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## PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE TO PHILIPPINE DEPED ODER NO. 40 S. 2012 "THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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### Abstract

*This study assessed the implementation of the DepEd Child Protection Policy (CPP) in public elementary schools in Aparri South and East Districts for the 2023-2024 school year. Using a descriptive-comparative design, the study surveyed teachers and school heads on their awareness, practices, and compliance with the policy. Findings indicated that teachers are highly aware and implement the policy effectively, though challenges persist. The study recommends enhanced training for teachers, regular monitoring by school leaders, and increased parental involvement to improve policy enforcement and ensure a safer school environment for students.*

**Keywords:** *Child Protection Policy (CPP), public elementary schools, policy implementation, teacher awareness, school compliance*

### INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that schools provide diverse viewpoints and policies beneficial to students is crucial in today's educational landscape. Teachers are now facilitators within a student-centered environment, emphasizing the need for policies that prioritize student well-being. However, a significant challenge arises in the practical implementation of these policies and procedures, especially regarding the safety and protection of students. Reports indicate that violence against children persists within school settings, underscoring the urgent need for robust child protection policies. For instance, recent statistics show that more than 770,000

children in the United States fall victim to abuse and neglect annually. This alarming figure highlights the critical role schools play in safeguarding students, despite the inherent difficulties in implementing victim-specific child protection policies (Rahman & Sarip, 2020).

Safeguarding children is an indisputable priority shared by government, community, parents, and educators. However, research has shown that interpretations of child protection can vary depending on familial, community, and educational contexts

(Hermino, 2017). In response to the need for a standardized approach to child protection, the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd), in collaboration with UNICEF Philippines and the Child Network Foundation, Inc., introduced DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, also known as the Child Protection Policy (Moniemayor, 2018). This policy was implemented to ensure that all Filipino children are nurtured in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and respectful environment, irrespective of their background (Briones, 2018).

PLAN Philippines, referencing the United Nations World Report on Violence Against Children, has detailed numerous incidents of violence against children within educational settings, including bullying, physical assault, gang violence, and even instances involving teachers. Notably, there have been cases where teachers were implicated in these acts of violence, as seen in two videos that went viral on social media, allegedly showing teachers violating child protection laws (Malipot, 2017). DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, was established as a response to these challenges, providing guidelines to protect children from abuse, violence, exploitation, and discrimination within schools. The policy is rooted in the Philippine 1987 Constitution, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Family Code of the Philippines.

The order further acknowledges that cases of abuse may arise from the difficult situations faced by teachers and other school officials, both within and outside the school environment. It also recognizes the primary role of parents, legal guardians, and other responsible individuals in safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation. Additionally, the policy emphasizes the importance of involving children in the policymaking and implementation processes that directly affect them, whether they are victims or aggressors.

To support the implementation of this policy, DepEd mandates the formation of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in all elementary and secondary schools. These committees, which include school officials, teachers, parents, students, and community representatives, have been established in 59% of public schools since the policy's inception in 2012 (deped.gov.ph, 2014). The policy also stipulates that teachers who degrade students will face administrative penalties under the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (RA 7610) and the Child Protection Policy.

Despite these provisions, the implementation of the policy remains challenging, particularly in smaller schools where a limited number of teachers must manage a large student population. Furthermore, the line between necessary disciplinary actions and perceived abuse can be blurred, leading to potential conflicts. Nevertheless, the proper execution of this policy is crucial to ensuring that no form of violence, exploitation, or abuse occurs within school premises.

Given these challenges, this study aims to assess the implementation of DepEd's Child Protection Policy in public elementary schools, specifically within the Aparri South and East Districts.

## Methodology

This study assessed the implementation of the DepEd Child Protection Policy (CPP) in public elementary schools of Aparri South and East Districts during the school year 2023-2024. The study focused on teachers and school heads who have been employed in the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Cagayan for at

least one year and have experience working with school heads. The research excluded individuals who did not meet these criteria or were unwilling to participate.

To gather data, a descriptive-comparative research design was employed. The descriptive aspect analyzed respondents' profiles, including age, sex, positions, education, years in service, training on child protection policy, and sources of information about the policy. The implementation status was examined through the teachers' awareness, practices, compliance, and the extent of the policy's implementation in schools, as well as the challenges encountered. The comparative aspect explored significant differences in the implementation of the CPP based on the teachers' profiles, the extent of school compliance, and the issues faced by teachers. Additionally, correlation analysis was used to assess the relationships between the extent of implementation, compliance, and problems encountered.

A survey questionnaire, adapted and modified from DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, served as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire comprised four parts: respondent profiles, the status of CPP implementation, the extent of implementation, and the challenges in implementation. The instrument's reliability and validity were confirmed through pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.983.

The data collection process involved obtaining permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, followed by coordination with school principals and heads. Respondents were informed about the study, and questionnaires were distributed, with options for online submission. After collecting the responses, the data were cleaned, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage analyses were employed to describe respondents' profiles, while mean and standard deviation were used to evaluate the CPP implementation. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to determine significant differences in implementation, and correlation techniques assessed relationships among the study variables.

## Results and Discussion

The successful implementation of child protection policies in schools is crucial for ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. This section presents the findings of the study on the profile, extent of implementation and compliance of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, within the public elementary schools of the Aparri South and East Districts.

### Demographic Profile

Table 1a. shows distribution of teachers in terms of demographic profile. It can be gleaned from the data that 76 or 50.78 percent of the teachers aged ranging from 33 to 42; 39 or 26 percent whose aged ranging from 23 to 32; 26 or 17.3 percent aged ranging 43-52; while 9 or 6 percent have aged 53 or above. With a computed mean age of 37.86 and SD which is equal to 8.3. The findings indicate that Public Elementary School teachers in Aparri South and East District are in their forties. With this age, teachers have a wide knowledge and expertise in the teaching field.

The table also shows the distribution of the teachers in terms of Sex variable. The data reveal that there are 121 or 80.7 percent female-teachers while 29 or 19.3 percent male- teachers. This finding indicates that the population of Aparri South and East District teachers, is female dominated.

In terms of civil status, the data also present that 123 or 82 percent of the teachers are married; 24 or 16 percent are single, while three or 2 percent are widow/er. Majority of the teachers in Aparri South and East District are married and living with their family which could be the reason for their means of handling possible problems in school.

The table also reveal highest educational attainment of the teachers, it is obvious on the findings that 79 or 52.7 percent of the teachers' earned units in Masteral; 39 or 26.0 percent are Masteral graduates; 22 or 14.7 percent are bachelor's degree graduates; 8 or 5.3 percent teachers earned units in Doctorate and 2 or 1.3 are doctorate graduates. This means that teachers continue prioritizing their professional growth and development which is a requirement stipulated in the DepEd order no. 50 s. 2020 which is also known as DepEd Professional Priorities for teachers and school leaders for the school year 2020-2023.

Table 1a. Distribution of teachers in terms of demographic profile

Demographic Profile Variables	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
53 or above	9	6.0
43 to 52	26	17.3
33 to 42	76	50.7
23 to 32	39	26.0
	<i>Mean = 37.86 years old</i>	<i>SD = 8.3</i>
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	121	80.7
Male	29	19.3
<b>Civil status</b>		
Single	24	16.0
Married	123	82.0
Widow/er	3	2.0
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Bachelor's degree graduate	22	14.7
Earned units in Masteral	79	52.7
Masteral graduate	39	26.0
Earned units in Doctorate	8	5.3
Doctorate graduate	2	1.3

**Work Profile**

The distribution of teachers in terms of work profile is shown on table 1b. It can be gleaned from the table that 86 or 57.3 percent of

the teachers are already Teacher III; 48 or 32 percent are Teacher II; 9 or 6.0 percent who are Teacher I; 5 or 3.3. are Master Teacher I; while 2 or 1.3 are Master Teacher II. It is clearly stated on the findings that teachers are promoted for the higher Plantilla positions. The data also supported by their highest educational attainment, hence one requirement for promotion is on pursuing their post graduate education.

The length of service (in years) of the teachers is also presented. Most of teachers rendered 6 to 12 years in the service having a computed frequency of 88 or 58.7 percent. 32 or 21.3 percent rendered 5 years or below; 11 or 7.3 percent rendered 13 to 19 years; 11 or 7.3 percent rendered 27 or above and 8 or 5.4 percent rendered 20 to 26 years in the teaching field. With a mean of 10.88 years and SD=7.83, it can be inferred that most of the teachers in Aparri South and East District are serving a decade in a teaching work. This means that they are no longer newbie in work in teaching.

The responses of teachers on their attendance to Seminars /Workshop on CPP is also seen on the table. It was found out that teachers attended various levels of trainings such as School-based with a frequency of 144 ranked 1.5; District level with a frequency of 144 ranked 1.5; Division level with a frequency of 141 ranked 3; Regional level with a frequency of 139 ranked 4; National level with a frequency of 73 ranked 5 and International with a frequency of 19 ranked 6. This means that the teachers have good trainings on the implementation of Child Protection Policy.

Meanwhile Source of information on Child Protection Program, the data reveal that teachers are using various sources as to understand about CPP, most of the teachers use Social media (150) ranked; Books (83) ranked 2; Newspapers (78) ranked 3.5; Documentaries (78) ranked 4.5; Pamphlets (54) ranked 5; Journals (35) ranked 6; Magazines (30) ranked 7; Encyclopedia (15) ranked (8). Since there are enough sources where teachers gathered information about Child Protection, it is expected that they are knowledgeable what is all about the program or policy.

Table 1b. Distribution of respondents in terms of work profile

Work Profile Variables	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage
<b>Plantilla positions</b>		
Master Teacher I	2	1.3
Master Teacher II	5	3.3
Teacher III	86	57.3
Teacher II	48	32.0
Teacher I	9	6.0
<b>Length of service (in years)</b>		
27 or above	11	7.3
20 to 26	8	5.3
13 to 19	11	7.3

6 to 12	88	58.7
5 or below	32	21.3
	<i>Mean = 10.88</i> <i>years</i>	<i>SD = 7.83</i>
<b>Seminars /Workshop on CPP</b>	<i>(multiple response)</i>	<i>(Rank)</i>
School-based	144	1.5
District level	144	1.5
Division level	141	3
Regional level	139	4
National level	73	5
International	19	6
<b>Source of information on CPP</b>	<i>(multiple response)</i>	<i>(Rank)</i>
Social media	150	1
Books	83	2
Newspapers	78	3.5
Documentaries	78	4.5
Pamphlets	54	5
Journals	35	6
Magazines	30	7
Encyclopedia	15	8

### Extent of Implementation of School Child Protection Policy

#### Level of Awareness of the Teachers

Table 2a shows the extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the teachers' level of awareness. The teachers are highly aware that there is a DepEd Order on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying, and other forms of abuse. 4.85.

Hence, they are only aware about violence against children committed in schools is an act or series of acts committed by school administrators, academic and non-academic personnel against a child. (3.84) and Bullying is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another or several students in a school setting, which results in physical and mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation. (3.64)

With an overall weighted mean of 3.9, the findings indicate that teachers are aware on child protection policy. The table further shows that teachers are familiar with such a policy. This is to

protect them from untoward incidents that may arise related to this context.

The findings contradict study of (Munger and Markstrom,2019) who found out that professionals in school lack knowledge of domestic violence (for example, child abuse) and even child protection.

Table 2a. Extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the teachers' level of awareness

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. There is a DepEd Order on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying, and other forms of abuse.	4.85	Highly aware
2. I have read and understood the DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012.	3.99	Aware
3. According to the 1987 Constitution, the State shall defend the right of children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, and abuse, neglect treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.	4.08	Aware
4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) aims to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.	4.15	Aware
5. This DepEd aims to ensure that all schools are conducive to the education of children.	4.15	Aware
6. Teachers and learning facilitators especially in learning centers are their substitute parents and are expected to discharge their functions and duties with this in mind.	4.15	Aware
7. This policy aims to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their normal development and over which they have control and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation.	4.15	Aware
8. DepEd aims to ensure such special protection from all forms	4.07	Aware

of abuse and exploitation and care as is necessary for the child's well-being.		
9. This DepEd Order has a zero-tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse.	3.78	Aware
10. There are different forms of bullying.	3.68	Aware
11. Bullying is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another or several students in a school setting, which results in physical and mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation.	3.64	Aware
12. Corporal punishment is a penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offense, which is carried out, for discipline, training by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority for punishment or discipline.	3.78	Aware
13. Positive and Non-violent discipline of children is a way of thinking and a holistic, constructive, and pro-active approach to teaching that helps children develop appropriate thinking and behavior in the short and long-term and foster discipline.	3.68	Aware
14. This DepEd Order aims to prevent violence against children in schools and make these available to all schools.	3.64	Aware
15. Violence against children committed in schools is an act or series of acts committed by school administrators, academic and non-academic personnel against a child.	3.84	Aware
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>Aware</b>

#### Practices Applied by the Teachers

Table 2b shows the extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the practices applied by the teachers, the table shows that teachers highly practiced on performing such other duties as are imposed by law upon them as substitute parents or guardians, which leads them on exercising the parental authority and responsibility over the child while under the school

personnel supervision, instruction and custody. With an Overall Weighted Mean of 4.45, the findings indicate that teachers of Aparri South and East District highly practiced Child Protection Policy.

It is significant for schools to respond regarding the Child Protection Policy, Mustikasari and Rostyaningsih (2020) narrated that implementing child protection policy is well. Every child is born with an innate basic right stipulated by laws. However, adults disregard these basic rights of children and continue to abuse children.

*Table 2b. Extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the practices applied by the teachers*

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. Have proper orientation of child protection policy and rights of the child to all school personnel.	4.51	Highly practiced
2. Promotes and promulgates child protection and programs through information and education campaign.	4.51	Highly practiced
3. Monitor and assessing of the problems and abuses encountered in school and community.	4.51	Highly practiced
4. Exercises the parental authority and responsibility over the child while under the school personnel supervision, instruction and custody. Responsibility apply in all activities whether inside or outside the premises of the school, entity or institution	3.88	Practiced
5. Keeps them in their company support, educate and instruct them by right precept and good example.	4.24	Highly practiced
6. Give them love and affection and advice and counsel companionship and understanding.	4.51	Highly practiced
7. Enhances, protects preserves, and maintains their physical and mental health at all times.	4.51	Highly practiced
8. Furnishes students with good and wholesome educational materials, supervise their activities, recreation, and association with others, protect them from bad company and prevent from acquiring habits detrimental to their health, studies and morals.	4.28	Highly practiced
9. Practices positive and non-	4.06	Practiced

violent discipline as maybe required under the circumstances provided that in no case of corporal punishment be inflicted upon them.		
10. Performs such other duties as are imposed by law upon them as substitute parents or guardians and	4.82	Highly practiced
11. School personnel shall also strictly comply with school's child protection policy.	4.42	Highly practiced
12. Abide by the mission and vision of DepEd through highlighting students' welfare	4.30	Highly practiced
13. Protect students from abuse through proper treatment	5.00	Highly practiced
14. Monitors and assesses of complaints and events	4.58	Highly practiced
15. Anecdotal reports through graphical presentation of every end school year data gathered.	4.57	Highly practiced
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>Highly practiced</b>

#### Implementation of the Teachers

Table 2c. shows the extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the implementation of the teachers. The data reveal that the school child protection committee has a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional, or behavioral signs. (5.00) (Highly implemented) and school conducts disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by employees 3.88 Implemented

With an Overall Weighted Mean of 4.46, the findings imply that teachers highly implemented Child Protection Policy. This result can be supported by a study by Segundo and Guia (2019) which showed that implementing the child protection policy was high among public elementary and high schools.

Table 2c. Extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy along the implementation of the teachers

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. The school adopts a child protection policy.	3.97	Implemented
2. Ensures all pupils, school personnel, parents, guardians, or custodians, and visitors are made aware of child protection policy.	4.36	Highly implemented
3. Organizes and convene the Child Protection Committee for	4.36	Highly implemented

the School.		
4. Conducts disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by employees	3.88	Implemented
5. Conducts disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils.	4.29	Highly implemented
6. Conducts the appropriate training and capability building activities on child protection measures and protocols. Information-dissemination activities and in-service training for teachers on the protection of children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or peer abuse, and other related cases.	4.51	Highly implemented
7. Ensures that the school adopts a Student Code of Conduct to be followed by every pupil while on school grounds, or when traveling to and from school, or during a school-sponsored activity and during lunch period, whether on or off-campus.	4.51	Highly implemented
8. Coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the appropriate government agencies or non-government organizations on a Child Protection Hotline for reporting abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts and counseling.	4.72	Highly implemented
9. The school administrator, teachers, academic and non-academic and other personnel practice positive and non-violent discipline as may be required under the circumstances; provided that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted upon them.	4.71	Highly implemented
10. The school child protection committee initiates information dissemination programs and organizes activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and bullying or peer abuse.	4.06	Implemented

11. Training modules that include positive and non-violent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity are used.	4.88	Highly implemented
12. Employs means which enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom.	4.61	Highly implemented
13. Any incidents of bullying are filed and reported immediately to the School Head.	4.53	Highly implemented
14. The school child protection committee has a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional, or behavioral signs.	5.00	Highly implemented
15. The school child protection committee coordinate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP) the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations.	4.72	Highly implemented
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>Highly implemented</b>

### Summary

Table 2c shows the summary of the extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy, the data reveal that teachers have high level of awareness on Child Protection Policy (3.98); they highly practiced (4.45) and highly applied by the teachers (4.45) and they also highly implemented (4.46). With a Composite Mean of (4.30), Aparri South and East District Elementary teachers highly implemented Child Protection Policy.

Table 2c. Summary of the extent of implementation of School Child Protection Policy

Statements	Overall WM	Overall DV
1. Level of awareness of teachers	3.98	Aware
2. Practices applied by the teachers	4.45	Highly practiced
3. Implementation of the teachers	4.46	Highly implemented
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>Highly Implemented</b>

### Extent of Compliance to the School Child Protection Policy

Table 3 shows the extent of compliance to the School Child Protection Policy. It was found out that school highly complied on administrators, teachers, academic and nonacademic personnel will play as they exercise special parental authority and responsibility over pupils and students under their supervision, instruction, and custody (4.88); however, the school is also compliant on determining school child protection policy with a code of conduct and a plan to ensure child protection and safety, which shall be reviewed every three years. (3.77). With an overall weighted mean of 4.36, the findings reveal that teachers are highly Compliant on the implementation of Child Protection Program, Teachers responded affirmatively in the compliance of the Child Protection Policy by the Department of Education. This is important since they also want to be protected to some extent. If an untoward event happens and it involves a child, they reprimand the teacher. However, a review of Shewchuk (2016) revealed that some school board procedures need to be updated. Munger and Markstrom (2019) also pointed out a gap between the school and child protection service domains and found confidentiality as an obstacle to collaborating. On the other hand, Treacy and Nohilly (2020) mentioned an over-reliance on online child protection training for primary school teachers' Protection Program.

Table 3. Extent of compliance to the School Child Protection Policy

Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. Creates a school child protection policy with a code of conduct and a plan to ensure child protection and safety, which shall be reviewed every three years.	3.77	Compliant
2. Measures information dissemination programs and organize activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying or peer abuse.	4.36	Highly compliant
3. Develops and implement a school-based referral and monitoring system.	4.36	Highly compliant
4. Establishes a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional or behavioral signs.	3.88	Compliant
5. Identifies, refer and if appropriate, report to the offices cases involving child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying.	4.29	Highly compliant

6. Gives assistance to the parents or guardians, whenever necessary in securing expert guidance counselling from the appropriate offices or institutions.	4.51	Highly compliant
7. Coordinates closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as may be appropriate.	4.51	Highly compliant
8. Monitors the implementation of positive measures and effective procedures in providing the necessary support for the child and for those who care for the child.	4.27	Highly compliant
9. Ensures that the children's right to be heard are respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare.	4.71	Highly compliant
10. The school identified and specifically defined the entities who are to comply with the policy which necessarily involve the pupils and students, school personnel, including its guests and service providers.	4.06	Compliant
11. Administrators, teachers, academic and nonacademic personnel will play as they exercise special parental authority and responsibility over pupils and students under their supervision, instruction, and custody	4.88	Highly compliant
12. A detailed statement of procedures that clearly enumerate the process of investigation, starting with the conduct of filing of the complaint up to the rendering of the decision, is provided in the policy	4.61	Highly compliant

13. the school also indicated in the policy a precise system for handling of cases that considered the following components: immediate responses, reporting, fact-finding and documentation, intervention, and referral.	4.53	Highly compliant
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>Highly Compliant</b>

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study assessed the level of implementation of the DepEd Child Protection Policy (CPP) in public elementary schools in the Aparri South and East Districts during the school year 2023-2024. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers in these districts are in their forties, predominantly female, and mostly married. Many teachers have pursued further education by earning units toward a master's degree, reflecting their commitment to professional growth. Most have served between 6 to 12 years and have participated in various levels of training on the Child Protection Policy, ranging from school-based to international levels.

The study found that teachers in the Aparri South and East Districts are highly aware of the Child Protection Policy and implement it to a significant extent. Their compliance with the policy is generally positive; however, challenges in its implementation remain. Despite being well-informed and trained, teachers observed several problems in enforcing the policy, which suggests that there are areas in need of improvement to ensure the policy's full effectiveness.

Thus, teachers must organize seminars or review sessions on the Child Protection Policy, inviting a representative from the Department of Education to serve as a speaker. These sessions should cover key aspects of the policy, including its most vital elements, to reinforce teachers' understanding and commitment to the policy's implementation.

For the Institution:

School leaders (principals or equivalent) should regularly monitor, review, and assess the key elements of the Child Protection Policy. Establishing an executive committee dedicated to overseeing the implementation of the policy within the school is recommended. This committee would ensure that the policy is consistently and effectively applied.

For Parental Involvement:

Engage parents in discussions about the Child Protection Policy. Schools should consider holding general meetings where parents and guardians are educated about the policy and its significance. This initiative would foster a collaborative approach to child protection, ensuring that both school staff and parents are aligned in their understanding and support of the policy.

By addressing these recommendations, the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in the Aparri South and East Districts can be strengthened, leading to a safer and more supportive educational environment for all students.



### Declaration of no conflict of interest

The author hereby declares no conflict of interest and this article is her original work.

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