

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
House Bill No. 11442



Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez, DPA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution recognizes the vital role of our youth in nation-building and directs the State to promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It likewise mandates the right of children to assistance and to special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

As a result, the Republic has enacted an extensive body of laws protecting children and learners from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking, bullying, discrimination, child marriage, online sexual abuse or exploitation, child sexual abuse or exploitation materials, and other threats to their safety and development. These include Republic Act No. 7610, as amended; Republic Act No. 9344, as amended by Republic Act No. 10630; Republic Act Nos. 10173, 11476, 11510, 11596, 11650, 11930, 12080, and 12199; and other child-protection, education, mental-health, disability, and data-privacy laws.

These laws provide important substantive protections. Yet a legal right cannot fully protect a child who does not know, in an age-appropriate manner, that such right exists, how to recognize a situation requiring protection, whom to approach, and how to obtain lawful assistance. Child protection must therefore include not only response and enforcement, but also prevention through practical, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate education.

Children need not be of legal age to understand their rights, recognize danger, seek assistance, respect the rights of others, and appreciate the responsibilities of citizenship. Legal literacy enables children and young people to understand the protections available to them, recognize situations requiring assistance, use lawful reporting and referral mechanisms, and appreciate the responsibilities that accompany the exercise of rights.

This measure draws, among other sources, upon the policy proposal advanced by Atty. Robie P. Quiño in the legal research paper entitled “Not of Legal Age, but of Legal Mind.” It is likewise anchored on Articles 29 and 42 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the

Child, which relate education to respect for human rights and require the principles and provisions of the Convention to be made widely known to adults and children alike.

Republic Act No. 11476 already institutionalizes Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) as a separate subject from Grades 1 to 6, integrates GMRC into kindergarten learning activities, and establishes Values Education for the higher grade levels. Its full promise, however, depends upon faithful classroom implementation, trained teachers, adequate and relevant learning resources, meaningful character-building activities, school-family-community partnership, and continuing review of actual learner outcomes.

This measure therefore strengthens, rather than duplicates or displaces, the GMRC and Values Education framework. It integrates age-appropriate child-rights and rule-of-law competencies with the formation of human dignity, respect, honesty, self-discipline, responsibility, peaceful conflict resolution, obedience to law, and concern for others, while preserving the separate-subject requirements and time allotments mandated under Republic Act No. 11476.

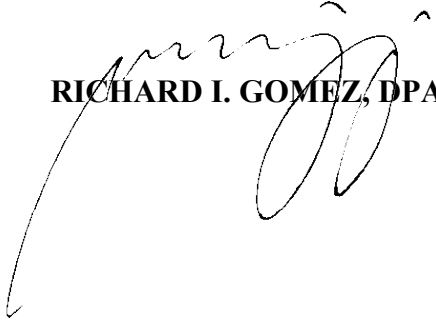
The proposed National Child Rights and Rule-of-Law Education Program does not create an additional stand-alone academic subject where existing curricula and learning areas can adequately deliver the required competencies. Instead, it establishes a national framework through which existing education, child-protection, GMRC, values-education, mental-health, digital-safety, juvenile-justice, alternative-learning, technical-vocational, higher-education, and youth-development programs may be mapped, harmonized, strengthened, and connected. This integration shall not diminish the teaching of GMRC and Values Education as separate subjects where required by Republic Act No. 11476.

The Program is age-progressive. For young children, it emphasizes dignity, personal safety, respectful relationships, personal boundaries, trusted adults, safe and unsafe situations, and help-seeking. For older learners, it progressively introduces children's rights and responsibilities, digital citizenship, privacy, crime prevention, due process, restorative justice, civic participation, the functions of public institutions, and lawful mechanisms for obtaining protection and assistance.

The measure also protects learners from retraumatization, compelled disclosure, stigma, retaliation, and misuse of personal information. Teachers and other education personnel are trained to recognize concerns, secure immediate safety, comply with applicable reporting duties, and make appropriate referrals, but they are not converted into investigators, forensic interviewers, social workers, counselors, prosecutors, or lawyers. Nothing in the measure creates a new criminal offense, increases criminal liability, or lowers the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

The bill further provides measurable implementation standards, accessible and legally accurate learning resources, local referral directories, inter-agency coordination within existing mandates, phased implementation, administrative accountability through existing lawful mechanisms, monitoring, periodic review, and reporting to Congress.

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


RICHARD I. GOMEZ, DPA

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL CHILD RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW
EDUCATION PROGRAM, STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD
MANNERS AND RIGHT CONDUCT AND VALUES EDUCATION UNDER REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 11476, PROVIDING FOR THEIR HARMONIZED INTEGRATION IN
EDUCATIONAL AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.*

This Act shall be known as the “Child Rights and Rule of Law Education Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*

It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the rights, safety, dignity, participation, and holistic development of every child; to make the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child widely known to children and adults; and to foster a culture of lawfulness founded on human rights, justice, accountability, equality, and respect for the rule of law.

Toward these ends, the State shall provide learners with age-appropriate, practical, inclusive, evidence-informed, and accessible education that enables them to understand their rights and corresponding responsibilities, recognize and avoid harm, seek timely assistance through safe and lawful channels, respect the rights and dignity of others, understand the basic functions of

public institutions and justice processes, resolve conflicts peacefully and lawfully, and participate responsibly in family, school, workplace, digital, civic, and community life.

The State shall implement this policy consistently with the best interests of the child, academic freedom, lawful school autonomy, the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians, cultural and religious diversity, gender equality, disability inclusion, child participation, due process, data privacy, and existing child-protection and safeguarding laws. Nothing in this Act shall diminish any protection, right, duty, remedy, or service available under existing law.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.*

- a. Institutionalize a coherent and age-progressive program on children's rights, child protection, crime prevention, criminal justice, and the rule of law;
- b. Equip learners with practical competencies to recognize violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, trafficking, child marriage, online harm, and other threats and to seek assistance through safe and lawful channels;
- c. Develop respect for human rights, due process, restorative justice, accountability, peaceful conflict resolution, and responsible citizenship;
- d. Strengthen the preventive and educational dimensions of the country's child-protection and juvenile-justice systems without stigmatizing child victims or witnesses, children at risk, or children in conflict with the law;
- e. Strengthen the faithful and measurable implementation of GMRC and Values Education under Republic Act No. 11476, including teacher preparation, learning resources, character-building activities, school-family-community partnership, supervision, and accountability;
- f. Integrate relevant competencies into appropriate existing subjects, learning areas, programs, and activities without unnecessary curricular duplication or overload;
- g. Train educators and service providers to deliver accurate content and respond safely and lawfully to child-protection concerns and disclosures;
- h. Ensure that instruction and learning resources are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, gender-responsive, trauma-informed, disability-inclusive, and available in accessible formats;
- i. Strengthen coordination among education, child-protection, social-welfare, health, justice, digital-safety, youth, and local government institutions;
- j. Establish measurable standards for implementation, accessibility, personnel capacity, referral functionality, learner competency, and institutional compliance; and
- k. Promote evidence-based continuous improvement through monitoring, evaluation, consultation, and periodic review.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.*

- a. ***“Age-appropriate” or “developmentally appropriate”*** means content, methods, language, activities, and assessment suited to the learner’s age, evolving capacities, developmental stage, circumstances, and individual needs;
- b. ***“Child”*** means a person below eighteen (18) years of age, or a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who, because of a physical or mental disability or condition, is unable to fully take care of or protect oneself from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination, consistent with applicable law;
- c. ***“Child rights and rule-of-law education”*** means structured learning that develops practical knowledge, values, attitudes, and competencies concerning children’s rights and responsibilities, child protection, crime prevention, justice institutions and processes, due process, restorative justice, civic participation, and lawful help-seeking;
- d. ***“Child safeguarding”*** means policies, procedures, and practices intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, retaliation, and other harm involving a child in an education or youth-program setting;
- e. ***“Covered institution or program”*** means an educational institution, training institution, early-childhood program, alternative learning program, or government-supported youth education or training program covered by this Act;
- f. ***“Learner”*** means any person participating in early childhood, basic, alternative, technical-vocational, higher education, or government-supported out-of-school youth education or training covered by this Act;
- g. ***“Referral mechanism”*** means an established process through which a learner or another person may be connected to an appropriate child-protection, social-welfare, health, mental-health, legal, law-enforcement, education, or other competent service;
- h. ***“Rule of law”*** means the principle that all persons and institutions, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with human rights
- i. ***“Good Manners and Right Conduct” or “GMRC”*** means the universally accepted basic social values, etiquette, and proper modes of behavior that convey respect for oneself and others, as defined and institutionalized under Republic Act No. 11476; and
- j. ***“Trauma-informed”*** means an approach that recognizes the possible effects of trauma, seeks to avoid retraumatization, promotes physical and emotional safety, and connects the learner to appropriate professional support.

CHAPTER II

CHILD RIGHTS AND RULE-OF-LAW EDUCATION PROGRAM

SEC. 5. Establishment of the Program.

There is hereby established a **National Child Rights and Rule-of-Law Education Program**, hereinafter referred to as the “Program,” which shall be implemented through existing early-childhood, basic, alternative, technical-vocational, higher-education, and government-supported out-of-school youth education and training systems in accordance with this Act.

The Department of Education (DepEd) shall serve as the lead agency for the Program in basic education and the Alternative Learning System (ALS), without prejudice to the statutory mandates of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), National Youth Commission (NYC), local government units (LGUs), and other concerned agencies.

It shall convene an interagency technical working group composed of the agencies identified in Section 19 of this Act for curriculum mapping, standards development, implementation coordination, and monitoring. The technical working group shall operate within existing structures and shall not constitute a new permanent council or bureaucracy.

The Program shall not create a new permanent council, commission, bureau, or office. Coordination shall be undertaken through existing inter-agency mechanisms and, where necessary, a technical working group convened by DepEd for matters within its mandate.

SEC. 6. National Program Framework.

Within the period prescribed under Section 24 of this Act, the responsible agencies shall jointly establish a National Child Rights and Rule-of-Law Education Framework containing the following:

- a. National learning objectives and minimum competencies;
- b. Age- and development-level progression standards;
- c. Minimum safeguarding and referral standards;
- d. Minimum accessibility and inclusion standards;
- e. Personnel competency and training standards;
- f. Standards for learning-resource development, legal-accuracy review, and updating;
- g. Referral and local-service directory requirements;

- h. Monitoring and evaluation indicators;
- i. Data-protection and confidentiality safeguards; and
- j. Procedures for periodic review and updating.

The Framework shall serve as the common reference for integrating the Program into existing education and training systems while allowing each responsible agency to issue appropriate standards within its lawful mandate.

SEC. 7. *Core Learning Content and Competencies.*

The Program shall develop age-appropriate knowledge, values, attitudes, and practical competencies on the following:

- a. The inherent dignity of every person; children's rights and corresponding responsibilities; equality and non-discrimination; and respect for the rights of others;
- b. Rights and protections under the Constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and relevant domestic laws, presented in plain and understandable language;
- c. Recognition and prevention of violence, abuse, neglect, cruelty, bullying, discrimination, trafficking, child marriage, economic and sexual exploitation, online sexual abuse or exploitation of children (OSAEC), child sexual abuse or exploitation materials (CSAEM), grooming, and other forms of harm;
- d. Personal safety, bodily integrity, personal boundaries, an age-appropriate understanding of consent, safe and unsafe situations, trusted adults, bystander responsibility, and lawful help-seeking;
- e. Digital citizenship, privacy, media and information literacy, responsible internet use, cybersecurity awareness, online fraud and manipulation, and safe reporting through official protocols without opening, downloading, copying, screenshotting, or redistributing unlawful or harmful material;
- f. Basic crime prevention, personal and community safety, lawful behavior, responsible decision-making, peaceful conflict resolution, and the consequences of unlawful conduct;
- g. The functions of barangay institutions, schools, social-welfare offices, health and mental-health services, law-enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, child-protection bodies, and other referral institutions;
- h. The rights and appropriate treatment of child victims and witnesses, children at risk, and children in conflict with the law, including diversion, due process, restorative justice, rehabilitation, reintegration, and freedom from stigma;
- i. Mental-health awareness, emotional safety, crisis help-seeking, and available referral services, consistent with Republic Act No. 12080 and other applicable laws;

- j. Citizenship, accountability, integrity, anti-corruption, civic participation, respect for diversity, and peaceful and lawful resolution of disputes; and
- k. Other emerging child-protection, public-safety, and rule-of-law concerns as may be determined through evidence-based review and consultation.

SEC. 8. *Curriculum and Instructional Standards.*

The Program shall be implemented in accordance with the following standards:

- a. Content shall follow a spiral progression that begins with personal safety, dignity, trusted adults, and help-seeking and advances toward rights, responsibilities, justice processes, civic participation, and the rule of law;
- b. Instruction shall be learner-centered, evidence-informed, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and trauma-informed;
- c. Content shall, whenever practicable, be integrated into appropriate existing subjects, learning areas, guidance and counseling activities, co-curricular programs, community learning, and digital-citizenship initiatives. Nothing in this Act shall require the creation of an additional separate subject for the Program where integration will achieve the intended competencies: Provided, That this shall not diminish the separate teaching of GMRC in Grades 1 to 6, Values Education in Grades 7 to 10, or other requirements established under Republic Act No. 11476;
- d. Responsible agencies shall conduct curriculum mapping to avoid duplication and unnecessary overload and to identify where the competencies under this Act will reinforce GMRC, Values Education, Araling Panlipunan, Health, or successor learning areas and existing child-protection and digital-safety programs, without reducing statutory subject requirements or prescribed instructional time;
- e. Teaching strategies may include stories, play, role-playing, case simulations, guided discussion, community engagement, and other participatory methods, provided that no activity exposes a learner to unnecessary risk or compels disclosure of a personal or traumatic experience;
- f. Materials shall distinguish legal information from individualized legal advice and shall direct learners to qualified professionals and proper agencies when case-specific assistance is required; and
- g. Assessment shall focus on practical understanding, safe decision-making, help-seeking, respect for rights, and application of competencies and shall not penalize a learner for declining to disclose personal or traumatic information.

SEC. 9. *Integration in Basic Education.*

DepEd shall integrate the Program into the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum in all public and private basic education institutions, consistent with Republic Act No. 10533, as amended, Republic Act No. 11476, and other applicable laws. DepEd shall prescribe grade-level standards and learning competencies, identify appropriate learning areas and activities, develop or approve learning resources, and issue differentiated and proportionate implementation guidance for public and private schools.

For kindergarten and the early elementary grades, instruction shall emphasize dignity, personal safety, respect, trusted adults, safe and unsafe situations, personal boundaries, help-seeking, and peaceful conflict resolution through play-based, story-based, and concrete learning activities. Technical legal terminology and detailed descriptions of violence or criminal conduct shall not be used where developmentally inappropriate.

For learners in the later elementary and secondary grades, instruction may progressively include legal rights and responsibilities, digital safety, privacy, crime prevention, due process, restorative justice, justice institutions, civic participation, and lawful reporting and referral.

SEC. 10. *Strengthening the Implementation of Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education.*

Nothing in this Act shall diminish, replace, or reduce the implementation of Republic Act No. 11476. GMRC shall remain a separate subject from Grades 1 to 6 with the time allotment prescribed for core subjects and shall remain integrated in daily learning activities in kindergarten. Values Education shall remain a separate subject from Grades 7 to 10, with GMRC integrated therein, and shall remain integrated into appropriate subjects in Grades 11 and 12, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11476.

DepEd shall harmonize the Program with GMRC and Values Education through curriculum mapping and grade-level competency standards. In the elementary grades, GMRC shall serve as one of the principal learning areas for appropriate competencies under this Act concerning human dignity, respect for oneself and others, honesty, self-discipline, responsibility, concern for others, peaceful conflict resolution, obedience to law, responsible citizenship, safe decision-making, and lawful help-seeking: Provided, That competencies requiring specialized child-protection, health, digital-safety, legal, or referral instruction shall also be delivered through the appropriate learning areas, personnel, and mechanisms.

Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, DepEd shall complete a national implementation review of GMRC and Values Education under Republic Act No. 11476 and shall issue or update standards and guidance concerning:

- a. Compliance with statutory grade-level coverage and prescribed time allotments;
- b. Clear and developmentally appropriate learning competencies and progression standards;
- c. Teacher qualifications, assignment, pre-service preparation, induction, in-service training, and continuing professional development;
- d. Adequate, relevant, culturally responsive, disability-inclusive, and accessible learning resources;
- e. Concrete and experiential character-building activities, including age-appropriate role-playing, guided discussion, school-family collaboration, community engagement, and other lawful participatory methods;
- f. A whole-school approach and meaningful partnership among schools, families, and communities;
- g. Assessment of practical understanding, decision-making, conduct, and application of values, without compelling disclosure of personal beliefs or traumatic experiences and without discriminatory, stigmatizing, or degrading treatment; and
- h. Supervision, technical assistance, monitoring, corrective action, and public accountability for implementation gaps.

School division offices shall periodically assess implementation, provide technical assistance, and require proportionate corrective action plans where material deficiencies are found. Monitoring shall focus on actual curriculum delivery, instructional time, trained personnel, learning resources, character-building activities, learner competencies, and school-family-community participation, and shall not be based solely on disciplinary statistics or subjective moral judgments.

SEC. 11. *Integration in the Early Childhood Care and Development System.*

The ECCD Council, in coordination with DepEd, DSWD, DOH, LGUs, parents, and child-development experts, shall integrate developmentally appropriate concepts on dignity, personal safety, respectful relationships, trusted adults, personal boundaries, safe and unsafe situations, emotional safety, and help-seeking into existing ECCD programs, learning experiences, parent education, and community-awareness activities under Republic Act No. 12199.

ECCD content shall be delivered through play, stories, routines, caregiver-child interaction, and other developmentally appropriate practices and shall not include technical criminal-justice instruction. Parents and parent-substitutes shall be provided practical information on positive caregiving, child safeguarding, recognizing possible signs of harm, responding appropriately, and accessing referral services.

Implementation under this Section shall observe the respective statutory responsibilities of the ECCD Council and DepEd for children below five (5) years of age and the formative years from five (5) to eight (8) years of age.

SEC. 12. *Alternative Learning System and Out-of-School Youth Programs.*

DepEd, through the Bureau of Alternative Education, shall integrate relevant competencies into the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, learning standards, modules, learning resources, functional education and literacy programs, and assessment mechanisms under Republic Act No. 11510, consistent with the flexible and learner-centered nature of ALS.

The NYC, DILG, DSWD, and LGUs shall, within their respective mandates, support or facilitate community-based, mobile, modular, broadcast, and digital delivery for out-of-school youth, particularly those in geographically isolated, underserved, conflict-affected, disaster-affected, and emergency settings.

Modules for older out-of-school youth shall include practical information on rights and responsibilities at home, in training, at work, and online; protection from trafficking and exploitation; lawful reporting and referral; community crime prevention; restorative justice; and access to legal, social-welfare, health, mental-health, and livelihood support. Nothing in this Section shall expand the jurisdiction of any agency beyond its existing statutory mandate.

SEC. 13. *Technical-Vocational Education and Training.*

TESDA shall integrate appropriate child safeguarding, workplace rights, digital safety, ethical conduct, and rule-of-law competencies into relevant training regulations, common competencies, and programs serving young people or preparing trainees to work with children. Particular attention shall be given to apprenticeships, workplace exposure, community-based training, and occupations in which trainees may interact with children or other vulnerable persons.

SEC. 14. *Higher Education.*

CHED shall develop and promote model modules, faculty-development programs, reference materials, and appropriate competency frameworks for teacher education, social work, psychology, criminology, health and allied professions, legal management, law-related education, public administration, and other programs whose graduates are likely to work with children or perform public-facing functions involving child protection.

CHED may support voluntary or institutionally appropriate integration of relevant content into general education, civic engagement, service-learning, and National Service Training Program activities. Implementation shall respect constitutional academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and applicable higher-education laws. Nothing in this Act shall authorize CHED to prescribe academic content or a course in a manner inconsistent with those guarantees.

SEC. 15. *Education and Training of Personnel.*

DepEd, the ECCD Council, CHED, TESDA, and other responsible agencies shall provide pre-service, induction, in-service, and continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, child development teachers and workers, ALS teachers and implementors, guidance personnel, school administrators, trainers, faculty members, and relevant youth-program personnel.

Training shall cover:

- a. Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education content, pedagogy, experiential character-building activities, and the whole-school approach required under Republic Act No. 11476;
- b. Child rights and safeguarding;
- c. Age-appropriate and trauma-informed pedagogy;
- d. Cultural, linguistic, gender, and disability inclusion;
- e. Digital safety and privacy;
- f. Recognition of possible harm;
- g. Confidentiality and data protection;
- h. Applicable mandatory-reporting duties;
- i. Referral procedures; psychological first aid within the limits of the personnel's competence;
- j. Protection against retaliation, intimidation, discrimination, victim-blaming, and other forms of reprisal; and
- k. The limits of the role of education personnel in investigations and professional intervention.

Nothing in this Act shall require teachers, child-development workers, or other education personnel to conduct criminal, forensic, psychological, or child-protection investigations. Their responsibilities shall be limited to actions authorized or required by law, including securing immediate safety, making required reports, preserving information when required by law, providing appropriate immediate support within their competence, and facilitating referral. Nothing in this Section shall expand or diminish a mandatory-reporting obligation under existing law.

SEC. 16. *Learning Resources; Localization, Accessibility, and Legal Accuracy.*

DepEd and the other responsible agencies shall develop, review, and periodically update learning resources for their respective areas of responsibility, in consultation, as appropriate, with children and youth, parents and guardians, educators, child-development specialists, child-protection practitioners, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations,

indigenous cultural communities, Muslim education stakeholders, civil society organizations, professional associations, and other relevant groups.

Learning resources shall be available in languages understood by learners and in accessible formats, including Filipino Sign Language, Braille, large print, audio, captioned, easy-read, and compatible digital formats, as appropriate and consistent with Republic Act No. 11650 and other applicable laws. Localization and indigenization shall be permitted, provided that minimum rights, safeguarding, accessibility, privacy, and legal-accuracy standards are maintained.

Legal provisions, agency names, referral procedures, reporting mechanisms, and digital-safety information in learning resources shall be reviewed periodically to ensure continuing accuracy.

CHAPTER III

SAFEGUARDING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SEC. 17. *Child Safeguarding, Disclosure, and Referral.*

Every covered institution or program shall maintain and implement clear, child-friendly, confidential, and accessible procedures for receiving and responding to a request for help, disclosure, or report of possible harm. Such procedures shall be consistent with existing child-protection, anti-bullying, juvenile-justice, mental-health, data-privacy, and mandatory-reporting laws and rules and shall:

- a. Prioritize the immediate safety, dignity, and best interests of the child;
- b. Avoid repeated, suggestive, public, or unnecessarily detailed questioning and prevent retaliation, intimidation, discrimination, and victim-blaming;
- c. Limit access to information to persons with lawful and legitimate functions, without prejudice to mandatory reporting and lawful investigation;
- d. Refer the child and, when appropriate, the family to qualified social-welfare, health, mental-health, legal, and law-enforcement services;
- e. Provide reasonable accommodation and communication support for children with disabilities and language needs;
- f. Ensure that parent or guardian participation does not delay immediate protection or compromise the child's safety, particularly when the parent, guardian, or household member is the alleged source of harm; and
- g. Ensure that school or program personnel do not determine the truth or legal sufficiency of an allegation where such determination is reserved by law to competent authorities.

SEC. 18. *Protection of Personal Information and Confidentiality.*

All covered institutions and government agencies shall comply with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” and other applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and rules. Personal information concerning a learner shall be collected, processed, stored, accessed, used, retained, and disclosed only for lawful and legitimate purposes and to the extent necessary and proportionate to such purposes.

Nothing in this Act shall prevent or restrict a disclosure expressly authorized or required by law, including mandatory reporting or lawful investigation. Responsible agencies shall establish safeguards against unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, retention, or use of information concerning child victims, witnesses, children at risk, and children in conflict with the law.

SEC. 19. *Duties of Government Agencies.*

The following agencies shall perform their respective duties under existing mandates and in coordination with the lead agency:

- a. DepEd shall lead curriculum mapping, standards development, basic education and ALS implementation, personnel training, guidance for public and private schools, and consolidated monitoring;
- b. The ECCD Council shall lead development and implementation of the early-childhood and parent-education components;
- c. The CWC shall ensure consistency with national child-rights and child-protection policies and facilitate meaningful child participation;
- d. The JJWC and DOJ shall assist in ensuring the accuracy and child-sensitive presentation of juvenile justice, criminal justice, due process, diversion, restorative justice, and legal-referral content;
- e. DSWD shall support safeguarding standards, social-welfare referral protocols, case-management coordination, and capacity building within its mandate;
- f. DOH shall support health, mental-health, psychosocial, and referral content in coordination with structures established under Republic Act No. 12080 and other applicable laws;
- g. CHED and TESDA shall perform the functions specified in Sections 13 and 14 of this Act;
- h. DICT shall assist in digital citizenship, privacy, cybersecurity, online safety, and accessible digital-learning content;
- i. DILG shall support LGU and barangay participation, local referral directories, community dissemination, and programs for out-of-school youth;
- j. NYC shall promote youth participation and support out-of-school and community-based youth education;

k. The Presidential Office for Child Protection, or its successor office as may be designated by the President, may participate in policy harmonization and inter-agency coordination consistent with applicable law and executive issuances; and

l. The Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, prosecution service, Public Attorney's Office, and other justice-sector bodies may provide technical assistance on legal accuracy and referral mechanisms within their respective mandates.

Participation of law-enforcement and justice-sector personnel in education activities shall be child-sensitive, non-intimidating, and separated from intelligence gathering or enforcement activities, except where immediate action is required by law to protect a child.

SEC. 20. *Local Referral and Service Directories.*

Each covered basic education institution, ALS program, and other covered government-supported youth program shall maintain or have access to an updated local referral directory containing, as applicable:

- a. School child-protection and safeguarding focal points;
- b. Local social-welfare offices;
- c. Health and mental-health services;
- d. Law-enforcement and emergency services;
- e. Prosecutorial and legal-aid services;
- f. Barangay and local child-protection mechanisms;
- g. Services for children with disabilities;
- h. Services addressing trafficking, online sexual abuse or exploitation of children, child sexual abuse or exploitation materials, child marriage, child labor, bullying, and other child-protection concerns; and
- i. Other competent and appropriate services available within the locality.

The directory shall be maintained in an accessible and child-friendly format and updated at least annually and whenever there is a material change in a relevant service or referral mechanism. No institution shall be required to create a new service where an appropriate existing government or accredited service is available.

SEC. 21. *Participation of Children, Parents, and Communities.*

Children shall be consulted in the design, testing, periodic review, and evaluation of learning resources and reporting mechanisms in a manner consistent with their age, evolving capacities, safety, and right to be heard. Parents, guardians, families, educators, community leaders, civil society, child-protection practitioners, and youth organizations shall be encouraged to support the Program through orientation, positive caregiving, community education, and referral awareness.

Parent and community participation shall respect the privacy, safety, autonomy, and best interests of the child and shall not restrict a child's access to lawful protection, counseling, social-welfare services, or reporting mechanisms.

SEC. 22. *Compliance and Administrative Accountability.*

Covered institutions shall comply with applicable standards issued by the agency having jurisdiction over them. Compliance shall be assessed through existing accreditation, licensing, recognition, supervision, quality-assurance, monitoring, inspection, or administrative mechanisms, as applicable.

Where a covered institution materially fails to comply with mandatory standards under this Act or its implementing rules, the responsible agency may require a corrective action plan, provide technical assistance, conduct follow-up monitoring, or impose administrative measures authorized under existing law, rules, regulations, or the terms of the institution's license, permit, recognition, accreditation, or authority to operate, subject to due process.

No administrative measure shall be based solely on the number of disclosures or reports received by an institution. Nothing in this Section authorizes suspension or cancellation of a license, permit, recognition, accreditation, or authority to operate without compliance with applicable procedural and substantive safeguards.

SEC. 23. *Private Education and Training Institutions.*

Private basic education institutions, private technical-vocational institutions, and other private programs covered by this Act shall comply with applicable minimum standards issued by the agency having jurisdiction. Implementing rules shall provide reasonable, phased, and proportionate requirements, technical assistance, model resources, and lawful flexibility for institutions with limited personnel or financial resources without reducing minimum child-safeguarding, accessibility, privacy, or legal-accuracy standards.

Nothing in this Act shall impair the lawful autonomy of private educational institutions or require creation of a separate academic subject where the competencies can be effectively integrated into existing programs.

SEC. 24. *Phased Implementation.*

Implementation of this Act shall proceed as follows:

- a. Within one hundred eighty (180) days from its effectivity, the implementing rules and regulations shall be promulgated;
- b. Within one (1) year from effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations, the responsible agencies shall complete curriculum mapping, the National Program

Framework, minimum competency standards, model learning resources, safeguarding and referral guidance, and the initial personnel-training framework;

c. Implementation shall begin not later than the first full school, training, or program year following completion of the requirements under paragraph (b); and

d. Nationwide implementation of the Program in basic education and ALS shall be completed within three (3) school years from commencement of implementation.

Existing programs, learning resources, training programs, and institutional mechanisms that substantially comply with this Act may be recognized, adapted, or integrated to prevent duplication and promote efficient use of public resources.

SEC. 25. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement.

DepEd, in coordination with the agencies identified in Section 19 of this Act, shall establish a national monitoring and evaluation framework for the Program. The framework shall measure, at a minimum:

- a. Curriculum and program coverage;
- b. Availability and accessibility of learning resources;
- c. Personnel trained and competency attainment;
- d. Learner knowledge and practical competency;
- e. Availability and functionality of referral mechanisms;
- f. Participation of children, parents, and communities;
- g. Inclusion of underserved learners and learners with disabilities;
- h. Implementation gaps and corrective actions;
- i. Compliance with safeguarding and privacy standards;
- j. Compliance with the grade-level coverage, prescribed time allotments, teacher preparation, learning-resource, character-building, whole-school, annual-review, and reporting requirements for GMRC and Values Education under Republic Act No. 11476; and
- k. Resource utilization and funding adequacy.

The framework shall not require unnecessary collection, publication, or disclosure of personally identifiable information concerning child victims, witnesses, children at risk, or children in conflict with the law. An increase in appropriate disclosures or reports shall not, by itself, be treated as evidence of increased abuse or institutional failure, and report counts shall not be used as a stand-alone performance indicator in a manner that discourages reporting, conceals harm, or penalizes proper compliance.

SEC. 26. *Report to Congress.*

Not later than two (2) years after the start of implementation and annually thereafter for the first five (5) years, DepEd shall submit a consolidated public report to the President and the appropriate committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report shall contain findings, expenditures, implementation challenges, agency compliance, corrective action taken, and recommended legislative or administrative action while protecting confidential and personal information and without identifying individual child victims, witnesses, children at risk, or children in conflict with the law. The report shall contain a distinct section on the implementation of GMRC and Values Education under Republic Act No. 11476, including compliance with grade-level coverage and time allotments, teacher preparation, learning resources, character-building activities, learner outcomes, implementation gaps, and corrective action. This consolidated reporting shall complement, and shall not excuse or replace, the annual review and report required under Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11476.

CHAPTER IV FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 27. *Appropriations.*

The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned agencies, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, auditing, and procurement laws, rules, and regulations. Thereafter, the amounts necessary for continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and the respective budgets of concerned agencies, subject to the usual budgetary process.

Within their respective mandates, agencies and LGUs may utilize lawful existing funds for education, child protection, youth development, training, digital safety, mental health, social welfare, and related programs, provided that such utilization is consistent with the purposes for which the funds were appropriated. Responsible agencies shall identify and submit their annual funding requirements, including accessible learning resources, personnel training, monitoring, and referral mechanisms, as part of the regular budget preparation process.

SEC. 28. *Non-Creation of Criminal Liability.*

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to:

- a. Create a new criminal offense;
- b. Increase criminal liability or impose a criminal penalty on any learner;
- c. Lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility;
- d. Modify the rules on criminal responsibility, legal capacity, age of consent, statutory rape, or other protections under existing law;

- e. Authorize an educational institution or education personnel to conduct a criminal or forensic investigation except to the extent expressly authorized by law;
- f. Create a new search, surveillance, intelligence-gathering, or police power;
- g. Diminish, replace, or reduce the separate teaching, grade-level coverage, time allotments, whole-school approach, annual review, or other requirements for GMRC and Values Education under Republic Act No. 11476; or
- h. Diminish rights, protections, remedies, confidentiality requirements, mandatory-reporting duties, professional standards, or procedural safeguards under existing child-protection, juvenile-justice, mental-health, disability, education, data-privacy, or other applicable laws.

SEC. 29. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*

Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd, in coordination with the ECCD Council, CWC, JJWC, DOJ, DSWD, DOH, CHED, TESDA, DICT, DILG, NYC, LGUs, and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary for its effective implementation, insofar as their respective mandates are concerned.

The implementing rules shall be developed through meaningful consultation with representatives of public and private education institutions, teachers, parents and guardians, children and youth, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, indigenous cultural communities, Muslim education stakeholders, civil society organizations, professional associations, and other relevant stakeholders and shall establish the National Program Framework, minimum competencies, age- and development-level standards, curriculum-integration procedures, safeguarding and referral standards, training requirements, accessibility standards, learning-resource procedures, data-protection safeguards, monitoring indicators, local referral-directory requirements, phased implementation, lawful administrative-compliance mechanisms, and procedures for periodic review and updating.

The implementing rules shall not create new criminal offenses or impose criminal penalties not authorized by law.

SEC. 30. *Separability Clause.*

If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 31. *Repealing Clause.*

All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative issuances, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to repeal or diminish Republic Act No. 11476 or any protection,

right, duty, remedy, or service under existing child-protection, education, disability, mental-health, data-privacy, juvenile-justice, or other applicable laws unless expressly provided herein.

SEC. 32. *Effectivity.*

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

Approved,