Conduct random, reasonable, and non-intrusive inspections of bags prior to entry, strictly upholding the students' right to dignity and privacy. Additionally, schools may, through consultation with the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA), mandate a "Clear Backpack Policy" to mitigate concealed threats.
- (c) **Parental Involvement:** Require parents and guardians, through formal agreements during enrollment, to receive information and guidance on the safe storage of firearms and other dangerous items, responsible reporting of threats, and their role in promoting school safety.
- (d) **Confiscation and Reporting:** Immediately secure any discovered weapon and promptly turn it over to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, consistent with applicable safety and evidence-handling procedures, and report the incident to the local Philippine National Police (PNP) within twenty-four (24) hours. Where the incident involves a minor, the school shall likewise notify the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) within the same period.

Any person who, in good faith, reports a suspected weapon, threat, or act of violence pursuant to this Act shall not be subject to civil or administrative liability solely by reason of such report, absent bad faith or malicious intent.

- (e) **Safe Surrender and Disposal:** Establish secure and controlled surrender points outside the main gate, allowing students to safely surrender prohibited items before entering the campus. The surrender mechanism shall be subject to procedures established by the DepEd, in coordination with the PNP, for the safe handling, documentation, turnover, and disposition of surrendered items. Nothing herein shall be construed as granting immunity from liability for offenses committed in connection with the possession, use, or transfer of such items.
- (f) **Environmental Security:** Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles by eliminating campus blind spots, trimming overgrown vegetation, ensuring adequate lighting, and removing abandoned structures where weapons may be hidden.
- (g) **School Safety Officer:** Designate a School Safety Officer who shall serve as the focal person for the coordination, implementation, documentation, and monitoring of school safety programs and measures, and shall coordinate with relevant government agencies and community partners during safety-related incidents.
- (h) **Comprehensive School Safety Plan:** Adopt and regularly update a comprehensive school safety and emergency response plan covering prevention, threat reporting, emergency communication, evacuation, lockdown, response to weapons-related incidents including bomb threats, explosive incidents, and other acts of mass violence, and coordination with emergency and law-enforcement authorities. The plan shall be reviewed periodically based on the school's security risk assessment.

SECTION 6. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs). — City and municipal LGUs shall actively support school safety by allocating, subject to applicable budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws and regulations, a portion of the Special Education Fund (SEF) for the procurement of modern security infrastructure, including but not limited to:

- (a) Perimeter hardening and structural reinforcements.
- (b) Electronic or other appropriate access-control systems, including RFID and smart turnstiles, where appropriate, to verify student enrollment and regulate entry points.

- (c) Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enhanced CCTV cameras and other appropriate security technologies capable of detecting or assisting in the identification of weapons or suspicious activity, subject to applicable data privacy, cybersecurity, procurement, and child protection standards.
- (d) Enacting or strengthening local ordinances, consistent with national law, that regulate the sale, display, or unauthorized possession of weapons within school zones.
- (e) Coordinating with the local PNP to ensure heightened police visibility and regular patrols in school zones during drop-off and dismissal hours.

SECTION 7. Duties of the Barangay. - As the primary grassroots unit, the barangay shall:

- (a) Deploy barangay tanods to conduct regular foot patrols within the immediate perimeter of schools located within their jurisdiction, subject to applicable laws, regulations, and coordination with the PNP.
- (b) Utilize the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) to identify and facilitate early interventions for at-risk youth showing credible indicators of violent behavior, consistent with applicable child protection and juvenile justice laws.
- (c) Establish a community watch system to promptly report to school authorities and appropriate law enforcement or social welfare authorities credible information concerning students suspected of carrying weapons before they enter school premises, without engaging in unauthorized physical intervention or confrontation.

SECTION 8. Interventions for Minors. - Any student found in possession of a weapon shall not be subjected to adult penal facilities. Interventions shall strictly comply with Republic Act No. 9344, otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, and other applicable child protection laws.

The Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), in coordination with the school and appropriate authorities, shall ensure the immediate assessment and provision of appropriate intervention, diversion, counseling, family support, and other necessary services, as may be warranted under Republic Act No. 9344 and its implementing rules and regulations, with appropriate notification and involvement of the child's parent or legal guardian, consistent with applicable law.

SECTION 9. Appropriations. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the PNP, through its Firearms and Explosives Office (FEO), where appropriate, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

The implementing rules and regulations shall prescribe minimum standards for school security risk assessment, access control, threat assessment, reporting mechanisms, safe surrender procedures, training, emergency response, school safety planning, and data protection.

The DepEd shall submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including school safety assessments, reported weapons-related incidents, training conducted, and compliance with the minimum safety standards established under this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly: Provided, that nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish or impair the rights and protections accorded to children under Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, Republic Act No. 7610, as amended, and other applicable laws.

SECTION 13. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.