STUDENT DISCIPLINE: HOW FAR CAN YOU GO?

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In the earlier years, teachers discipline their students by way of hitting sticks to dirty fingernails, by flying notebooks, by ordering them to face the wall or to squat at some period of time. These are some of the corporal punishments which are no longer applicable nowadays. The reason for this is that the Department of Education imposed a law on Child Protection Policy. A teacher can no longer lay a hand on his student nor hit his fingertips incidentally.

What is discipline really? As Merriam-Webster defines it, it is a control gained by enforcing obedience or order. It also defines it as punishment. But as a teacher here in the Philippines, how far can one go on disciplining his students?

In 2012, the Department of Education released its order which may focus student discipline. This is DepEd Order No. 40 s. 2012 which is entitled DepEd Child Protection Policy. It states there some examples of corporal punishment which are adopted before but are now prohibited. It also says there that there should be a child protection committee so that they will be the one who will focus on certain cases of abuse on children at school. This policy also requires schools to submit their own child protection policy so teachers can have a guide on disciplining their students.

Certainly, teachers’ way of discipline should not hurt a child physically, mentally and emotionally. The reason for this is because this may affect a child psychologically. Actually, there is now a bill currently on its third and final reading at the Senate and on its second reading at the House of Representatives which is entitled, “Promoting Positive and Non-Violent Ways to Discipline Children”. The organizations, Positive
Discipline Advocates of the Philippines or PDAP which comprises teachers and school officials, Save the Children and Philippine Educational Theater Association, are working together to push for the legislation of this bill. An article from Smart Parenting by Kitty Elicay also said that studies have shown that discipline methods like corporal punishment can lead to aggression, delinquency or misbehavior, and mental health problems in children.

In reality, parents are the children’s first teachers. Positive discipline should start at home. Teachers, on the other hand, who are children’s second parents, should also know how to make their students obey them. They should not use violence as their resort to punishment. One can suggest that a two-way communication be established, that is actively listening and talking. Lastly, giving the student a chance to hear his voice or feelings is the best way to enforce positive discipline because once we know why he is acting that way, we can then address what really the problem is.

References:

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