

**[ DEPED ORDER NO. 26, S. 2002, June 18, 2002 ]**

**ENJOINING COMPLIANCE TO DECS ORDER NO. 120, S. 1999  
(AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF DECS ORDER NO. 13, S.  
1998)**

1. Declaration of Policy — The State shall, in conformity with the mandate of the Constitution, encourage and promote the teaching of religion to children in public elementary and high schools within the regular class hours. The State is cognizant of the vital role that the teaching of religion assumes in citizen formation, particularly the molding of our youth. Hence, the State recognizes the necessity of religious instruction not only in the private schools but also in public schools. For these purposes, the Department hereby provides the mechanics to enable the teaching of religion in all public elementary and high schools in the country, fully aware that the Constitution prohibits the government from favoring a particular establishment or religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Furthermore, the implementation of this Order should not entail additional cost to the government.
2. Coverage — This Order shall apply to all public elementary and high schools in the Philippines.
3. Definition of Terms — As used in this Order, the following terms shall mean:
  - a. Religion — an institutionalized system of beliefs, attitudes and practices.
  - b. Values Education — the integration into the school curriculum of universally accepted as well as Filipino human, social, moral, political, economic and cultural values.
  - c. Optional religious instruction — refers to the religion classes conducted in the public elementary and high schools for students or pupils whose parents opted to exercise their right to request religious instruction in public schools for their children or wards. The optional character of religious instruction in public schools is a prerogative or choice of the parents or guardians, who are free to request or not to request that the children under their care be instructed in the religion of their choice.
  - d. Regular class hours — refers to the regular or normal scheduled periods of instruction or laboratory work for a student.
  - e. Class period — the average length of time scheduled for one session or instructional period in a course.
4. The Teachers/Instructors — The religious teachers/instructors who teach religion classes in the public elementary and high schools shall be formally sourced or recruited by the respective principal or school head in accordance with the corresponding request for optional religious instruction. After their designation or