

Functionality Levels And Practices Of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies in Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the functionality levels and implementation practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in public schools of Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, it determined the CPC functionality in terms of organization and coordination, policies and guidelines, capacities and resources, service delivery, accountability, and performance; evaluated implementation practices on preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, rules and procedures in handling cases, and referral and assessment; determined differences in perceptions among school heads, teachers, and parents; and developed an intervention to enhance CPC effectiveness. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design involving 103 respondents composed of 25 school heads, 52 teachers, and 26 parents designated as CPC members. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and the Kruskal-Wallis H test. Findings revealed that School-Based CPCs generally demonstrated high functionality across all domains, with strong compliance in policy implementation, case management, coordination, and monitoring systems. However, weaknesses were identified in strategic planning, formal coordination with external agencies, learner participation mechanisms, documentation accessibility, and financial sustainability. CPC practices were rated highly in preventive measures, protective and remedial interventions, and case-handling procedures, particularly in promoting positive discipline, timely reporting, and policy enforcement. In contrast, referral and assessment practices were only slightly implemented, indicating gaps in referral systems and administrative processes. Results further showed statistically significant differences in perceptions among school heads, teachers, and parents across all areas of CPC practices. School heads generally provided more favorable ratings, while teachers reported lower levels of implementation. Parents demonstrated higher engagement, particularly in referral and assessment activities. Based on the findings, Project S.A.F.E. (Strengthening Accountability, Functionality, and Engagement for Child Protection) was developed to address identified gaps. The intervention focuses on strengthening coordination mechanisms, referral systems, stakeholder engagement, learner participation, capacity building, and resource sustainability to improve the effectiveness and long-term implementation of child protection policies in schools.

Keywords: School-based Child Protection Committees, child protection policies, functionality, practices, child protection implementation, Project S.A.F.E.

INTRODUCTION

Child protection remains a critical global concern as children continue to face various forms of abuse, exploitation, violence, and neglect across different contexts. International organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund emphasize that despite strengthened policies and frameworks, millions of children worldwide are still exposed to unsafe environments, including within schools. Schools, which are expected to serve as safe spaces for learning and development, can also become sites where bullying, discrimination, and abuse occur if protective mechanisms are weak or poorly implemented. Globally, the establishment of child protection systems within educational institutions has been recognized as a key strategy to ensure children's safety and well-being, with school-based committees playing a vital role in enforcing policies and responding to child protection concerns (UNICEF, 2023).

Moreover, global frameworks such as those promoted by UNESCO highlight the importance of strengthening institutional functionality to ensure effective child protection. Functionality includes organizational structures, availability of resources, adherence to policies, and accountability mechanisms. Recent studies indicate that while many countries have established child protection policies, gaps remain in implementation due to limited training, insufficient resources, and weak coordination among stakeholders (UNESCO, 2022). These gaps underscore the need to examine not only the existence of child protection structures but also their functionality and actual practices in real-world settings, particularly in schools.

In the Philippine context, child protection in schools is institutionalized through policies of the Department of Education, particularly DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, also known as the Child Protection Policy. This mandates the creation of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in all schools to ensure the protection of learners from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm. Recent reports indicate that while schools have complied with the establishment of CPCs, the level of functionality varies significantly across institutions.

In the Division of Camarines Norte, efforts have been made to strengthen CPCs through training and policy reinforcement; however, there is limited empirical data assessing their functionality and practices across schools, especially in districts such as Mercedes. At the school level, the Child Protection Committee serves as the primary body responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of learners. Its effectiveness depends on several factors, including organization and coordination, availability of resources, adherence to policies, and accountability mechanisms. Equally important are the practices implemented by CPCs, such as preventive programs, case handling procedures, and referral systems. When these elements are not effectively carried out, the protection of children may be compromised. Given the critical role of CPCs, it is essential to assess both their functionality levels and practices to identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement.

In the context of the Schools of Mercedes District in the Division of Camarines Norte, there is a need to systematically determine how Child Protection Committees operate and how their practices influence their overall functionality. Understanding this relationship will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current child protection efforts and inform the development of appropriate interventions. This study, therefore, determined the functionality levels and practices of CPCs, determined differences in the practices of child protection committees when grouped as to school heads, parents, and teachers, and proposed an intervention to enhance child protection mechanisms in schools.

This study determined the functionality levels and practices of school-based Child Protection Committees in implementing child protection policies in schools of Mercedes District in the Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, it answered the following questions: 1) What are the functionality levels of school-based Child Protection Committees in terms of organization and coordination, policies and guidelines, capacities and resources, service delivery and accountability and performance? 2) What are the practices of school-based Child Protection Committees in implementing child protection policies in terms of preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, rules and procedures in handling cases and referral and assessment? 3) Is there a significant difference in the practices of child protection committee when grouped as to school heads, parents, and teachers? 4) What intervention can be proposed to improve the functionality and practices of Child Protection Committees?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the quantitative method using a descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive method was employed to determine the functionality levels and practices of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in schools of Mercedes District in the Division of Camarines Norte. Descriptive research is appropriate for studies that aim to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population (Creswell and Creswell, 2022). On the other hand, comparative methods, specifically the Kruskal-Wallis H test, were utilized to determine significant differences between the leadership practices and commitment of the school stakeholders in the delivery of school services. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is used to compare more than two independent groups when the data are ordinal or not normally distributed (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2016).

The respondents of the study composed of school personnel who are members of the Child Protection Committees in public schools of Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte. These included 25 school heads, 52 teachers, and 26 designated CPC members/parents who are directly involved in implementing child protection policies, a total of 103 respondents. A complete enumeration was employed in this study. These individuals were directly involved in implementing child protection policies and programs. Their roles and responsibilities provided reliable data regarding the functionality and practices of CPCs.

The study utilized the adopted School-Based Child Protection Committee Functionality Indicators Monitoring Tool (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012). This tool was administered to the respondents to determine the functionality levels of school-based Child Protection Committees in terms of organization and coordination, policies and guidelines, capacities and resources, service delivery, and accountability and performance. Moreover, to determine the practices of school-based Child Protection Committees in implementing child protection policies in terms of preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, rules and procedures in handling cases, and referral and assessment, the indicators were adopted in the provisions of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012.

The data gathered were subjected to the following statistical analysis: Frequency count and percentage technique were employed to quantify the functionality levels of school-based Child Protection Committees in terms of organization and coordination, policies and guidelines, capacities and resources, service delivery, and accountability and performance. Meanwhile, to quantify the practices of school-based Child Protection Committees in implementing child protection policies in terms of preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, rules and procedures in handling cases, and referral and assessment, weighted mean was used. Moreover, to determine the significant difference in the practices of the child protection committee when grouped as to school heads, parents, and teachers, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results of the data analysis in response to the problems covered by this study.

Functionality Levels of School-Based Child Protection Committees

Functionality levels refer to the degree to which an organization or committee effectively performs its expected roles, responsibilities, and functions in achieving its objectives (Scott and Davis, 2016). In this study, functionality levels refer to the effectiveness of School-Based Child Protection Committees measured in terms of organization and coordination, policies and guidelines, capacities and resources, service delivery, and accountability and performance.

Organization and Coordination in terms of the Establishment/ Reorganization of the CPC. Organization and coordination refer to the process of structuring activities, assigning responsibilities, and facilitating collaboration among individuals and groups to achieve common objectives (Robbins and Judge, 2019). In this study, organization and coordination refer to the extent to which School-Based Child Protection Committees establish effective communication, role distribution, and collaboration mechanisms.

Organization and Coordination in terms of Establishment/Reorganization. Table 1 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in terms of organization and coordination in terms of establishment/reorganization. The findings reveal that most indicators received high affirmative responses, indicating that schools have generally complied with the organizational requirements for establishing and maintaining Child Protection Committees. This suggests that schools recognize the importance of creating institutional structures that support child protection initiatives and learner welfare.

The indicators with the highest frequency were there is a list of CPC members, meeting with possible CPC members had been scheduled, the orientation for identified CPC members had been scheduled, the CPC was organized and convened, CPC members were identified and their names posted in school, New CPC members

oriented on the functions and work of CPC, and CPC members have analyzed the Child Protection situation in the school, all obtaining a 100% frequency (26 respondents).

These results indicate complete compliance among the schools in implementing the basic requirements related to the establishment and organization of Child Protection Committees. The findings are supported by Weist et al. (2022) that schools with organized coordination systems and clearly established structures demonstrated stronger support systems and improved responsiveness to student concerns. Similarly, as affirmed by Saptono (2022), schools with established child-friendly policies and effective stakeholder coordination created safer learning environments and demonstrated more successful implementation of child protection initiatives.

On the other hand, the indicators with the lowest frequency were CPC, which has a clear organizational chart, CPC has a strategic goal or VMG and plan (3 years), and an annual plan with tasking based on a Child Protection situation analysis. 80%-100% of annual objectives/targets in plans accomplished and has clear plans for strengthening the child protection system in school, each obtaining 22 responses or 84.62%, while 4 respondents or 15.38% responded negatively.

The findings are supported by Rogula et al. (2026), who found that child protection systems frequently encounter challenges related to fragmented organizational structures and insufficient coordination mechanisms. Similarly, as affirmed by Sapul (2022), regular monitoring, stakeholder collaboration, and consistent evaluation practices are essential in improving accountability and performance in child protection systems.

Table 1 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Organization and Coordination in terms of Establishment/Reorganization

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Immediate assistance on how to convene the CPC was sought.	23	88.46	3	11.54
2. There is a list of CPC members	26	100	0	0
3. Meeting with possible CPC members had been scheduled	26	100	0	0
4. The orientation for identified CPC members had been scheduled.	26	100	0	0
5. The CPC was organized and convened.	26	100	0	0
6. CPC members were identified, and their names posted in school	26	100	0	0
7. Turnover of reports and other CPC documents to the new CPC was done	25	96.15	1	3.84
8. New CPC members oriented on the functions and work of CPC	26	100	0	0
9. CPC Members have identified and divided the tasks among themselves	24	92.30	2	7.69
10. CPC has a clear organizational chart	22	84.62	4	15.38
11. CPC members have reviewed its functions	25	96.15	1	3.84
12. CPC members have analyzed the Child protection situation in the school	26	100	0	0
13. CPC Holds quarterly meetings to discuss appropriate interventions/responses to school problems on bullying and child abuse cases, as well as updating on status of the CPC plan	23	88.46	3	11.54
14. CPC has written orientation material/ guidebook for CPC members (printed/ digital)	23	88.46	3	11.54
15. Each CPC member has a copy of the orientation material/guidebook (printed/ digital)	23	88.46	3	11.54
16. CPC has a strategic goal or VMG and plan (3 years; and an annual plan with tasking based on a Child Protection situation analysis)	22	84.62	4	15.38
17. 90-100% of planned meetings of the CPC are conducted	23	88.46	3	11.54
18. 80%-100% of annual objectives/targets in plans accomplished	22	84.62	4	15.38

19. CPC has clear mechanisms for ensuring protection of Children with disabilities	23	88.46	3	11.54
20. CPC has integrated the responsibilities of CPC from DO 55 2013 (anti-bullying) and DO 18, 2015 restorative justice panel (RJP re CICL)) and other child protection policies of DepEd	25	96.15	1	3.84
21. Has clear plans for strengthening the child protection system in school	22	84.62	4	15.38

Organization and Coordination in terms of Coordination and Mechanism. Table 2 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in terms of coordination and coordination. The findings show that most indicators obtained high affirmative responses, suggesting that schools generally demonstrate effective coordination practices and have established mechanisms that support child protection implementation. This indicates that schools recognize the importance of collaboration and partnerships in ensuring the effective delivery of child protection services and interventions.

The indicator with the highest frequency was “Has implemented cooperative/collaborative work,” which obtained 25 responses or 96.15%, while only 1 respondent or 3.85% answered “No.” This finding indicates that most schools actively engage in collaborative efforts with stakeholders and relevant agencies to support child protection initiatives. The high response suggests that schools acknowledge the importance of shared responsibility and collective action in addressing child protection concerns.

Table 2 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Organization and Coordination in terms of Coordination and Mechanism

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Immediate assistance on how to develop coordination mechanism on child protection was sought.	23	88.46	3	11.54
2. Has mapped out available resources in their community for possible linkages/networking for cases needing referrals	23	88.46	3	11.54
3. Has identified specific areas of work for coordination/collaboration with other agencies or service providers	23	88.46	3	11.54
4. Has informal or initial coordination arrangements for referral system with WCPD, LSWD, LHO, other agencies or non-government organizations	22	84.62	4	15.38
5. Actively coordinates with the Schools District/ Division office	23	88.46	3	11.54
6. Has formal coordination mechanism (e.g. MOA), with the LHO, WCPD, LSWD, private practice counselling (Psychiatrist, Psychologist) for the referral services.	22	84.62	4	15.38
7. Actively coordinates with the Schools District/ Division office	23	88.46	3	11.54
8. Has implemented cooperative/collaborative work	25	96.15	1	3.85
9. Coordination mechanism for planning, implementation, monitoring and assessments have been formalized and functioning of this mechanism is reviewed and disseminated.	22	84.62	4	15.38

The present finding is supported by Weist et al. (2022), who revealed that schools with organized coordination systems and collaborative structures demonstrated stronger support mechanisms and improved school climate outcomes. It also emphasized that collaboration among stakeholders contributes significantly to successful school interventions. Similarly, as affirmed by Saptono (2022), schools with effective coordination among stakeholders and established child-friendly policies maintained safer school environments and achieved more successful child protection implementation.

Conversely, the indicators with the lowest frequency were has informal or initial coordination arrangements for referral system with WCPD, LSWD, LHO, other agencies or non-government organizations, has formal

coordination mechanism (e.g., MOA), with the LHO, WCPD, LSWD, private practice counselling (Psychiatrist, Psychologist) for referral services, and Coordination mechanism for planning, implementation, monitoring and assessments have been formalized and functioning of this mechanism is reviewed and disseminated,” each obtaining 22 responses or 84.62%, while 4 respondents or 15.38% answered No.

Although these indicators still reflect relatively high affirmative responses, they represent the weakest aspects of coordination and mechanisms. The results suggest that while schools actively engage in collaborative activities, some schools have not fully established formalized systems and structured partnerships with external agencies and service providers. These findings are supported by Clarke et al. (2022), who emphasized the critical role of schools in referral and assessment systems involving child protection concerns. Effective communication and stronger coordination between schools and child welfare agencies improve child protection reporting and intervention mechanisms. Likewise, as affirmed by Rogula et al. (2026), child protection systems frequently encounter challenges related to fragmented structures and weak coordination mechanisms, which affect system effectiveness.

Policies and Guidelines in terms of Child Protection Policy and Operational Guidelines. Table 3 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along with child protection policies and guidelines. The findings indicate that most indicators obtained high affirmative responses, suggesting that schools generally comply with policy requirements and demonstrate efforts in developing and implementing child protection policies within their respective institutions. The results imply that schools recognize the importance of policies and guidelines in creating safe learning environments and ensuring the welfare of learners. The indicators with the highest frequency were has initiated meetings to review and craft the school-based child protection policy and code of conduct, has drafted the school-based child protection policy based on Department Order No. 40 series of 2012, Draft code of conduct may have specific provisions to address potential risks to students, Conflict resolution may be in practice, School has a written school-based child protection and anti-bullying policy with a code of conduct for learners, school administrators, non-teaching personnel, teachers, visitors, and off-campus activities, School has a conflict resolution mechanism that respects children’s rights, and School has a handbook/manual on its school-based child protection and anti-bullying policy with a code of conduct and a plan to ensure child protection and safety, which is reviewed every three years,” all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents). The findings indicate that all participating schools have established written child protection policies and are actively implementing policy-related mechanisms. This suggests strong compliance with policy requirements and demonstrates schools’ efforts to institutionalize child protection measures through structured guidelines and procedures.

The findings are supported by Saptono (2022), who revealed that schools with established child-friendly policies and structured implementation guidelines experienced safer learning environments and more effective child protection implementation. It also emphasized that clear policies and defined guidelines contribute significantly to the success of child protection initiatives. Similarly, Stålberg et al. (2024) affirmed that strong institutional support and clearly established policies are essential components of effective child protection systems.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest frequency was the Draft Child Protection policy, which includes a code of conduct for Learners, School administrators, non-teaching personnel, Teachers, Visitors, and Off-campus activities, which obtained only 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% answered No. This finding suggests that although schools generally have child protection policies in place, some schools may not have fully developed comprehensive codes of conduct that include all school stakeholders and activities. The results indicate that policy documents in some schools may focus primarily on learners and school personnel, while certain components, such as provisions concerning visitors and off-campus activities, may receive less attention.

Table 3 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Child Protection Policies and Guidelines

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Immediate assistance on how to draft the school-based child protection policy was sought	23	88.46	3	11.54
2. Has identified the policy and program gaps and challenges that need to be addressed	24	92.30	2	7.70
3. Has initiated meetings to review and craft the school-based child protection policy and code of conduct	26	100	0	0
4. Has drafted the school-based child protection policy based on Department Order No. 40 series of 2012	26	100	0	0
5. Draft Child Protection policy includes code of conduct for Learners, School administrators, non-teaching personnel, Teachers, Visitors, and Off campus activities	18	69.23	8	30.77
6. Draft code of conduct may have specific provisions to address potential risks to students	26	100	0	0
7. Conflict resolution may be in practice	26	100	0	0
8. School has a written school-based child protection and anti-bullying policy with a code of conduct for Learners, School administrators, non-teaching personnel, Teachers, Visitors, and Off campus activities	26	100	0	0
9. School has a conflict resolution mechanism that respects children's rights	26	100	0	0
10. There are written procedures to guide the conduct of disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils, students or learners	25	96.15	1	3.85
11. School has a handbook/ manual on its school-based child protection and anti-bullying policy with a code of conduct and a plan to ensure child protection and safety, which is reviewed every 3 years	26	100	0	0
12. School has a clear policy on the use of positive and non-violent discipline for children	24	92.30	2	7.69
13. School has specific guidelines that ensure child protection for children with disabilities	21	80.77	5	19.23
14. CPC integrates other Child protection policy related orders in this school-based CP policy.	22	84.62	4	15.38

The findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025) that despite awareness of child protection policies, schools experienced implementation challenges associated with inadequate training and limited institutional support. Similarly, Adewale and Potokri (2023) affirmed that moderate awareness levels among school personnel affected policy implementation and emphasized the need for continuous professional development. Furthermore, Schelenz et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of updating child protection policies to address emerging risks and ensure comprehensive protection mechanisms.

Capacities and Resources in terms of Orientation and Capacity Building for the Members of CPC. Table 4 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along with capacities and resources in terms of orientation and capacity building. The findings indicate that most indicators obtained high positive responses, suggesting that schools generally recognize the importance of developing the competencies and skills of Child Protection Committee members to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities. Capacity-building activities are essential because they equip CPC members with the knowledge and skills necessary for implementing child protection policies and responding to child-related concerns.

Table 4 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Capacities and Resources in terms of Orientation and Capacity Building

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how the CPC can develop an annual capacity building activities for its members	25	96.15	1	3.85
2. CPC has identified capacity building needs of its members	26	100	0	0
3. Initiated plans for capacity building needs which includes: Child's Rights; DepEd child protection training module/s; First responder training; Training on 4Rs of VAC (Recognizing, Recording, Reporting & Referring VAC cases); Positive Discipline; Monitoring & Evaluation of policy and plan	26	100	0	0
4. Initiated plans and request for technical assistance or capacity building activities from DepEd, LGU, or CSO	20	76.92	6	23.08
5. At least one CPC member participated in training for CPC conducted by the School District / Division Office/Central Office for roll out to other CPC members	25	96.15	1	3.85
6. CPC has received training based on their capacity needs which may include: Child's Rights; DepEd child protection training module/s; First responder training; Training on 4Rs of VAC (Recognizing, Recording, Reporting & Referring VAC cases); Positive Discipline; Monitoring & Evaluation of policy and plan.	22	84.62	4	15.38
7. Capacity building plan is partially implemented	22	84.62	4	15.38
8. Capacity building plan is fully implemented and participated in by all CPC members	22	84.62	4	15.38
9. Trainor's training conducted for CPC members	18	69.23	8	30.77
10. CPC members capable of rolling out the training modules among teachers, administrators, and non-teaching personnel	24	92.31	2	7.69

The indicators with the highest frequency were CPC has identified capacity building needs of its members and Initiated plans for capacity building needs which include Child's Rights, DepEd child protection training modules, First Responder Training, Training on 4Rs of Violence Against Children (Recognizing, Recording, Reporting, and Referring VAC cases), Positive Discipline, and Monitoring and Evaluation of policy and plan, both obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents).

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest frequency was Trainor's training conducted for CPC members, which obtained 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% responded No. This finding suggests that while schools have successfully identified training needs and developed capacity-building plans, actual specialized training intended to prepare CPC members as trainers or facilitators has not been fully implemented in some schools. The findings indicate that schools may still encounter difficulties in providing advanced or specialized training opportunities for committee members.

The findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who found that despite awareness of child protection policies, schools experienced challenges related to inadequate training opportunities and insufficient institutional support. Likewise, Cubio and Bagnol (2025) found variations in the functionality of Child Protection Committees due to differences in resources and capacity development initiatives. Similarly, Rogula et al. (2026) affirmed that child protection systems often encounter challenges related to fragmented organizational support and insufficient capacity-building mechanisms. The study highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional support and competency development to improve implementation effectiveness.

Capacities and Resources in terms of Budget Allocation for CPC Operations and its Financial Sustainability. Table 5 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along with capacities and resources in terms of budget allocation for CPC operations and financial sustainability. The findings reveal variations in responses across indicators, suggesting that while schools demonstrate efforts in allocating resources for child protection activities, challenges remain in ensuring long-term financial sustainability and external funding support for CPC operations.

The indicator with the highest frequency was There is minimal allocation from the school MOOE, which obtained 100% frequency (26 respondents). This indicates that all participating schools reported that some level of financial support from the school's Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) is available for Child Protection Committee activities and operations. This suggest that schools recognize the necessity of allocating financial resources to support child protection programs and interventions. Schools commonly rely on school MOOE funds to support school operations, activities, and programs, including learner welfare initiatives. Since Child Protection Committees form part of the school's institutional responsibilities, schools may allocate portions of available funds to support orientation activities, meetings, information dissemination, and other child protection-related activities.

The findings are supported by Stålberg et al. (2024), who emphasized that effective child protection systems require strong institutional support and adequate resource allocation to ensure successful implementation. Similarly, Weist et al. (2022) affirmed that schools with organized systems and sufficient institutional support demonstrated stronger implementation practices and better learner outcomes. Likewise, Cubio and Bagnol (2025) affirmed that schools generally maintained operational Child Protection Committees but observed variations in resources and support systems that influenced functionality levels. Likewise, Han-Awon (2025) noted that institutional support significantly contributes to effective child protection implementation in schools.

Conversely, the indicators with the lowest frequency were has initiated plans or requests for budget from LGU/LSB, LGU and/or LSB allocates some amount for the planned activities of the CPC, and Budgets allocated and utilized for the establishment of Room or Infrastructure for the CPC and a private interview/counselling room, all obtaining 0 frequency (0%), while 100% of respondents (26) answered No. These findings indicate that none of the participating schools reported receiving or initiating formal budget support from Local Government Units (LGUs) or Local School Boards (LSBs), nor did they report the establishment of dedicated facilities for Child Protection Committee operations. This suggests that schools may rely primarily on internal school resources and may have limited access to external financial support for child protection initiatives.

The findings may reflect local school realities where budgets are limited and must be shared among various school priorities such as instruction, facilities, and operational needs. As a result, Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) may only minimally support child protection activities. Coordination with LGUs and Local School Boards may also be constrained by funding limitations, administrative processes, and competing community priorities. The findings imply the need to strengthen financial sustainability through stronger external linkages and resource mobilization. Enhancing partnerships and securing dedicated support for child protection programs may improve the capacity of schools to provide comprehensive services, including counseling, case management, and the establishment of appropriate child protection facilities.

Table 5Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Capacities and Resources in terms of Budget Allocation for CPC Operations and Financial Sustainability

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to craft a budget for the CPC	23	88.46	3	11.54
2. Has identified budgetary requirements for CPC operations	21	80.77	5	19.23
3. Has initiated plans or requests for budget from LGU/LSB	0	0	26	100
4. There is minimal allocation from the school MOOE	26	100	0	0

5. LGU and/or LSB allocates some amount for the planned activities of the CPC	0	0	26	100
6. Budgets allocated and utilized for hiring and training of Guidance counsellors for CPC work or In lieu of guidance counsellors, Teacher–guidance (graduates of psychology)	24	92.31	2	7.69
7. Budgets allocated and utilized for the establishment of Room or Infrastructure for the CPC and a private interview/ counselling room	0	0	26	100
8. Partial allocation for Capability building activities	23	88.46	3	11.54
9. Partial allocation for Information Dissemination	19	73.08	7	26.92
10. Partial allocation for Operations for service delivery	22	84.62	4	15.38
11. CPC has secured budget allocation for its Strategic and annual plans in implementing the child protection policy based on its investment programming	19	73.08	7	26.92
12. CPC plan and budget included in the school improvement plan and the Annual work and financial plan	21	80.77	5	19.23
13. The School, PTA, LGU and LSB are coordinating to ensure budget allocation for the strategic and annual investment program of the CPC	22	84.62	4	15.38
14. School is able to generate funds from external sources.	22	84.62	4	15.38

These findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who found that schools encountered implementation challenges related to inadequate institutional support and resource limitations. Similarly, Cubio and Bagnol (2025) affirmed that the existence of Child Protection Committees alone does not guarantee functionality because resource availability significantly affects implementation effectiveness. Likewise, Rogula et al. (2026) confirmed that child protection systems commonly face challenges associated with fragmented support systems and insufficient organizational resources. The study emphasized that sustainable funding mechanisms and institutional support are necessary to improve child protection implementation.

Service Delivery in terms of Prevention Program. Table 6 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in terms of service delivery in prevention programs. The findings indicate that schools generally demonstrate strong implementation of preventive activities intended to promote child safety, awareness, and protection among learners and other school stakeholders. Prevention programs are critical components of child protection because they focus on proactive strategies designed to reduce risks, increase awareness, and create safe and supportive learning environments.

The indicators with the highest frequency were meetings to flesh out the details and schedules of orientation on Child Protection policy and other awareness-raising activities on the policy, and CPC conducts training among teachers and non-teaching staff on the First Responder system and referral system for Violence Against Children (VAC) incidents within the school, both obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents). This indicates that all participating schools actively conduct planning activities and training programs related to child protection implementation. The results suggest that schools recognize the importance of preparedness and proactive measures in ensuring effective child protection implementation. Conducting meetings and training programs may indicate that schools prioritize preventive strategies rather than responding only after child protection issues occur.

As supported by Wolfersteig et al. (2022) school-based child protection programs significantly improved children's knowledge of safety concepts, recognition of abuse situations, and confidence in seeking assistance. It also emphasized that preventive programs contribute positively to learner awareness and self-protection skills. Similarly, Guastafarro et al. (2023) affirmed that structured child sexual abuse prevention programs improved children's awareness and strengthened self-protection capabilities. The study highlighted the importance of integrating preventive programs within school systems.

Table 6 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Service Delivery in terms of Prevention Programs

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Immediate assistance on how to develop an information dissemination program was sought.	21	80.77	5	19.23
2. There is some information on Child protection policy posted on the bulletin board in school	19	73.08	7	26.92
3. Has conducted meetings to flesh out the details and schedules of orientation on CP policy and other awareness raising activities on the policy	26	100	0	0
4. CPC conducts orientation of learners on the school's child protection and anti-bullying policy once during the school-year	20	76.92	6	23.08
5. CPC organizes activity/ies on child protection during children's month celebration	21	80.77	5	19.23
6. CPC conducts orientation sessions on the school's child protection policy for learners, school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff	23	88.46	3	11.54
7. CPC conducts training among teachers and non-teaching staff on First Responder system and referral system for VAC incidents within the school	26	100	0	0
8. CPC able to roll out and implement the capability building program on child protection for learners, teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff	23	88.46	3	11.54
9. CPC has IEC materials (Handbook, Guidebook) on the child protection policy and disseminated these to the learners, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff	23	88.46	3	11.54
10. CPC monitors and evaluates the impact of the trainings and awareness raising activities	22	84.62	4	15.38

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest frequency was there is some information on Child Protection policy posted on the bulletin board in school, which obtained 19 responses or 73.08%, while 7 respondents or 26.92% answered No. This finding suggests that despite strong implementation of meetings and training activities, visible dissemination of child protection information through bulletin boards and similar information channels remains relatively limited in some schools. Although most schools still reported compliance, this indicator obtained the lowest response among the prevention program indicators. As supported by Adewale and Potokri (2023) awareness levels among school personnel significantly affect the effectiveness of child protection implementation. The researchers emphasized the need for continuous dissemination of information and professional development activities. Similarly, Evidor and Villacruz (2025) affirmed that schools encountered implementation challenges associated with inadequate institutional support and limited training opportunities, which may also influence the dissemination of child protection information. Likewise, Schelenz et al. (2023) confirmed the importance of continuously updating child protection mechanisms and information systems to ensure that protection measures remain accessible and responsive to emerging concerns. Information dissemination strategies serve as important tools in increasing awareness among learners and school stakeholders.

Service Delivery in terms of the Existence of a Quick Response System for Child Protection. Table 7 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in terms of service delivery, in terms of the existence of a quick response system for child protection. The findings indicate that schools generally demonstrate positive practices in establishing immediate response mechanisms intended to address child protection concerns and emergencies within the school environment. A quick response system is an important component of child protection because it ensures timely intervention and immediate action when learners experience abuse, violence, bullying, or other child protection concerns.

The indicators with the highest frequency were Meetings are conducted to develop the quick response system. In practice, witnesses call on the school principal or guidance counsellor for immediate response to an ongoing case, and all school personnel are oriented on the quick response system, all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents). On the other hand, the indicators with the lowest frequency were. There is a written quick response system which is substantially implemented, and all learners are oriented on the quick response system, both obtaining 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% answered No. These findings suggest that while schools actively implement immediate response practices and orient personnel, some may still lack fully documented systems and consistent dissemination of procedures to learners. This indicates that implementation is strong in practice but weaker in formal documentation and learner awareness.

Table 7 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Service Delivery in terms of Existence of Quick Response System for Child Protection

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to develop a quick response system for CP	23	88.46	3	11.54
2. Meetings are conducted to develop the quick response system	26	100	0	0
3. In practice, witnesses call on the school principal or guidance counsellor for immediate response to an ongoing case	26	100	0	0
4. All school personnel are oriented on the quick response system	26	100	0	0
5. There is a written quick response system which is substantially implemented	18	69.23	8	30.77
6. All learners are oriented on the quick response system	18	69.23	8	30.77
7. Quick response system is implemented where teachers, administrators and non-teaching staff, are able to act as first responders	25	96.15	1	3.85

This may reflect local school realities where operational practices are prioritized over formal documentation. Response procedures are often understood through meetings and verbal instructions, but written protocols may be incomplete or not regularly updated. Likewise, learner orientations may be limited as schools tend to prioritize training for personnel directly involved in handling child protection concerns. It implies the need to strengthen written response systems and improve learner awareness of child protection procedures. Developing clear, updated protocols and ensuring regular learner orientations may enhance accessibility, promote awareness, and empower learners to appropriately report and respond to child protection concerns.

The findings are supported by Adewale and Potokri (2023) that awareness and understanding significantly affect the effectiveness of policy implementation and highlight the importance of continuous information dissemination and training. Similarly, Bekaert et al. (2022) affirmed that many children felt unheard and inadequately informed within child protection systems, emphasizing the importance of strengthening communication and child-centered approaches. The study highlighted that involving children and ensuring they understand protection mechanisms contribute to better child protection outcomes.

Service Delivery in terms of Referral System, Case Management, Monitoring, and Documentation of Cases. Table 8 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along service delivery in terms of referral system, case management, monitoring, and documentation of cases. The findings indicate that schools generally demonstrate positive practices in managing child protection concerns through referral systems, monitoring processes, and documentation mechanisms. These systems are essential components of child protection implementation because they facilitate timely intervention, proper case handling, and continuous monitoring of learner welfare concerns.

The indicators with the highest frequency were at least 50% of incidents/cases of bullying and child abuse were managed according to the quick response and referral system, Documents are well kept, and 0% violation of

confidentiality, and Assistance provided to parents or guardians, whenever necessary, in securing expert guidance and counseling from the appropriate offices or institutions, all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents). These findings indicate that all participating schools maintain proper handling of cases through existing response mechanisms and ensure the confidentiality and protection of sensitive information. The findings also suggest that schools actively involve parents and guardians in addressing child protection concerns by providing support in securing professional assistance when necessary.

Table 8 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Service Delivery in terms of Referral System, Case Management and Monitoring and Documentation of Cases

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to establish a referral system	21	80.77	5	19.23
2. Seeks immediate assistance on how to conduct a case conference	24	92.31	2	7.69
3. The CPC is drafting a school-based referral and monitoring system to address child abuse and bullying cases.	22	84.62	4	15.38
4. Informal referral system in practice	22	84.62	4	15.38
5. Meetings with other agencies or service providers are conducted to discuss the referral system and case management	7	26.92	19	73.08
6. CPC has developed and is implementing a school-based referral and monitoring system to address child abuse and bullying cases	21	80.77	5	19.23
7. System is substantially implemented	22	84.62	4	15.38
8. At least 50% of incidents/cases of bullying and child abuse were managed according to quick response and referral system	26	100	0	0
9. At least 50% of bullying and VAC cases are documented	22	84.62	4	15.38
10. At least 50% of cases/complaints can be tracked and immediate feed backing on status of case provided to concerned parties	25	96.15	1	3.85
11. 100% of incidents/cases of bullying and child abuse were managed according to quick response and referral system	21	80.77	5	19.23
12. 100% of bullying and VAC cases are documented	25	96.15	1	3.85
13. 100% of cases/complaints can be tracked and immediate feed backing on status of case provided to concerned parties	24	92.31	2	7.69
14. Documents are well kept and 0% violation of confidentiality	26	100	0	0
15. Assistance provided to parents or guardians, whenever necessary in securing expert guidance counseling from the appropriate offices or institutions	26	100	0	0

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest frequency was Meetings with other agencies or service providers are conducted to discuss the referral system and case management, which obtained only 7 responses or 26.92%, while 19 respondents or 73.08% answered No. This finding suggests that although schools effectively manage and document cases internally, coordination with external agencies and service providers for referral and case management remains relatively limited. The results indicate that formal collaborative efforts with agencies responsible for child protection services may not be consistently practiced in all schools.

The findings may reflect realities within local schools where access to external agencies and specialized service providers may be constrained by location, availability of personnel, or institutional limitations. Schools may rely heavily on internal school mechanisms and personnel in handling child protection concerns, while coordination with agencies such as social welfare offices, healthcare providers, and psychological service providers may occur only when serious cases arise. Administrative procedures and workload demands may likewise affect the frequency of inter-agency meetings and coordination activities.

As supported by Rogula et al. (2026) child protection systems commonly experience challenges associated with fragmented coordination systems and limited integration among agencies. The study emphasized that stronger coordination mechanisms and interagency partnerships are necessary to improve system effectiveness. Likewise, Cubio and Bagnol (2025) affirmed that although Child Protection Committees are established in schools, differences in coordination systems and support mechanisms affect their overall functionality.

Service Delivery in terms of Proactive Identification and Reporting of VAC Cases (Early Detection). Table 9 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along with proactive identification and reporting of Violence Against Children (VAC) cases. The findings indicate that schools generally demonstrate positive practices in identifying, reporting, and responding to child protection concerns. Proactive identification and reporting systems are essential in child protection implementation because they enable schools to recognize early warning signs of abuse and ensure that affected learners receive timely interventions and support services.

The indicators with the highest frequency were Identified cases are referred for appropriate action, 90%-100% of recognized and reported possible cases of abuse are investigated, and all identified cases are provided with appropriate intervention, all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents). These findings indicate that schools consistently implement response procedures once child protection cases are identified. This suggests strong responsiveness in managing reported incidents and providing appropriate interventions and support services for affected learners.

The findings are supported by Clarke et al. (2022) that schools function as important institutions for identifying and reporting child protection concerns. Effective reporting and referral systems improve schools' ability to respond to child welfare concerns and facilitate appropriate interventions. Similarly, Ramsli et al. (2023) affirmed that early intervention and effective case management contribute significantly to improving outcomes among children exposed to abuse and maltreatment. Likewise, Costa and Sani (2024) emphasized that responsive child protection systems improve intervention outcomes and strengthen institutional effectiveness.

On the other hand, the indicators with the lowest frequency were trained on this system, both obtaining 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% responded No. These findings suggest that while schools demonstrate effectiveness in responding to identified cases, there are limitations regarding the establishment and formalization of systems for early identification of child protection concerns and training of school personnel on such systems. Although schools appear effective in managing identified cases, mechanisms for detecting cases at earlier stages may require strengthening. The findings may reflect realities within schools where personnel commonly rely on experience, observation, and informal practices in identifying child protection concerns rather than structured and standardized systems. Public schools may also encounter challenges in conducting specialized training because of workload demands, limited funding, or limited access to technical support and resource persons.

As supported by Adewale and Potokri (2023) awareness and understanding among school personnel influence child protection implementation. They also emphasized that insufficient training and knowledge gaps may hinder the effectiveness of child protection practices. Similarly, Evidor and Villacruz (2025) affirmed that schools experienced challenges associated with insufficient training and weak institutional support, affecting implementation processes.

Table 9 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Proactive Identification and Reporting of VAC Cases

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to develop a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on physical, emotional, or behavioral signs	20	76.92	6	23.08

2. The CPC is drafting a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on physical, emotional, or behavioral signs	18	69.23	8	30.77
3. Teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and non-teaching staff are trained on this system	18	69.23	8	30.77
4. Teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and non-teaching staff are able to recognize and identify signs of abuse	25	96.15	1	3.85
5. Identified cases are referred for appropriate action	26	100	0	0
6. 90%-100% of recognized and reported possible cases of abuse are investigated.	26	100	0	0
7. All identified cases are provided with appropriate intervention	26	100	0	0

Accountability and Performance in terms of Availability and Accessibility of Statistical Report on Cases Handled. Table 10 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in terms of accountability and performance in terms of the availability and accessibility of statistical reports handled. The findings reveal that schools generally demonstrate strong practices related to documentation, reporting, and monitoring of Violence Against Children (VAC) cases. Statistical reporting and documentation are important aspects of accountability because they provide evidence-based information that supports planning, monitoring, decision-making, and evaluation of child protection programs and interventions.

The indicators with the highest frequency were Seeks immediate assistance on how to generate data or statistical reports on VAC cases handled by the CPC/School, CPC finalizes intake sheets, other monitoring and reporting forms on VAC, CPC sets schedules for the submission and consolidation of reports, CPC fills up intake sheets and other monitoring and reporting forms on VAC, Submits consolidated reports on bullying and child abuse cases to the division office, Data may be incomplete; Partial implementation of statistical reporting on VAC cases, Substantial documentation and implementation of statistical reporting on VAC cases handled is done and is always updated, Regularly submits updated consolidated reports on bullying and child abuse cases to the division office, CPC is able to document VAC cases and responses and presents a situational analysis of VAC in school based on statistical reports, CPC situation on VAC is discussed among teachers, guidance personnel, administrators, non-teaching staff and parents, and Situational analysis with statistical reports is regularly submitted and discussed with the division office, all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents).

Table 10 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Accountability and Performance in terms of Availability and Accessibility of Statistical Reports Handled

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to generate Data or Statistical reports on VAC cases handled by the CPC /School	26	100	0	0
2. CPC finalizes intake sheets, other monitoring and reporting forms on VAC	26	100	0	0
3. CPC sets schedules for the submission and consolidation of reports	26	100	0	0
4. CPC fills up intake sheets, and other monitoring and reporting forms on VAC	26	100	0	0
5. Submits consolidated reports on bullying and child abuse cases to the division office	26	100	0	0
6. Data may be incomplete; Partial implementation of statistical reporting on VAC cases	26	100	0	0
7. Substantial documentation and implementation of statistical reporting on VAC cases handled is done and is always updated	26	100	0	0
8. Regularly submits updated consolidated reports on bullying and child abuse cases to the division office	26	100	0	0

9. CPC is able to document VAC cases and responses and presents a situational analysis of VAC in school based on statistical report on VAC cases handled by the CPC.	26	100	0	0
10. CPC Situation on VAC is discussed among teachers, guidance, administrators and non-teaching staff and parents of learners	26	100	0	0
11. Situational analysis with statistical report is regularly submitted and discussed with the division office	26	100	0	0
12. Situational analysis is also made available and accessible to the public	18	69.23	8	30.77

The findings are supported by Sapul (2022), which emphasized that monitoring systems, stakeholder collaboration, and regular evaluation practices strengthen accountability and improve child protection implementation. The study highlighted that systematic reporting mechanisms contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Rogula et al. (2026) affirmed that accountability systems and structured monitoring mechanisms are essential for improving the effectiveness of child protection systems. The researchers emphasized that proper documentation and reporting procedures support better organizational performance and strengthen institutional coordination.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest frequency was Situational analysis is also made available and accessible to the public, which obtained 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% responded No. This finding suggests that while schools demonstrate strong internal reporting and documentation systems, public accessibility of child protection reports, and situational analyses remains limited in some schools. Although documentation and reporting activities are consistently practiced, dissemination of information beyond internal school stakeholders may require further improvement. The findings are supported by Bekaert et al. (2022) that child protection systems should maintain confidentiality and protect children's rights while ensuring effective communication. Similarly, Stapleton et al. (2022) affirmed the importance of accountability mechanisms while emphasizing that information systems involving child protection require appropriate safeguards and ethical considerations.

Accountability and Performance in terms of Child Participation in CPC Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation, Solicits Feedback from Learners. Table 11 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along accountability and performance in terms of child participation in child protection activities. The findings indicate that schools generally demonstrate positive practices in promoting learner participation and involvement in Child Protection Committee programs and activities. Child participation is a critical aspect of child protection systems because it empowers learners to express their concerns, provide feedback, and actively engage in processes that affect their welfare and safety.

The indicators with the highest frequency were Orientation on child participation is conducted for all CPC members, Plans on how children can meaningfully participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CPC activities are finalized, CPC provides information to all learners about how they can participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CPC activities, CPC creates safe spaces for child participation, CPC encourages feedback from learners on CPC activities informally, CPC orients all learners about the child-friendly CPC functionality booklet, CPC provides regular venue for learners and student bodies in the CPC planning, implementation, and evaluation, and CPC gives due weight to learners' feedback, all obtaining 100% frequency (26 respondents).

On the other hand, the indicators with the lowest frequency were CPC conducts survey among learners on child protection in school" and Learners start using the CPC booklet, both obtaining 18 responses or 69.23%, while 8 respondents or 30.77% answered No. These findings suggest that while schools provide opportunities for participation and feedback, formal mechanisms for gathering learner perspectives and encouraging active use of child protection materials may not yet be consistently implemented. Although schools appear successful in promoting participation generally, structured approaches for collecting learner input and utilizing child-friendly resources may still require improvement.

The findings may reflect realities in local schools where surveys and learner-focused monitoring activities may not be regularly conducted because of time limitations, competing school activities, or limited resources. Additionally, while child-friendly booklets may be available, learners may not consistently utilize them because of insufficient orientation, limited accessibility, or preference for direct communication with teachers and school personnel.

It also implies that although schools demonstrate strong child participation practices, there remains a need to strengthen formal mechanisms that allow learners to express their perspectives systematically. Conducting regular surveys and increasing learner utilization of child-friendly materials may provide valuable information regarding learner needs, concerns, and experiences. Strengthening these mechanisms may also improve evidence-based planning and promote greater learner engagement. These findings are supported by Bekaert et al. (2022) that many

Table 11 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Accountability and Performance in terms of Child Protection

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks immediate assistance on how to facilitate student participation in CPC activities	24	92.31	2	7.69
2. Orientation on child participation is conducted for all CPC members	26	100	0	0
3. There are initial plans on how children can meaningfully participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CPC activities	24	92.31	2	7.69
4. Plans on how children can meaningfully participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CPC activities are finalized	26	100	0	0
5. CPC provides information to all learners about how they can participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CPC activities	26	100	0	0
6. CPC creates safe spaces for child participation	26	100	0	0
7. CPC encourages feedback from learners on the CPC activities informally	26	100	0	0
8. CPC orients all learners about the child-friendly CPC functionality booklet	26	100	0	0
9. CPC provides regular venue for learners and student bodies in the CPC planning, implementation and evaluation	26	100	0	0
10. CPC conducts survey among learners on child protection in school	18	69.23	8	30.77
11. Learners start using the CPC booklet	18	69.23	8	30.77
12. Learners actively participate in the planning, including investment programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CPC plan	19	73.08	7	26.92
13. CPC collects feedback from learners through the child-friendly CPC booklet	20	76.92	6	23.08
14. CPC gives due weight to the learners' feedback (CPC considers and analyses the feedback)	26	100	0	0

children felt unheard within child protection systems and emphasized the importance of improving communication and child-centered approaches. Similarly, Costa and Sani (2024) stressed that participation mechanisms become more effective when children are actively engaged through structured opportunities and feedback systems.

Accountability and Performance in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation. Table 12 presents the functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) along accountability and performance in terms of monitoring and evaluation. The findings reveal that all indicators obtained a 100% yes response rate, indicating that all 26 respondents (100%) answered Yes for every indicator. This demonstrates a very strong functionality level of School-Based Child Protection Committees regarding monitoring and evaluation practices. The findings

indicate that all participating schools consistently perform activities related to monitoring and evaluation, including seeking technical assistance, drafting monitoring tools, orienting members regarding monitoring responsibilities, conducting assessment activities, utilizing monitoring tools, and evaluating outcomes of child protection interventions. This suggests that schools recognize monitoring and evaluation as an essential mechanism for ensuring accountability and continuous improvement of child protection implementation.

Table 12 Functionality Level of School-Based Child Protection Committees along Accountability and Performance in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation

Indicators	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
1. Seeks assistance on how to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the child protection and/or anti-bullying policies	26	100	0	0
2. CPC is drafting the monitoring and evaluation design and tools it will use	26	100	0	0
3. All CPC members are oriented on the tools and their tasks relative to monitoring and evaluation	26	100	0	0
4. CPC is using the tools	26	100	0	0
5. CPC conducts assessment exercises	26	100	0	0
6. 100% of learners affected by bullying and VAC are reporting and availing of the programs and services of the CPC	26	100	0	0
7. 70%-100% of objective of Child protection strategic plan met	26	100	0	0

These findings are supported Sapul (2022) that monitoring mechanisms, stakeholder participation, and regular evaluation activities strengthen accountability and improve the implementation of child protection policies. The study highlighted that systematic monitoring enables schools to identify implementation gaps and make necessary adjustments to improve program effectiveness. Similarly, Rogula et al. (2026) affirmed that effective monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms are important elements of child protection systems because they improve institutional effectiveness and ensure continuity of services. The researchers emphasized that regular monitoring contributes to stronger organizational performance and more coordinated implementation processes.

Furthermore, the finding that 100% of learners affected by bullying and Violence Against Children (VAC) cases are reporting and availing of CPC programs and services, as well as the finding that 70%–100% of strategic child protection objectives are met, suggests that schools perceive their child protection mechanisms as functional and responsive to learner needs. However, although all indicators obtained complete affirmative responses, the uniformly high ratings should still be interpreted carefully. In actual school settings, differences in implementation experiences and resource availability may still exist. Uniform responses may indicate strong compliance with required procedures, but they may not necessarily reflect differences in implementation quality or depth across schools.

The findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who emphasized that schools may comply with child protection requirements but continue to encounter practical implementation challenges related to resources and institutional support. Similarly, Cubio and Bagnol (2025) affirmed that the existence of systems and structures does not automatically guarantee their full effectiveness in practice.

Practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies

The practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in implementing child protection policies play significant role in ensuring a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment for learners. These practices involve the proper execution of activities, programs, and mechanisms designed to protect children from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and other forms of harm within the school setting. Effective implementation of child protection policies helps strengthen learners' welfare, promote their rights, and foster a

culture of safety and respect in schools. Assessing these practices is important in determining how School-Based Child Protection Committees carry out their responsibilities and contribute to the overall protection and well-being of learners.

Preventive Measures. Table 13 presents the practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in implementing child protection policies along preventive measures as perceived by school heads, parents, and teachers. The findings reveal that preventive measures are generally implemented at a high level across the three groups of respondents, as reflected in the overall weighted means of 4.10 (Highly Practiced) for school heads, 3.96 (Highly Practiced) for parents, and 3.86 (Highly Practiced) for teachers. The findings indicate that respondents generally perceive that preventive child protection practices are regularly implemented in schools, reflecting the schools' commitment to promoting child safety, positive discipline, and awareness of children's rights.

The overall findings suggest that preventive approaches have become integrated into school practices in Mercedes District. Schools appear to prioritize activities intended to create safe and child-friendly environments through awareness campaigns, orientations, and capacity-building initiatives. In the Philippine educational setting, schools have increasingly strengthened preventive measures because of heightened concerns regarding bullying, child abuse, learner welfare, and the implementation of child protection policies mandated by the Department of Education.

Among school heads, the indicator with the highest weighted mean was Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in the initiatives of the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs) with a weighted mean of 5.00 (Very Highly Practiced). This finding indicates that school heads strongly perceive the integration of child protection concepts into PTA activities as consistently implemented. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean among school heads was Implementing specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers and other activities with a weighted mean of 3.56 (Highly Practiced). Although still interpreted as highly practiced, the result suggests that parenting-specific activities may be implemented less frequently than broader school-based preventive initiatives. This may reflect practical realities in schools where participation of parents and caregivers may be affected by work schedules, socioeconomic responsibilities, or availability during school activities. Parents may encounter difficulties attending scheduled activities because of employment demands and family responsibilities. These findings are corroborated by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who found that implementation challenges in child protection systems include limitations in stakeholder participation and institutional support. Likewise, Sapul (2022) emphasized that active stakeholder collaboration is necessary to strengthen child protection implementation.

Table 13 Practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies along Preventive Measures

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Parents	
	WM	Int.	WM	Int.	WM	Int.
1. Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in the initiatives of the Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs).	5.00	VHP	4.54	VHP	4.38	VHP
2. Capacity-building programs for school administrators, teachers and non-academic personnel focused on children's rights, child development and positive and nonviolent approaches to teaching and classroom management, to enable them to incorporate positive discipline messages in parent-teacher conferences and family counseling and integrate messages on children's rights and corporal punishment in classroom discussions.	4.16	HP	4.19	HP	3.81	HP

3. Encouraging and supporting the formation and initiatives of support groups among teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents and caregivers.	4.12	HP	3.94	HP	3.77	HP
4. Implementing specific parenting orientation sessions with parents and caregivers and other activities.	3.56	HP	3.42	HP	3.81	HP
5. Implementing school activities or events that raise awareness on children's rights, corporal punishment and positive discipline, fostering the active involvement of and providing venues for bringing together parents, families and children.	3.80	HP	3.65	HP	4.00	HP
6. Encouraging and supporting student-led initiatives to raise awareness on children's rights, corporal punishment and positive discipline; and	4.12	HP	3.96	HP	3.96	HP
7. Setting up child-friendly mechanisms for obtaining children's views and participation in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of school rules and policies related to student discipline.	3.92	HP	3.29	MP	3.96	HP
Overall Weighted Mean	4.10	HP	3.86	HP	3.96	HP

Rating Scale:

Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20 – 5.00

Very Highly Practiced (VHP)

3.40 – 4.19

Highly Practiced (HP)

2.60 – 3.39

Moderately Practiced (MP)

1.80 – 2.59

Slightly Practiced (SP)

1.00 – 1.79

Not at All Practiced (NAP)

Among teachers, the indicator with the highest weighted mean was “Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in PTA initiatives” with a weighted mean of 4.54 (Very Highly Practiced). This finding suggests that teachers strongly recognize the importance of integrating child protection discussions into PTA programs because they often participate directly in planning and implementing such activities. Teachers may perceive these activities as highly practiced because they observe their implementation during conferences and school-community engagements.

Conversely, the lowest weighted mean among teachers was Setting up child-friendly mechanisms for obtaining children's views and participation in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of school rules and policies related to student discipline” with a weighted mean of 3.29 (Moderately Practiced). This finding suggests that teachers perceive learner participation mechanisms as less practiced compared with other preventive measures. The result may reflect realities within local school contexts where decision-making and policy formulation continue to be largely adult-led processes. Although schools encourage learner participation, opportunities for learners to actively contribute to policy development and monitoring may remain limited.

Among parents, the indicator with the highest weighted mean was likewise Integration of education sessions on corporal punishment and positive discipline in PTA initiatives with a weighted mean of 4.38 (Very Highly Practiced). The finding indicates that parents perceive child protection awareness initiatives integrated into PTA activities as highly visible and consistently implemented. Parents likely recognize these activities because PTA meetings serve as one of their primary points of engagement with schools. However, the lowest weighted mean

among parents was Encouraging and supporting the formation and initiatives of support groups among teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and caregivers with a weighted mean of 3.77 (Highly Practiced).

These also implies that schools in Mercedes District demonstrate strong implementation of preventive child protection measures through awareness activities, positive discipline initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. However, there remains a need to strengthen structured parent involvement programs, establish stronger stakeholder support groups, and create more child-centered participation mechanisms. The findings are affirmed by Bekaert et al. (2022), who found that many children felt unheard within child protection systems and emphasized the importance of strengthening child-centered approaches and communication processes. Likewise, Costa and Sani (2024) confirmed that meaningful child participation contributes to more effective child protection systems.

Protective and Remedial Measures. Table 14 presents the practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in implementing child protection policies along protective and remedial measures as perceived by school heads, parents, and teachers. Protective and remedial measures are essential components of child protection because they ensure that appropriate actions, interventions, and support services are provided when child protection concerns arise. These measures focus on responding to reported incidents, protecting affected learners, implementing interventions, and promoting positive disciplinary approaches.

The findings reveal that the overall weighted means were 4.14 for school heads, 3.90 for parents, and approximately 3.90 for teachers, which generally fall under the Highly Practiced (HP) category. The findings indicate that respondents perceive that schools consistently implement interventions and protective measures intended to address bullying incidents and child protection concerns. This suggests that schools in Mercedes District demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring learner safety and implementing mechanisms for addressing cases involving violence, bullying, and other child protection issues. Schools have increasingly strengthened child protection initiatives due to growing concerns regarding school violence, learner welfare, and the promotion of safe educational environments. School administrators and Child Protection Committees are often expected to immediately respond to complaints, provide interventions, and observe child-sensitive disciplinary procedures.

Table 14 Practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies along Protective and Remedial Measures

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Parents	
	WM	Int.	WM	Int.	WM	Int.
1. Upon the filing of a complaint or upon notice by a school personnel or official of any bullying or peer abuse incident, the same shall be immediately reported to the School Head.	3.68	HP	3.58	HP	3.96	HP
2. The School Head informs the parents or guardian of the victim and the offending child and calls a meeting for the purpose.	5.00	VHP	4.50	VHP	4.50	VHP
3. The victim and the offending child shall be referred to the Child Protection Committee for counseling and other interventions.	3.92	HP	3.27	MP	4.00	HP
4. If warranted, the penalty may be imposed by the School Head in the presence of the parents or guardians.	5.00	VHP	4.25	VHP	4.19	HP
5. If bullying is committed for a second or subsequent time, after the offending child has received counseling or other interventions, the penalty of	2.20	SP	3.15	MP	2.85	MP

suspension for not more than one (1) week may be imposed by the School Head, if such is warranted.						
6. During the period of suspension, the offending child and the parents or guardians may be required to attend further seminars and counseling.	2.40	SP	3.19	MP	3.00	MP
7. The School Head shall ensure that appropriate interventions, counseling and other services are provided for the victim or victims of bullying.	5.00	VHP	4.25	VHP	4.50	VHP
8. If bullying results in serious physical injuries or death, the case shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9344 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.	2.48	SP	2.67	SP	3.08	MP
9. The child and the parents or guardians must be informed of the complaint in writing.	3.76	HP	3.77	HP	3.77	HP
10. The child shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing, with the assistance of the parents or guardian.	5.00	VHP	4.50	VHP	4.38	VHP
11. The decision of the school head must be in writing, stating the facts and the reasons for the decision.	4.48	VHP	4.50	VHP	4.50	VHP
12. The decision of the school head may be appealed, as provided in existing rules of the Department.	4.12	HP	4.15	HP	3.96	HP
13. The school implements non-punitive measures depending on the gravity of the bullying committed by any pupil, student or learner.	5.00	VHP	4.25	VHP	4.54	VHP
14. Depending on the gravity of the bullying committed by any pupil, student or learner, the school may impose child-sensitive non-punitive measures.	5.00	VHP	4.23	VHP	4.15	VHP
15. Non-punitive measures are applied in accordance with the principles of Positive and Non-Violent Discipline.	5.00	VHP	4.27	VHP	4.65	VHP
Overall Weighted Mean	4.14	HP	3.90	HP	3.90	HP

Rating Scale:

Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20 – 5.00	Very Highly Practiced (VHP)
3.40 – 4.19	Highly Practiced (HP)
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Practiced (MP)
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Practiced (SP)
1.00 – 1.79	Not at All Practiced (NAP)

Among school heads, the indicators with the highest weighted mean were the School Head informs the parents or guardian of the victim and the offending child and calls a meeting for the purpose, If warranted, the penalty may be imposed by the School Head in the presence of parents or guardians, The School Head shall ensure that appropriate interventions, counseling and other services are provided for the victim or victims of bullying, The child shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing with assistance from parents or guardians,

The school implements non-punitive measures depending on the gravity of bullying committed, Depending on the gravity of bullying committed, the school may impose child-sensitive non-punitive measures, and Non-punitive measures are applied in accordance with the principles of Positive and Non-Violent Discipline, all obtaining a weighted mean of 5.00 (Very Highly Practiced).

On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean among school heads was If bullying is committed for a second or subsequent time, after the offending child has received counseling or other interventions, the penalty of suspension for not more than one week may be imposed by the School Head if warranted with a weighted mean of 2.20 (Slightly Practiced). This suggests that school heads perceive suspension-related disciplinary measures as less commonly implemented compared with supportive and preventive interventions. This may reflect current educational practices where schools prioritize restorative and positive discipline approaches rather than punitive actions. The finding may also reflect local realities where school administrators often attempt to resolve learner behavioral concerns through counseling, mediation, and interventions before resorting to disciplinary sanctions. Schools increasingly promote positive discipline frameworks that discourage harsh and exclusionary practices. Among teachers, the highest weighted mean was The School Head informs the parents or guardian of the victim and the offending child and calls a meeting for the purpose and the child shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing with assistance from parents or guardians, both obtaining 4.50 (Very Highly Practiced). This finding indicates that teachers strongly recognize the involvement of parents and due process procedures in handling child protection cases. Teachers directly participate in identifying incidents and communicating with parents; therefore, these practices may be more visible to them.

Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean among teachers was If bullying results in serious physical injuries or death, the case shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9344 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations with a weighted mean of 2.67 (Moderately Practiced). The lower rating may be explained by the fact that serious bullying cases involving severe physical injuries or death occur infrequently in schools. Consequently, teachers may have limited experience or direct exposure to implementing procedures under such circumstances.

Among parents, the indicator with the highest weighted mean was non-punitive measures are applied in accordance with the principles of Positive and Non-Violent Discipline with a weighted mean of 4.65 (Very Highly Practiced). The finding suggests that parents perceive schools as promoting positive and child-sensitive disciplinary approaches. Parents may observe these practices through meetings, conferences, and communication with teachers regarding learner behavior and school interventions. Conversely, the lowest weighted mean among parents was If bullying is committed for a second or subsequent time, after the offending child has received counseling or interventions, suspension for not more than one week may be imposed with a weighted mean of 2.85 (Moderately Practiced).

The findings imply that schools in Mercedes District demonstrate strong implementation of protective and remedial measures, particularly in promoting parental involvement, counseling services, and positive disciplinary approaches. However, there remains a need to strengthen awareness and understanding of procedures related to serious cases and legal provisions governing child protection concerns. The findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who found that schools encounter implementation challenges associated with limited legal knowledge and institutional support. Likewise, Adewale and Potokri (2023) emphasized that knowledge gaps among school personnel may affect implementation practices and responsiveness.

Rules and Procedures in Handling Cases. Table 15 presents the practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in implementing child protection policies along rules and procedures in handling cases as perceived by school heads, parents, and teachers. Rules and procedures in handling cases are essential components of child protection implementation because they provide a systematic process for investigating complaints, ensuring due process, protecting the rights of concerned parties, and facilitating timely and appropriate interventions.

The findings reveal overall weighted means of 4.36 for school heads, 3.91 for parents, and 3.89 for teachers. Based on the rating scale, the responses of school heads fall under Very Highly Practiced (VHP) while the responses of parents and teachers fall under Highly Practiced (HP). The findings indicate that respondents generally perceive that schools consistently follow prescribed procedures in addressing child protection cases and observing required timelines in investigations and reporting mechanisms.

Among school heads, the indicators with the highest weighted mean were the conduct of investigation and reporting of cases of child abuse, exploitation, violence or discrimination shall be done expeditiously, The School Head or Schools Division Superintendent, upon receipt of the complaint, shall forward the same within forty-eight (48) hours to the disciplining authority, and the Disciplining Authority shall then issue an Order for the conduct of a fact-finding investigation not later than seventy-two (72) hours from submission, all obtaining a weighted mean of 5.00 (Very Highly Practiced).

On the other hand, the lowest weighted mean among school heads was If the person complained of is a non-teaching personnel, the Schools Division Superintendent shall cause the conduct of a fact-finding investigation within the same period with a weighted mean of 3.32 (Moderately Practiced). This finding suggests that school heads perceive procedures involving complaints against non-teaching personnel as less frequently implemented. This may be due to the relatively infrequent occurrence of such cases in school settings, resulting in limited direct experience in implementing these procedures.

Among teachers, the highest weighted mean was The School Head or the Schools Division Superintendent, upon receipt of the complaint, shall forward the same within forty-eight (48) hours to the disciplining authority with a weighted mean of 4.50 (Very Highly Practiced). The finding indicates that teachers strongly perceive formal reporting systems and timely referral procedures as practiced in schools because teachers are usually among the first school personnel to identify and report child protection concerns.

Table 15 Practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies along Rules and Procedures in Handling Cases

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Parents	
	WM	Int.	WM	Int.	WM	Int.
1. The conduct of investigation and reporting of cases of child abuse, exploitation, violence or discrimination shall be done expeditiously.	5.00	VHP	4.25	VHP	3.85	HP
2. The School Head or the Schools Division Superintendent, upon receipt of the Complaint, shall forward the same, within forty-eight (48) hours, to the Disciplining Authority.	5.00	VHP	4.50	VHP	4.04	HP
3. The Disciplining Authority shall then issue an Order for the conduct of a fact-finding investigation, not later than seventy-two (72) hours from submission.	5.00	VHP	4.19	HP	4.38	VHP
4. These periods shall be strictly observed, except when justified by circumstances beyond their control.	4.48	VHP	3.44	VHP	4.31	VHP
5. If the person complained of is a non-teaching personnel, the Schools Division Superintendent shall cause the conduct of a fact-finding investigation within the same period.	3.32	MP	3.40	HP	3.27	MP
6. If a complaint is not sufficient in form, the concerned School Head, Schools Division Superintendent, or Disciplining Authority shall immediately inform the complainant of the requirements of a formal complaint.	3.36	MP	3.58	HP	3.62	HP
Overall Weighted Mean	4.36	VHP	3.89		3.91	

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation:
4.20 – 5.00	Very Highly Practiced (VHP)
3.40 – 4.19	Highly Practiced (HP)
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Practiced (MP)
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Practiced (SP)
1.00 – 1.79	Not at All Practiced (NAP)

Conversely, the lowest weighted mean among teachers was If the person complained of is a non-teaching personnel, the Schools Division Superintendent shall cause the conduct of a fact-finding investigation within the same period with a weighted mean of 3.40 (Highly Practiced). Across all respondent groups, the same indicator consistently obtained the lowest rating, indicating a common perception that procedures involving complaints against non-teaching personnel are less evident in actual practice. This may reflect local realities where schools rarely encounter such incidents, leading to limited awareness or direct experience among stakeholders.

Among parents, the highest weighted mean was The Disciplining Authority shall then issue an Order for the conduct of a fact-finding investigation not later than seventy-two (72) hours from submission with a weighted mean of 4.38 (Very Highly Practiced). This indicates that parents perceive schools as responding promptly and appropriately to child protection concerns. Parents may observe the responsiveness of schools through communication and actions taken by school personnel during incidents. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean among parents was If the person complained of is a non-teaching personnel, the Schools Division Superintendent shall cause the conduct of a fact-finding investigation within the same period with a weighted mean of 3.27 (Moderately Practiced).

The findings imply that schools in Mercedes District demonstrate strong implementation of rules and procedures in handling child protection cases, particularly in prompt reporting, investigation processes, and observance of prescribed timelines. However, there remains a need to strengthen awareness and understanding regarding procedures applicable to less common situations, particularly cases involving non-teaching personnel. The findings are supported by Evidor and Villacruz (2025), who found that implementation challenges in child protection systems include limited legal knowledge and varying levels of institutional support. Similarly, Adewale and Potokri (2023) affirmed that knowledge and awareness gaps among school personnel may influence implementation practices.

Referral and Assessment. Table 16 presents the practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in implementing child protection policies along referral and assessment as perceived by school heads, parents, and teachers. Referral and assessment procedures are essential components of child protection systems because they ensure that learners involved in child protection concerns receive appropriate interventions, professional assistance, and necessary legal or psychosocial support services. Effective referral mechanisms facilitate coordination among schools and external agencies responsible for child welfare and protection.

The findings reveal overall weighted means of 2.16 (Slightly Practiced) for school heads, 2.56 (Slightly Practiced) for parents, and 2.47 (Slightly Practiced) for teachers. These findings indicate that referral and assessment practices were generally perceived as less consistently implemented compared with the other dimensions of child protection practices. The results suggest that although schools have mechanisms for handling child protection concerns within school settings, referral processes involving external agencies and more complex legal procedures may not be regularly observed or implemented.

Among school heads, the highest weighted mean was the conduct of a fact-finding investigation shall be in accordance with the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Department of Education in Administrative Cases with

a weighted mean of 5.00 (Very Highly Practiced). This finding suggests that school heads consistently implemented formal investigation procedures. Since school heads are directly involved in handling complaints and overseeing procedural processes, they may have greater familiarity with the requirements and due process procedures.

Conversely, the lowest weighted mean among school heads was represented by several indicators, namely preventive suspension or reassignment of the offending party may be imposed, The respondent may be placed under preventive suspension pending investigation, The respondent may also be preventively suspended to preclude the possibility of influencing or intimidating witnesses, The respondent may file a Motion for Reconsideration with the Disciplining Authority, and The Disciplining Authority may elevate the same to the Civil Service Commission by way of appeal within fifteen days, all obtaining a weighted mean of 1.48 (Not at All Practiced). This suggests that school heads rarely encounter situations requiring implementation of these more formal legal and disciplinary procedures. In actual school settings, severe child protection cases requiring suspension, appeals, or legal escalation may occur infrequently. School administrators may instead prioritize preventive and restorative interventions before escalating concerns to formal disciplinary procedures.

Table 16 Practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees in Implementing Child Protection Policies along Referral and Assessment

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Parents	
	WM	Int.	WM	Int.	WM	Int.
1. The conduct of a fact-finding investigation shall be in accordance with the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Department of Education in Administrative Cases.	5.00	VHP	4.27	VHP	4.50	VHP
2. Pending investigation, upon referral of the School Principal or Guidance Counselor/Teacher, the Local Social Welfare and Development Officer (LSWDO) of the concerned local government unit shall assess the child and provide psycho-social intervention to help the child victim recover from whatever trauma he or she has experienced as a result of the abuse.	2.68	MP	2.71	MP	2.92	MP
3. The offender shall likewise undergo psycho-social intervention, if such is warranted.	2.68	MP	2.65	MP	2.42	SP
4. If a prima facie case exists based on the investigation report and the records, a Formal Charge shall be issued by the Disciplining Authority.	1.68	NAP	2.42	SP	1.69	NAP
5. Preventive Suspension or reassignment of the offending party may be imposed, as may be warranted.	1.48	NAP	2.44	SP	1.50	NAP
6. The respondent may be placed under preventive suspension pending investigation, for a period of ninety (90) days, if the injury or abuse committed against a child is so grave, as to render the child unable to attend his or her classes.	1.48	NAP	2.35	SP	2.50	SP
7. The respondent may also be preventively suspended to preclude the possibility of influencing or intimidating witnesses.	1.48	NAP	2.37	SP	2.50	SP
8. The respondent may file a Motion for Reconsideration with the Disciplining Authority.	1.48	NAP	1.50	NAP	2.50	SP
9. The Disciplining Authority may elevate the same to the Civil Service Commission by way of an Appeal within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof.	1.48	NAP	1.50	NAP	2.50	SP
Overall Weighted Mean	2.16	SP	2.47	SP	2.56	SP

Rating Scale:	Descriptive Interpretation:
4.20 – 5.00	Very Highly Practiced (VHP)
3.40 – 4.19	Highly Practiced (HP)
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Practiced (MP)
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly Practiced (SP)
1.00 – 1.79	Not at All Practiced (NAP)

Among teachers, the highest weighted mean was also the conduct of a fact-finding investigation shall be in accordance with the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Department of Education in Administrative Cases” with 4.27 (Very Highly Practiced). This suggests that teachers strongly recognize the implementation of procedural investigation mechanisms because they are commonly involved in reporting incidents and supporting investigations. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean among teachers was shared by the respondent may file a Motion for Reconsideration with the Disciplining Authority and the Disciplining Authority may elevate the same to the Civil Service Commission through an appeal”, both obtaining 1.50 (Not at All Practiced). Across respondent groups, indicators involving formal legal procedures, preventive suspension, and appeals consistently received lower ratings. This may reflect local realities where schools rarely reach the stage of implementing formal legal remedies because most child protection concerns are resolved through school-based interventions and counseling.

Among parents, the highest weighted mean was the conduct of a fact-finding investigation shall be in accordance with the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Department of Education in Administrative Cases with 4.50 (Very Highly Practiced). This finding indicates that parents generally perceive schools as observing formal investigation procedures and ensuring fairness in handling complaints. Parents may recognize visible procedural activities such as meetings, investigations, and communication with school authorities. The lowest weighted mean among parents was Preventive suspension or reassignment of the offending party may be imposed” with 1.50 (Not at All Practiced).

The findings imply that schools in Mercedes District demonstrate stronger implementation of internal investigation procedures than external referral and legal assessment mechanisms. While schools appear capable of handling initial child protection concerns, there remains a need to strengthen linkages with external agencies, improve awareness of legal procedures, and enhance referral systems involving psychosocial and specialized services. The findings are supported by Adewale and Potokri (2023), who found that limited awareness and knowledge gaps among school personnel may affect child protection implementation. Similarly, Han-Awon (2025) emphasized that institutional support and capacity-building activities remain necessary to strengthen implementation systems.

Difference in the Practices of Child Protection Committee when grouped as to School Heads, Parents, and Teachers

Table 18 presents the results of the test for significant differences in the practices of Child Protection Committee when respondents are grouped as school heads, parents, and teachers, using the Kruskal–Wallis H-test. The use of this non-parametric statistical tool is appropriate given that the comparison involves more than two independent groups and does not assume normal distribution of data. Thus, the Kruskal–Wallis H-test provides a strong basis for determining whether statistically significant differences exist in the perceived practices across the three groups of respondents.

The results reveal that all four areas of Child Protection Committee practices, such as preventive measures, protective and remedial measures, rules and procedures in handling cases, and referral and assessment obtained statistically significant differences among school heads, parents, and teachers.

For preventive measures, the computed chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 8.238$, $p = .016$) indicates a significant difference at the 0.05 level. The mean ranks show that school heads (65.52) have the highest perception of implementation, followed by parents (53.23), and teachers (44.88). This suggests variability in how preventive efforts are perceived and possibly implemented across stakeholder groups. In the area of protective and remedial measures, a highly significant difference is observed ($\chi^2 = 22.769$, $p = .000$). School heads reported the highest mean (75.48), followed by parents (51.52), and teachers (40.95).

Similarly, rules and procedures in handling cases also demonstrate a highly significant difference ($\chi^2 = 22.838$, $p = .000$), with school heads again obtaining the highest mean (76.50), compared to teachers (45.13) and parents (42.19). Interestingly, a different trend is observed in referral and assessment, where the difference remains highly significant ($\chi^2 = 18.997$, $p = .000$), but parents (64.65) report the highest mean, followed by teachers (56.07), and school heads (30.38). This indicates that parents perceive themselves as more engaged or aware in processes related to referral and assessment compared to school heads.

The statistically significant differences across all areas imply that the perceptions of Child Protection Committee practices vary considerably among school heads, parents, and teachers. The consistently higher ratings by school heads in most variables suggest that they may perceive the implementation of child protection practices more favorably, possibly due to their administrative roles and direct involvement in policy enforcement and program management.

On the other hand, the comparatively lower ratings from teachers may reflect practical challenges encountered at the classroom level, where implementation occurs on a day-to-day basis. Teachers' closer interaction with students might make them more critical or realistic in assessing the effectiveness of such practices. The higher ratings of parents in referral and assessment indicate their increased awareness or involvement when actual child protection cases arise, as these processes often require parental participation and coordination with external agencies. This deviation in perception highlights differences in roles, responsibilities, and levels of engagement among stakeholders.

Table 17 Test for Significant Difference in the Practices of Child Protection Committee when Grouped as to School Heads, Parents, and Teachers

Practices of Child Protection Committees	Respondents' Group	Mean	χ^2	<i>p-value</i>
Preventive Measures	School Heads	65.52	8.238*	.016
	Parents	53.23		
	Teachers	44.88		
Protective and Remedial Measures	School Heads	75.48	22.769**	.000
	Parents	51.52		
	Teachers	40.95		
Rules and Procedures in Handling Cases	School Heads	76.50	22.838**	.000
	Parents	42.19		
	Teachers	45.13		
Referral and Assessment	School Heads	30.38	18.997**	.000
	Parents	64.65		
	Teachers	56.07		

**Significant @ 0.01 level.

*Significant @ 0.05 level.

These findings reflect the school context in Mercedes District where school heads lead CPC operations and compliance efforts, giving them a broader view of implementation, while teachers, as frontline implementers, tend to be more critical due to daily classroom challenges. Parents, on the other hand, are more engaged during specific child protection cases, which shapes their perceptions. Differences in perceptions may also be influenced by limited resources, workload demands, communication gaps, and varying levels of stakeholder involvement. These are supported by Cubio and Bagnol (2025), and Evidor and Villacruz (2025). Similarly, Alcala & Cornelia (2025) affirmed that gaps in resources, training, coordination, and stakeholder engagement affect CPC implementation and perceptions.

These findings imply the need to strengthen communication and coordination among stakeholders to build a shared understanding of CPC roles and processes. Teachers require additional support through training and technical assistance to improve implementation at the classroom level. Parental involvement should also be sustained through regular consultations and engagement activities beyond case-specific concerns. Overall, effective child protection requires shared responsibility and stronger collaboration among school heads, teachers, parents, and external agencies.

Proposed Intervention to Improve the Functionality and Practices of Child Protection Committees

Based on the findings of the study, a proposed intervention in the form of Action Plan entitled Project S.A.F.E. (Strengthening Accountability, Functionality, and Engagement for Child Protection) was developed to improve the functionality and practices of School-Based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in the schools of Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte. Although the findings generally revealed that Child Protection Committees demonstrated functional organizational structures and highly practiced child protection activities in several areas, specific concerns requiring enhancement were identified.

These concerns include limited formal coordination with external agencies, inadequate implementation of referral and assessment mechanisms, insufficient financial support and sustainability measures, limited learner participation systems, and varying perceptions among school heads, parents, and teachers regarding the implementation of child protection practices. Such findings suggest the need for a more comprehensive and sustainable intervention that will strengthen organizational systems, stakeholder participation, and implementation effectiveness.

In response to these identified concerns, the researcher proposes an intervention plan entitled Project S.A.F.E. (Strengthening Accountability, Functionality, and Engagement for Child Protection). The intervention is designed to enhance the overall effectiveness of School-Based Child Protection Committees by improving their operational systems, strengthening collaborative partnerships, enhancing technical competencies of committee members, and increasing stakeholder engagement in child protection implementation.

The proposed intervention primarily aims to strengthen the functionality levels and implementation practices of Child Protection Committees through capacity-building initiatives, strengthened referral mechanisms, enhanced learner participation, improved community involvement, and sustainable support systems. Specifically, the intervention seeks to improve the competencies of CPC members and school personnel in handling child protection concerns, increase awareness and participation among stakeholders, establish stronger partnerships with external agencies, strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, and improve resource mobilization efforts.

The first component of the intervention focuses on capacity building and professional development activities. Findings of the study indicated the need for strengthening competencies related to referral procedures, case management, and implementation of child protection processes. To address this concern, schools may conduct

training activities for School-Based CPC members, school heads, teachers, and non-teaching personnel focusing on child rights, child protection policies, positive and non-violent discipline, first responder systems, referral procedures, Violence Against Children (VAC) case management, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Through continuous training and technical assistance, school personnel may become more equipped and confident in handling child protection concerns effectively.

The second component emphasizes strengthening referral systems and inter-agency partnerships. The study revealed relatively lower implementation in referral and assessment practices and limited formal coordination mechanisms with external agencies. Thus, schools may establish stronger partnerships with agencies such as the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), Local Health Office (LHO), guidance and counseling professionals, and other community organizations. Formal agreements and regular coordination meetings may be initiated to facilitate efficient referral systems and strengthen support services for children needing intervention.

The intervention also includes a learner participation and child engagement component. Findings revealed relatively lower implementation in learner feedback systems and child-friendly participation mechanisms. To address this issue, schools may create child-friendly platforms where learners can actively participate in Child Protection Committee activities through feedback systems, learner surveys, suggestion mechanisms, and student representation in planning and evaluation activities. Child-friendly information materials and CPC booklets may also be developed and utilized to strengthen learner awareness and engagement.

Moreover, a parent and community engagement activity is proposed to strengthen stakeholder participation and collaboration. The findings showed differences in perceptions among respondent groups, suggesting varying levels of involvement and understanding of child protection practices. Schools may therefore conduct regular orientation activities, seminars, and awareness campaigns involving parents and community stakeholders focusing on child rights, positive parenting, anti-bullying initiatives, and child protection reporting systems. Establishing support groups and strengthening communication channels among schools, families, and communities may further improve stakeholder collaboration.

Furthermore, findings on budget allocation and sustainability suggest the need to strengthen resource mobilization and financial support systems. Schools may integrate Child Protection Committee plans into School Improvement Plans and Annual Implementation Plans to ensure allocation of resources for child protection activities. Coordination with Local Government Units, Local School Boards, Parent-Teacher Associations, and other external partners may also be strengthened to secure additional resources and support for child protection programs.

Finally, the proposed intervention includes strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement of Child Protection Committee operations. Schools may establish regular monitoring procedures, periodic assessment of Child Protection Committee functionality, and systematic documentation and reporting mechanisms to evaluate program effectiveness and identify areas requiring improvement.

The implementation of Project S.A.F.E. (Strengthening Accountability, Functionality, and Engagement for Child Protection) is expected to improve the functionality levels of School-Based Child Protection Committees, strengthen the implementation of child protection policies and practices, improve stakeholder collaboration and participation, enhance referral and support systems, increase learner engagement, and ensure sustainability of child protection programs. Ultimately, the proposed intervention seeks to establish a more responsive, effective, and child-friendly school environment that protects and promotes the welfare and rights of learners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were deduced: 1) School-Based Child Protection Committees generally demonstrate high functionality across all domains, with strong compliance in key operational areas such as policy implementation, case management, coordination, and monitoring systems. However, gaps remain in strategic planning, formal coordination mechanisms, learner engagement tools, documentation accessibility, and especially in external funding and sustainability support, indicating areas needing strengthening. 2) CPC practices are generally highly implemented in preventive, protective, and procedural aspects, particularly in positive discipline, timely case handling, and policy enforcement. However, referral and assessment systems, along with some administrative and learner participation mechanisms, are only slightly practiced or inconsistently implemented, highlighting the need for improved system strengthening and procedural consistency. Moreover, 3) there are statistically significant differences in the perceptions of CPC practices across all areas, with school heads consistently giving higher ratings, while teachers generally provide lower ratings. Parents show higher engagement in referral-related processes. These variations reflect differences in roles, exposure, and involvement in child protection implementation. 4) The study led to the development of Project S.A.F.E., aimed at addressing identified gaps in CPC functionality and practices. The intervention focuses on strengthening coordination, referral systems, capacity building, stakeholder engagement, learner participation, and resource sustainability to enhance the overall effectiveness of School-Based Child Protection Committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence and conclusions derived from the study, the following recommendations are proposed: 1) School Heads and CPC members may strengthen strategic planning, establish formal coordination with external agencies, improve documentation and learner participation systems, and prioritize budget allocation through SIP/AIP integration and external linkages. 2) School Heads, CPC members, and trained teachers may enhance referral and assessment systems through standardized procedures, continuous training, and strengthened implementation of child-friendly participation mechanisms and administrative processes. 3) School Heads, with the CPC and PTA leaders, may conduct regular stakeholder alignment activities such as orientations, consultations, and feedback sessions to harmonize understanding and strengthen shared implementation of CPC practices. 4) Schools Division Office, School Heads, and CPC members may adopt and implement Project S.A.F.E., ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation to improve CPC effectiveness, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement. 5) Future researchers and graduate students may expand the scope of the study across different contexts and employ mixed-method designs to gain deeper insights into CPC implementation challenges.

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