THE SECOND HOME: IMPORTANCE OF BEING A FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

by:
Sharmaine B. Peñaloza

School is our second home – at least this was what they told students when they started first grade. The emotion brought about by the idea of learning is unexplainable. Children are excited to go to school as they look forward to meeting new friends and their teachers. However, this is not entirely pertinent to everybody.

Academic institutions play a crucial role in shaping the minds, behavior, and attitude of students particularly in elementary and high schools. Students spend most of their time in schools, and parents are not going to be there to monitor who they hang out with and what they are up to. Moreover, they may be influenced by others to commit punishable acts, may experience peer pressure, and may be a victim of bullying. To ensure the safety of children in schools, former President Benigno Aquino III signed the law of Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act on September 12, 2013. It is a law that aims to protect children enrolled in kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools and learning centers from being bullied. It requires them to adopt school policies to address bullying that are present in their schools.

Even with the passing of this law, a lot of bullying cases are still prevailing and some events that occur were not even reported. According to a study, approximately 6 out of 10 Filipino students experience bullying in schools, and cases vary depending on the sex of the student. This causes negative impacts on the physical, social, mental, and emotional health of the victims. It was reported that students who experience bullying tend to express sad feelings frequently. The thing with this issue is that some victims are afraid to tell the truth to school authorities due to the fear of being bullied more. To avoid
this kind of sub-problem, schools must instigate the forces and conditions that cause bullying to happen. They must also take into consideration that the victims of bullying are not only those who are bullied, but it also includes those who bully and those who witness the act.

It is important to create a friendly environment in schools. The policies are not sufficient enough in addressing this serious matter. To serve the purpose of the law and other anti-bullying programs and campaigns, schools must strongly uphold their policies. Teachers should also be compelled to be more sensitive to their students. Their initiative to reach out and lend a hand would help students to open up and feel that they are not alone. They should also impose discipline in a way that every student will take responsibility in maintaining a good, social environment for themselves and fellow students as well. What schools must not experience is having a case of suicide because of extreme bullying.

A student’s experience in his or her school years contribute to the totality of their being human. To be able to improve their education, the school that they are attending to must first be conducive for their learning, growth, and development. It should be a place where they can feel safe and protected. Homes should be safe to live in, and schools as second homes to these students must be also an environment where they can be free from abuse.

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