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Vaccination not required for children attending in-person classes: DepEd chief

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Posted at Mar 02 2022 12:59 PM | Updated as of Mar 02 2022 02:38 PM

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A child receives his first COVID-19 vaccine dose during a vaccination drive at the New Frontier Theater, Araneta City in Quezon City on February 20, 2022. *Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News/File*

MANILA — The Department of Education (DepEd) is not requiring students attending in-person classes to be vaccinated against COVID-19, Secretary Leonor Briones said Wednesday.

Briones said her agency could not make vaccination mandatory because parents are the ones who decide if their children would get inoculated against the respiratory illness.

"Hindi required [ang vaccination for in-person classes]. It is voluntary kasi ang parents ang magde-decide niyan. But of course, we would encourage [vaccination]," Briones said at the Laging Handa public briefing.

(Vaccination is not required for in-person classes. It is voluntary because the ones that would decide that are the parents. But of course, we would encourage vaccination.)

Briones noted children also have a stronger immunity against COVID-19.

Of the more than 15,000 students that joined the pilot phase of in-person classes last November to December, no one tested positive for the virus, she said.

But Briones reiterated that vaccination is mandatory for teaching and nonteaching personnel attending in-person classes.

An unvaccinated personnel can continue working from their home or must submit a COVID-19 test before reporting to the workplace, she said.

- [No discrimination in vaccine requirement for in-person classes —DepEd](#)

In higher education, COVID-19 vaccination is required for students and school personnel attending in-person classes.

As of March 1, 4,315 schools nationwide have started holding in-person classes, of which 76 are private schools, according to the DepEd.

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"We are anticipating na lalong dadami ang mga schools na sasali dahil pagpasok ng [National Capital Region], malaking bulto ng mga eksuwlehan 'yan," said Briones, referring to the capital region that recently eased into the least restrictive COVID-19 alert level.

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(We are anticipating that the number of schools holding in-person classes will increase, especially with the inclusion of the National Capital Region. That's a lot of schools there.)

The DepEd is currently undertaking a "progressive expansion" of in-person classes, under which schools can hold limited face-to-face instruction as long as they comply with the agency's requirements, such as securing permission from the local government units and students' parents.

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Briones stressed that schools would continue to implement remote learning to complement in-person classes.

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