

POLICY PATHWAYS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROMOTION OF CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) and its relationship to child protection outcomes and child-friendly school practices in selected secondary schools in the Schools Division Office of Batangas Province. It aimed to determine the extent of policy implementation, assess child protection outcomes, identify existing challenges, and explore how these factors contribute to and support the promotion of child-friendly schools for all students. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed to this study. The survey questionnaires were used to gather data first, then focus group discussions with teachers, school heads, and stakeholders facilitated an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in creating a child-friendly school which help the researcher to describe the present situation and analyze the responses of research participants. Statistical tools, including the mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis, were employed. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated awareness and practice in reporting and documentation, while guidance and counseling were highly practiced. School heads showed strong implementation in monitoring, policy enforcement, and support systems. Community involvement was moderately observed, while school personnel commitment was high despite resource constraints. Child protection outcomes were achieved to a great extent, particularly in promoting policy compliance, learner safety, and child-friendly school environments. Significant relationships were found between CPP implementation and outcomes, with challenges partially influencing this relationship. The study concludes that effective CPP implementation requires collaborative efforts, continuous training, strong leadership, and active community engagement. A Policy Pathway Model is proposed to strengthen and sustain child protection practices.

Keywords: Child Protection Policy, school safety, policy implementation, child-friendly schools, stakeholder roles

INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation of national progress and people's development. A quality education system drives social, economic, and cultural advancement. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) is committed to providing quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education for all Filipino learners. This mission centers on creating child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating learning environments. Teachers guide and support every learner, and stakeholders help foster lifelong learning. A key priority is a safe and friendly environment where students feel respected, connected, and empowered to reach their full potential (National School Climate Center). This focus on safety and well-being leads to policies that protect children in the education system.

The Child Protection Policy sets a framework to prevent, identify, and address abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm in schools. The goal is to prioritize the child's best interests and ensure that all actions, decisions, and policies support the child's safety and growth (Department of Education, 2012). From these measures, challenges remain. Rahman and Sarip (2020) highlight persistent issues for victims and institutions. Continuous effort and vigilance are crucial for safeguarding children.

National laws such as Republic Act 7610, the "Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act," strengthen child protection. This law requires the State to protect children from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, and discrimination, and to run programs for prevention, deterrence, and crisis intervention. If caregivers do not protect a child or cause harm, the State must intervene to ensure the child's safety and development. These legal requirements form the backbone of school-based child protection policies.

To turn these legal mandates into action in education, the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) partnered with UNICEF Philippines and the Child Network Foundation, Inc. They issued the DepEd Order, the Child Protection Policy. The policy ensures all Filipino children have a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and respectful environment, regardless of background (Briones, 2019).

Despite legislative and policy efforts, challenges still persist. According to UNICEF, nearly 8 in 10 Filipino children, specifically, 80% as reported in their latest survey, have experienced some form of violence at home, in school, or in their communities. This statistic emphasizes ongoing difficulties for schools. Teachers and school heads must detect and report abuse and are also responsible for engaging in multidisciplinary support and monitoring. These roles require training and resources, which highlights the ongoing need for support and capacity building.

The policy requires the involvement of children in policymaking and implementation to ensure that their voices are heard, whether as victims or aggressors. The Department of Education mandates the establishment of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in all public and private schools, composed of school officials, teachers, parents, students, and community representatives, as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012. These committees serve as mechanisms for preventing and responding to abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying in schools. The policy also enforces accountability through administrative sanctions for violations of child protection standards, as provided under Republic Act No. 7610 and the Child Protection Policy.

Despite existing protective laws and policies, Filipino children still encounter various dangers—such as physical and sexual abuse, bullying (including cyberbullying), neglect, trafficking, and online sexual exploitation—that often happen at school, home, or online. These threats negatively impact children's emotional and cognitive development, lower their attendance and engagement, and diminish public confidence in schools. Therefore, schools need a clear and practical Child Protection Policy. This policy translates legal requirements into everyday actions and guarantees that all stakeholders consistently address child protection issues.

The legal framework in the Philippines already provides a strong basis for action. Republic Act No. 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination) and later laws—like RA 10627 (Anti-Bullying Act) and RA 11930 (Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children Act)—set duties, list forbidden acts, and outline penalties. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy) and its memoranda spell out school procedures. Still, gaps remain at the school level, and awareness of their duties, reporting, and referral pathways is sometimes unclear. Training coverage varies, and the capacity to prevent and handle technology-based harms can be limited. The policy clarifies roles, strengthens preventive systems (including safe learning spaces and digital safety), standardizes reporting and referral, and sets monitoring measures for all stakeholders.

Reports of online sexual exploitation and ongoing abuse and bullying are rising. To protect our students, it urges all school leaders, educators, and community members to fully support and implement these measures: prevention training, ICT safeguards, community engagement, survivor-centered response, mandatory reporting, and strong partnerships with social welfare and law enforcement. The policy also commits DepEd to monitoring to ensure schools can measure prevalence, track responses, and close the implementation gap, making every school a place of safety, dignity, learning, and healing.

Although the Child Protection Policy offers a comprehensive legal and policy framework, its implementation in secondary schools within the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Batangas Province reveals a persistent gap between formal policy and actual practice. This study, therefore, examines how the distinct roles of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders influence child protection and child-friendly schools, specifically by identifying key challenges—including resource constraints, school personnel commitment, and stakeholder involvement. Addressing these areas is crucial to closing the implementation gap and ensuring that policies have a tangible impact on child safety at school.

OBJECTIVES IF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the perceptions of teachers, school leaders, and community stakeholders regarding the implementation of child protection policies in secondary schools within SDO Batangas Province. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: To what extent do the following stakeholders involved in the spheres perceive the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of: 1.1 Teachers a. awareness; b. reporting and documentation; and c. guidance and counseling? School Heads a. monitoring and recording, b. policy enforcement, and c. support systems? 1.3 Community a. reporting and referral of cases, b. monitoring and feedback; and c. counseling and rehabilitation support? 2. To what extent do the challenges in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP), child protection outcome, and child-friendly school practices observed in terms of: a. resource constraints,

b. school personnel commitment, and c. community involvement? 3. How may the child protection outcomes be described in terms of their: 3.1 Implementation 3.2 Awareness and Practice 3.3 Promotion of child-friendly schools? 4. Is there a significant relationship between the implementation of the child protection policy and child protection outcomes? 5. Is there a significant relationship between the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly school practices? 6. Based on the result of the study, what proposed Policy Pathways Model can be developed to enhance the implementation of the child protection policy and promote child-friendly schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study used a sequential explanatory design, a type of mixed-methods research that involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to further explain or interpret the initial results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative approach, using a descriptive-correlational design, examines the impacts of teachers' and school heads' roles, and of the community, on the implementation of child protection policy, and explores the relationships among these variables. The descriptive method seeks the facts about a current situation.

The design facilitated an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in creating a child-friendly school. According to Sumiog (2022), it includes surveys and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds, which help the researcher to describe the present situation and analyze the responses of research participants. It summarizes the current roles performed by the respondents, while the correlational method will be used to analyze the relationship between the roles and the challenges that have a great impact on the effectiveness of CPP implementation.

Additionally, the description, comparison, analysis, and interpretation of existing data are the main focus of this methodology.

Respondents included 280 teachers, 18 school heads, and 44 stakeholders from 18 secondary schools in Cluster III, Batangas Province. Purposive sampling was used for qualitative participants. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire aligned with DepEd Order No. 40 s.2012, covering roles of teachers, school heads, stakeholders, challenges, and outcomes. Data collection followed validation, pilot testing, and official approvals. Statistical tools included mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis, and PROCESS Macro For mediation analysis. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Awareness

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Teachers are familiar with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy	4.59	.55	<i>Highly Aware</i>
2. Teachers are aware of their duties in promoting child protection.	4.68	.50	<i>Highly Aware</i>
3. Teachers regularly attend orientations and trainings about the CPP.	3.97	.93	<i>Aware</i>
4. Teachers understand how the CPP applies in daily classroom situations.	4.50	.63	<i>Highly Aware</i>

5. Teachers are aware of signs of abuse, bullying, neglect, or exploitation.	4.58	.63	Highly Aware
Overall Mean	4.47	.50	Aware

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Aware) 4.49- 3.50 - Agree (Aware) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (Moderately Aware) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Aware) 1.49-1.00 - Strongly Disagree (Not Aware)

As shown in Table 1, teachers, as key stakeholders, perceived the level of implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) as “aware,” with an overall mean of 4.47. This indicates most of indicators perceived high level of awareness among respondents, although variations in specific indicators suggest differences in the extent of their understanding and engagement.

The quantitative results show that teachers are highly aware of their duties in promoting child protection. They are familiar with policy provisions, capable of identifying signs of abuse, bullying, neglect, or exploitation, and understand how the Child Protection Policy (CPP) is applied in daily classroom situations. However, in terms of regularly attending orientations and trainings related to CPP, teachers obtained a verbal interpretation of “aware,” indicating a comparatively lower level of engagement in this aspect.

These findings indicates that teachers exhibit a high level of awareness of their roles in promoting child protection, consistent with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy, which mandates school personnel to ensure learners’ safety and welfare (Department of Education, 2012, Section VI). However, participation in trainings and orientations needs to be strengthened through continuous capacity-building programs, as emphasized in the policy (Department of Education, 2012, Section X). Furthermore, Alcala and Cornelia (2025) noted that high levels of teacher awareness reflect institutional alignment with policy standards and demonstrate the effectiveness of school-based orientations and dissemination strategies.

Supporting these results, the focus group discussion revealed a common theme of familiarity with the Child Protection Policy. Participants demonstrated a general awareness of the CPP, primarily gained through seminars, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions specifically conducted in the first quarter of the school year, and school-based orientations; however, the depth of knowledge varied. Some teachers reported that basic understanding has been acquired, as expressed by participants:

“Ahm sakto lang, hindi lumalampas dun, palaging guided po ng CPP ang aming pag-i-implement.” T1G1

While others demonstrated a deeper understanding of the policy, as one participant stated:

“Actually, I am very familiar since I am attending several seminars about CPP and LRP as well.” T3G2

These qualitative findings contrast with the moderate level of awareness reflected in the quantitative results, suggesting that while survey data indicate moderate engagement in training, the experiences shared during discussions reveal that some teachers achieve a deeper understanding through active participation in professional development activities.

The findings suggest that teachers possess both conceptual knowledge and practical awareness necessary to protect learners. These competencies are critical, as teachers serve as the first line of defense in identifying and responding to child protection concerns. However, the moderate level of participation in trainings and orientations highlights a gap in continuous professional development that must be addressed to ensure consistent and sustained implementation of the CPP.

Table 2

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Reporting and Documentation.

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Teachers know the proper reporting procedure for child abuse or bullying cases.	4.43	.74	Practiced
2. Teachers keep records of incidents related to child protection concerns.	4.35	.76	Practiced
3. Teachers know how to document and submit reports to the proper authorities.	4.40	.74	Practiced
4. Teachers coordinate with school heads when documenting child protection cases.	4.56	.65	Highly Practiced
5. Teachers maintain confidentiality when handling sensitive child protection cases.	4.72	.52	Highly Practiced

Overall Mean	4.49	.56	Practiced
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Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Practiced) 4.49- 3.50 - Agree (Practiced) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (Moderately Practiced) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Practiced) 1.49-1.00 - Strongly Disagree (Not Practiced)

Table 2 indicates that reporting and documentation are practiced, with an overall mean of 4.49, as perceived by stakeholders in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP). This suggests that teachers generally carry out reporting and documentation procedures, although variations exist across specific indicators.

The findings reveal that specific aspects of reporting and documentation are highly practiced, particularly in maintaining confidentiality when handling sensitive child protection cases and in coordinating with school heads during the documentation process. However, other indicators, such as knowledge of appropriate reporting procedures for child abuse or bullying cases, the proper documentation and submission of reports to relevant authorities, and the maintenance of systematic records of child protection incidents, are classified as practiced and remain comparatively lower than those identified as highly practiced.

These results suggest inconsistencies in the implementation of reporting procedures, as reflected in the variation in descriptive ratings across indicators. While selected aspects, such as maintaining confidentiality and coordinating with school heads, obtained higher mean scores and were interpreted as “Highly Practiced,” other indicators, including knowledge of appropriate reporting procedures, proper documentation and submission of reports, and systematic record-keeping, yielded comparatively lower mean values and were classified as “Practiced.” This implies that, although teachers demonstrate general awareness of child protection policies, there are observable gaps in the procedural application of these policies, particularly in technical and compliance-related aspects of reporting. Such disparities indicate the need for clearer operational guidelines, standardized reporting protocols, and strengthened monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistency and accuracy in implementation. Bayucca (2020) similarly noted that procedural aspects of CPP implementation often require further clarification and training. Likewise, Dizon and Carreon (2020) identified a gap between teachers’ awareness of policies and their actual reporting practices, emphasizing the need for clearer guidelines and more effective monitoring systems.

Supporting these findings, the focus group discussion revealed a common theme: that reporting and documentation as a process for handling cases in which participants described a step-by-step procedure followed by schools, beginning with the class adviser and escalating to higher authorities such as discipline officers and guidance counselors when necessary, supported by proper documentation and progressive sanctions.

The results further reveal that schools address cases such as bullying or abuse through a multi-step process. It begins with the identification of the incident by the teacher, followed by initial reporting and documentation. The case is then elevated to appropriate authorities, such as school heads, discipline officers, or guidance counselors, for further assessment. After evaluation, appropriate interventions or actions are implemented. Throughout the process, proper documentation and record-keeping are maintained to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuity of support for the learner, and provide appropriate interventions.

For instance, one participant explained:

“Ang amin pong rules dito sa school kapag bullying, adviser po muna ang magha-handle... pag hindi po maaayos, saka po ito dadalhin sa discipline at guidance.” T4G1

Similarly, others stated:

“May sinusunod po kaming proseso, meron po kaming naghandle for the sanction po ng students at the same time po may intake sheet at Anecdotal report para detalyado po ang documentation... Kapag ma instances na abuse cases, nire-refer po namin sa registered guidance counselor.” GC1G3

These responses indicate that reporting and documentation processes are generally followed and involve coordination among multiple stakeholders. However, consistent with the quantitative findings, variations in practice suggest that while procedures are in place, their implementation may differ in terms of accuracy, completeness, and consistency. This highlights the need to further strengthen teachers’ competence in documentation and reporting through continuous training and clearer procedural guidelines.

Table 3*Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Guidance and Counseling*

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Teachers provide emotional support to students who experience abuse or bullying.	4.64	.58	<i>Highly Practiced</i>
2. Teachers refer students in need (psychological or safety support) to guidance counselors or child protection officers.	4.53	.68	<i>Highly Practiced</i>
3. Teachers promote positive discipline instead of corporal punishment	4.63	.56	<i>Highly Practiced</i>
4. Teachers actively participate in counseling sessions even though counselors lead for affected students.	4.42	.75	<i>Practiced</i>
5. Teachers encourage open communication with students regarding safety and protection.	4.68	.59	<i>Highly Practiced</i>
Overall Mean	4.58	.52	<i>Highly Practiced</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Practiced) 4.49- 3.50 - Agree (Practiced) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (Moderately Practiced) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Practiced) 1.49-1.00 - Strongly Disagree (Not Practiced)

Guidance and counseling services are integral to the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy, as they address the emotional and psychological well-being of learners. As presented in Table 3, stakeholders' perceptions indicate that the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of guidance and counseling yielded an overall mean of 4.58, interpreted as "Highly Practiced."

The findings indicate that teachers highly practice essential supportive behaviors. These include encouraging open communication with students regarding safety and protection, providing emotional support to learners who experience abuse or bullying, promoting positive discipline instead of corporal punishment, and referring students in need of psychological or safety support to guidance counselors or child protection officers.

Moreover, guidance and counseling are not limited to structured interventions conducted by guidance counselors but are also reinforced through teachers' everyday interactions with learners. Teachers continuously provide care and follow-up support beyond formal counseling sessions. Such practices demonstrate a proactive and compassionate approach to addressing students' emotional and psychological needs. Additionally, consistent follow-up and informal check-ins help build trust between teachers and students, making it easier for learners to open up about their experiences and concerns. This is supported by the statement of one participant:

"Ang ginagawa ko po may follow up po akong kamustahan, hindi ko man sya ipatawag kunyare nadaan ako sa classroom at kapag nakita ko, kinakamusta ko po ang bata," T6 G1

which reflects teachers' ongoing efforts to monitor and support students beyond formal interventions. This qualitative evidence reinforces the quantitative findings, particularly the high mean ratings for indicators related to emotional support and open communication, thereby confirming that these practices are consistently implemented in actual school contexts.

However, the lowest mean score ($M = 4.42$), interpreted as "Practiced," pertains to teachers' participation in counseling sessions. This suggests that while teachers are actively involved in supporting learners, their participation in formal counseling remains limited. This may be attributed to the delineation of professional roles, wherein guidance counselors are primarily responsible for conducting counseling interventions, while teachers provide initial support, identification, follow-up, and referral. Additionally, this finding may reflect institutional protocols that restrict teachers' direct involvement in counseling to ensure that interventions are handled by trained specialists. It may also indicate a need for enhanced capacity-building initiatives to equip teachers with foundational counseling-related competencies within appropriate professional boundaries.

These results indicate that guidance and counseling services are effectively integrated into school practices, with teachers performing a facilitative and supportive role rather than a direct counseling function. Such an approach ensures that learners receive appropriate professional intervention while maintaining a supportive classroom environment. These findings highlight the importance of teachers as frontline support providers in implementing the Child Protection Policy, complementing the specialized functions of guidance counselors in promoting students' well-being and protection. However, the comparatively lower rating in this area underscores the need to further clarify role boundaries and strengthen coordination between teachers and guidance counselors to enhance the overall effectiveness of support mechanisms. Furthermore, reinforcing

interprofessional collaboration through structured referral systems, regular case conferences, and clear communication channels may improve service delivery. Continuous professional development and policy reinforcement are also essential to ensure that both teachers and guidance counselors effectively fulfill their complementary roles within the child protection framework.

Table 4

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Monitoring and Recording

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head regularly monitors the status of implementation of the Child Protection Policy.	4.50	.70	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
2. The school head has complete and updated records of reported child protection cases.	4.49	.70	<i>To Moderate Extent</i>
3. The school head ensures that all incident reports are properly documented and followed up on.	4.57	.67	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
4. The school head evaluates the effectiveness of CPP implementation	4.47	.75	<i>To Moderate Extent</i>
5. The school head provides clear and timely feedback to teachers on CPP-related concerns.	4.55	.70	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.51	.64	<i>To a Great Extent</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 4 shows that school heads, as stakeholders, perceived the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of monitoring and recording to a great extent, with an overall mean of 4.51.

The findings reveal that school heads ensure that incident reports are properly documented and followed up provide clear and timely feedback to teachers on child protection concerns, and regularly monitor the status of CPP implementation, all of which are practiced to a great extent. These practices indicate that school heads are actively fulfilling their supervisory and accountability roles in ensuring compliance with child protection standards. This is supported by the statement from the discussion who noted that:

“all cases are documented” and are “kept in the guidance office,” ShIG3

reflecting established practices in documentation and centralized record-keeping within the school.

However, maintaining complete and updated records of reported child protection cases ($M = 4.49$) and evaluating the effectiveness of CPP implementation ($M = 4.47$) are practiced only to a moderate extent. This suggests that while monitoring and immediate response mechanisms are well established, more technical and system-oriented processes—such as comprehensive documentation and systematic evaluation—are less consistently implemented. In the school context, this may be attributed to factors such as time constraints, administrative workload, limited training in data management and evaluation procedures, and the absence of standardized monitoring tools.

The findings that school heads monitor implementation, provide feedback, and ensure documentation to a great extent are aligned with the mandates of the Department of Education, particularly under DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which assigns school heads the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and ensuring that cases are properly recorded, reported, and acted upon (Department of Education [DepEd], 2012). This alignment suggests that school heads are effectively performing their supervisory and administrative roles in enforcing child protection measures within the school setting. These results are further supported by previous studies, which emphasize that while school personnel demonstrate strong awareness and engagement in child protection practices, gaps often emerge in systematic documentation and evaluation processes (Dizon & Carreon, 2020). Similarly, Bayucca (2020) noted that procedural and technical aspects of policy implementation require continuous training and clearer guidelines to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

Moreover, the active involvement of school heads in monitoring and feedback mechanisms highlights the critical role of instructional leadership in reinforcing policy adherence and fostering a culture of accountability within schools. Their supervisory functions not only ensure compliance but also facilitate the translation of policy into practice through regular guidance and performance monitoring. However, the observed gaps in documentation and evaluation underscore the need for

more structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks, including the use of standardized tools and data management systems to support evidence-based decision-making. Strengthening these systems may enhance transparency, improve case management efficiency, and ensure more timely and appropriate interventions for learners.

While the high overall ratings indicate strong compliance in supervisory practices, the comparatively lower ratings in maintaining complete records and evaluating CPP effectiveness suggest a partial gap in the sustainability and continuous improvement of implementation. This implies that strengthening systematic documentation processes, enhancing training on evaluation procedures, and institutionalizing regular monitoring mechanisms are necessary to ensure that child protection practices are not only implemented but also consistently improved over time.

Table 5

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Policy Enforcement

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head ensures that all school personnel comply with the Child Protection Policy guidelines.	4.61	.61	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
2. The school head enforces discipline policies aligned with the CPP.	4.61	.60	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
3. The school head takes firm action against anyone who violates the CPP.	4.60	.64	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
4. The school heads promptly act on all reported cases in accordance with established policies.	4.62	.63	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
5. The school head ensures fair and impartial handling of all child protection cases	4.63	.62	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.61	.56	<i>To a Great Extent</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 5 presents the stakeholders' perception of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of policy enforcement, with an overall mean of 4.612, interpreted as "to a great extent." The findings reveal that all indicators of policy enforcement are practiced to a great extent, indicating that school heads demonstrate a strong commitment to enforcing child protection policies within the school. Their active involvement in ensuring compliance, implementing discipline, and responding promptly to reported cases reflects effective leadership and accountability in maintaining a safe and protective learning environment.

The consistently high ratings across all indicators suggest that policy enforcement mechanisms are well-established and properly implemented. This implies that schools have clear systems and procedures in place, such as established reporting mechanisms, standardized disciplinary protocols, proper documentation and case handling procedures, and structured referral systems for appropriate intervention and support services.

These findings are further substantiated by participants' experiences, describing the implementation of disciplinary measures as a structured and progressive system:

"May first, second, and third offense po kami. Kapag first offense, oral warning muna; kapag umulit, may parent conference e na, at kung kinakailangan, may corresponding consequence tulad ng community service" GC3T5 G5

This indicates that enforcement is carried out through clearly defined and consistently applied procedures.

In addition, another participant emphasized that actions taken are grounded in established policies rather than personal judgment, stating that:

"Kung ano po ang nakasaad sa aming patakaran, iyon po ang sinusunod naming aksyon. Hindi po ito base sa personal na desisyon, kundi nakaangkla sa aming guidelines" T5 G5

This highlights that policy enforcement is guided by formal rules and institutional standards, ensuring fairness and consistency in handling cases.

These qualitative insights affirm that policy enforcement in schools is systematic, policy-driven, and consistently implemented. The findings suggest that school heads play a crucial role in ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is not only implemented but also strictly enforced. Their leadership fosters a culture of safety, fairness, and accountability within

the school. However, continuous monitoring and reinforcement of these practices remain essential to sustain effective policy enforcement over time.

Table 6

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Support System

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head organizes programs that promote child safety and protection	4.50	.71	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
2. The school head provides resources to support CPP implementation.	4.56	.69	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
3. The school head collaborates with teachers, parents, and the community to support CPP.	4.57	.64	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
4. The school head supports teachers through training and coaching on child protection, behavior management, and positive discipline.	4.55	.68	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
5. The school head ensures that students receive psychological or academic support when needed.	4.59	.66	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.55	.61	<i>To a Great Extent</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 6 reveals stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of support systems, with an overall mean of 4.554, interpreted as "to a great extent." This indicates that support mechanisms for child protection are well-established and consistently implemented across schools. It also suggests that schools have institutionalized these support systems as part of their regular practices, rather than treating them as isolated or reactive measures.

The findings show that school heads organize programs that promote child safety, provide necessary resources, collaborate with teachers, parents, and the community, and support teachers through training and coaching. In addition, they ensure that students receive psychological or academic support when needed, which obtained the highest mean among the indicators. These results suggest that support systems are not only present but are actively functioning to address learners' needs. This further implies that schools recognize the holistic nature of child protection, addressing not only physical safety but also learners' emotional and developmental well-being.

Qualitative data further explain how these support systems are operationalized in practice. One participant shared that:

"Type of support ay sa LAC session namin pinag-uusapan namin kung ano yung maganda... at kung may mga case na na-encounter sa school rules, tine-revise namin... kaya palagi naming inaayos", SH2 G5

indicating that support is provided through collaborative discussions and continuous improvement of school practices during LAC sessions. This demonstrates that support systems involve not only resource provision but also collective decision-making and reflective practices among school personnel. Such practices highlight the role of professional learning communities in sustaining policy implementation and ensuring that responses remain relevant to emerging issues.

Furthermore, the strong collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community reflects a shared responsibility in implementing child protection measures. This coordinated effort allows for more responsive and contextually appropriate interventions for learners. Continuous monitoring and open communication also strengthen trust within the school community, enabling early identification of concerns and timely responses. This collaborative environment fosters a culture of accountability, where stakeholders are more proactive in addressing potential risks and safeguarding students' welfare.

While the results indicate that support systems are effectively implemented, sustaining these practices requires continuous strengthening of partnerships, provision of resources, and capacity-building initiatives. This ensures that support mechanisms remain responsive, adaptive, and aligned with the evolving needs of learners and the demands of child protection policy implementation.

Table 7

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Reporting and Referral of Cases.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The community (parents, barangay officials) reports cases of child abuse or bullying to the school.	4.35	.73	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
2. The community is aware of the proper referral procedures for child protection cases to the right authorities.	4.29	.78	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
3. The community cooperates with the school in handling reported cases.	4.37	.70	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
4. The community responds quickly when a child protection case occurs.	4.38	.72	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
5. The community participates in awareness campaigns related to child protection.	4.39	.72	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Overall Mean	4.36	.63	<i>Moderately Observed</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 7 shows stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of reporting and referral of cases, with an overall mean of 4.36, interpreted as moderately observed.

The findings reveal that all indicators related to community involvement in reporting and referral are moderately observed. Specifically, the community's participation in child protection awareness campaigns received a high score of 4.39, while awareness of the proper referral procedures for child protection cases to the right authorities received the lowest score, with a weighted mean of 4.29. These results indicate that while there is active participation from the community, such involvement is not consistently strong across all aspects of reporting and referral. The moderate level suggests that awareness, responsiveness, and engagement exist but may vary depending on the situation or stakeholders involved.

This finding is supported of the discussion as stated by the participant:

“Actually, very active naman po, especially parents. If the students who are victims of abuse or bullying, they tend to report it to us immediately... they know how to report it, kaya nagagawan namin ng paraan na ma-resolve.” GCI G2

This statement indicates that community members, particularly parents, can report cases promptly and are aware of proper reporting procedures. However, while such instances demonstrate active participation, the overall moderate rating suggests that this level of engagement is not consistently observed among all community members or in all situations.

As mandated by the Department of Education, particularly under DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, the result is aligned to emphasizing the importance of community participation, proper reporting mechanisms, and referral systems in ensuring effective child protection. However, the moderate ratings suggest a gap between policy expectations and actual practice, particularly in achieving consistent community awareness and participation.

This implies that while schools have established systems for reporting and referral, the extent of community engagement needs to be strengthened. Limited awareness of procedures and inconsistent participation may affect the timely reporting and proper handling of child protection cases.

Furthermore, these findings, explained through the lens of the Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that the child's protection and development are influenced by multiple interconnected systems, particularly the family, school, and community. The moderate level of community involvement suggests that while these systems are present, their interaction is not fully maximized. This highlights the need to strengthen collaboration, improve information dissemination, and enhance capacity-building initiatives among community stakeholders.

Moreover, the results emphasized the importance of shifting from reactive responses to preventive approaches through sustained awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagement. Strengthening these efforts will help ensure a more responsive, coordinated, and effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

Table 8
Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Monitoring and Feedback

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The community helps monitor the implementation of child protection activities.	4.33	.76	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
2. The community attends meetings related to child protection policy.	4.25	.77	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
3. The community members share feedback with schools on CPP implementation.	4.32	.77	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
4. The community ensures feedback is regularly collected and used to improve the program.	4.25	.75	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
5. The community communicates with school staff to ensure child safety.	4.40	.67	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Overall Mean	4.31	.67	<i>Moderately Observed</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 8 presents the stakeholders' perception of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of monitoring and feedback, with an overall mean of 4.31, interpreted as "moderately observed." This indicates that while community involvement in monitoring and feedback mechanisms is present, it is not consistently or systematically sustained across all areas.

The findings show that the community participates in monitoring activities, attends meetings, provides feedback, and communicates with school personnel; however, all indicators fall within the "moderately observed" level. This suggests that stakeholder participation is limited in terms of frequency, as involvement generally occurs when specific issues arise rather than through consistently scheduled monitoring activities. While community members are involved, their participation is often reactive, focusing on reporting or responding to concerns rather than actively engaging in decision-making, and is not consistently sustained across monitoring and feedback processes. This further indicates that stakeholder engagement lacks structured and continuous mechanisms that would support regular participation in monitoring activities. Moreover, the limited depth of involvement suggests that stakeholders are not fully integrated into decision-making processes, which may affect the overall effectiveness of feedback utilization and policy implementation.

A key theme that emerged from the data is limited and inconsistent stakeholder participation in monitoring and feedback. While mechanisms for involvement exist, actual engagement is often reactive rather than proactive.

This pattern is supported by participants' statements:

"Kami po ang nagiging boses ng kabataan, lalo na kapag may cases ng bullying. Kami po ang lumalapit sa mga guro at nagsasabi ng mga nangyayari," (SL1 G5)

indicating that monitoring often depends on students reporting incidents rather than on structured and continuous community-based monitoring systems. Similarly, another participant noted that:

"Kadalasan po, kapag may problema lang saka nagkakaroon ng usapan o aksyon," SL2 G1

suggesting that stakeholder involvement is triggered by specific cases rather than sustained participation in regular monitoring and feedback activities.

These findings highlight a gap between the presence of monitoring mechanisms and the actual level of community engagement. Although communication between the school and its stakeholders is present, active participation in meetings, feedback mechanisms, and monitoring activities remains inconsistent and not fully institutionalized. Moreover, while feedback is collected, there is limited evidence of its systematic provision and utilization to inform continuous program improvement.

From the perspective of Ecological Systems Theory, effective child protection requires active and continuous interaction among stakeholders, including the school, family, and community. The moderate level of involvement observed in this study suggests that these interactions are present but not fully maximized.

This implies that schools need to strengthen stakeholder engagement by institutionalizing regular monitoring activities, increasing active participation in meetings, and developing more structured systems for feedback collection and utilization. Enhancing these processes will promote a more collaborative and sustained approach to monitoring and feedback, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of Child Protection Policy implementation.

Table 9

Stakeholder Perception on the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy as to Counseling and Rehabilitation Support.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The community provides support services for children needing counseling or rehabilitation, such as a psychologist or psychometrician.	4.24	.79	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
2. The community helps in reintegrating abused or bullied children into school.	4.27	.74	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
3. The community offers community-based programs that promote child well-being.	4.27	.79	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
4. The community coordinates with teachers and guidance counselors for counseling.	4.41	.73	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
5. The community provides material or moral support to children in distress.	4.25	.79	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Overall mean	4.28	.69	<i>Moderately Observed</i>

Legend: 5 – 4.50 Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49 – 3.50 Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49 – 2.50 Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49 – 1.50 Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49 – 1.00 Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 9 presents stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in terms of counseling and rehabilitation support, with an overall mean of 4.28, interpreted as moderately observed. This indicates that while support mechanisms are in place, their implementation remains inconsistent, particularly in ensuring regular access to professional counseling services and sustained coordination among stakeholders.

The findings reveal that all indicators related to community involvement in counseling and rehabilitation support are moderately observed. Specifically, the community provides support services for children in need of counseling or rehabilitation, such as access to psychologists or psychometricians, assists in the reintegration of abused or bullied children into the school environment, and offers community-based programs that promote child well-being. In addition, the community coordinates with teachers and guidance counselors in delivering counseling services, which emerged as one of the more evident practices among the indicators.

However, access to specialized professionals, such as psychologists or psychometricians, appeared less evident, suggesting limitations in the availability of professional support services. In many cases, schools rely on referrals or external agencies, which may not always be readily accessible or immediately available. Furthermore, the community provides both material and moral support to children experiencing distress, such as providing school supplies, financial assistance, and emotional encouragement through follow-up communication and community support activities.

These findings are aligned with the provisions of Republic Act No. 12080, which emphasizes the responsibility of school personnel—including teachers, school heads, and guidance counselors—to ensure the protection, proper intervention, and rehabilitation of children. The law highlights that personnel are expected to coordinate support services and facilitate access to appropriate interventions for affected learners. However, the moderate level of implementation observed in this study suggests that while these responsibilities are recognized, they are not fully realized in practice, particularly in ensuring consistent access to specialized services and sustained community involvement.

These results indicate that while the community plays a role in supporting children's recovery and well-being, such involvement is not consistently strong or fully developed. The moderate level of implementation suggests that support systems exist but may be constrained by limited accessibility to professional services, insufficient resources, and gaps in coordination among stakeholders.

This implies that although support mechanisms are present, their integration and collaborative implementation are not fully maximized to ensure holistic recovery for affected children. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen community-based support systems, improve access to professional counseling services, and enhance coordination among schools, families, and local agencies. Increasing awareness and implementing capacity-building initiatives for community stakeholders may further improve the delivery of counseling and rehabilitation services.

Table 10

Extent of Observation in the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices in terms of Resource Constraints

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The teachers' workload limits their ability to monitor students effectively.	4.18	.98	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
2. The school has sufficient personnel designated for child protection tasks	4.13	.93	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
3. Schools have trained personnel to handle child protection concerns.	4.19	.88	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
4. The school receives support from the local government or NGOs.	4.17	.89	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
5. The school has sufficient facilities for handling child protection cases (e.g., counseling room).	4.23	.89	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Resources Constraint	4.18	.72	<i>Moderately Observed</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49-2.50 - Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 10 shows the extent of observation in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices in terms of resource constraints, with an overall mean of 4.178, interpreted as “moderately observed.” This indicates that while resources and support systems are present, they are not consistently sufficient to fully support effective policy implementation.

The findings reveal that all indicators related to resource constraints are moderately observed. Specifically, teachers' workload limits their ability to effectively monitor students, suggesting that responsibilities related to child protection are added to existing teaching and administrative duties.

This is reflected in a participant's statement indicating that workload affects the

consistency of monitoring practices:

“Marami po kaming ginagawa bilang guro, kaya minsan nahihirapan kaming tutukan ang monitoring ng mga bata,” T10G4

In addition, schools have personnel assigned to child protection tasks, such as guidance counselors or designated child protection coordinators; however, their availability and capacity may be limited due to multiple roles and responsibilities. It highlights limitations in personnel capacity as shared by:

“Hindi lang naman yun yung trabaho mo... minsan po ay kulang ang oras... nakaka-drain, iisa lang ang guidance counselor, kaya hindi agad natutugunan ang lahat ng kaso,” T10G4

Schools are also reported to have trained personnel to handle child protection concerns and receive support from local government units and non-government organizations. However, such support may not always be readily accessible or sustained, particularly in cases requiring immediate intervention or specialized services. This indicates delays in accessing specialized services as supported by another participant who noted:

“Kailangan pa pong i-refer sa labas kapag kailangan ng psychologist, at minsan po matagal ang proseso,” GC1G3

Furthermore, while facilities such as counseling rooms are available, their adequacy varies depending on the school's resources and capacity. These findings indicate that although resources and support systems are present, they are not consistently adequate to ensure the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy. The moderate level of observation suggests existing limitations in manpower, workload distribution, access to specialized training, and availability of facilities.

This finding is supported by DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which emphasizes the importance of adequate resources, trained personnel, and institutional support in ensuring effective child protection. The results highlight a gap between policy expectations and the actual resources available in schools, particularly in managing workload demands and ensuring adequate personnel for child protection responsibilities. This gap indicates that while policy provisions are clearly defined, their practical implementation is constrained by institutional limitations that affect the consistency and responsiveness of child protection efforts.

Furthermore, these findings may be explained through the lens of Ecological Systems Theory, which underscores the influence of institutional factors such as school capacity, available resources, and external support systems on policy implementation. Limitations in these areas may constrain the school's ability to respond effectively and consistently to child protection issues.

This suggests that strengthening institutional capacity is essential not only for compliance but also for ensuring timely and appropriate responses to child protection concerns.

This underscores the need to strengthen resource allocation by increasing personnel support, clarifying designated roles for child protection, providing continuous professional development, improving access to facilities, and enhancing partnerships with local government units and non-government organizations. Addressing these constraints will support more effective and sustainable implementation of child protection policies by ensuring that schools are equipped with adequate personnel, functional systems, and consistent support mechanisms necessary for timely and appropriate responses to child protection concerns.

Table 11

Extent of Observation in the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices in terms of School Personnel Commitment.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. School personnel show concern about how the CPP is practiced in schools.	4.50	.62	<i>Highly Observed</i>
2. School personnel show a positive attitude toward child protection.	4.59	.58	<i>Highly Observed</i>
3. Teachers willingly cooperate with school heads in CPP programs.	4.61	.62	<i>Highly Observed</i>
4. School personnel commit to implementing the CPP.	4.57	.64	<i>Highly Observed</i>
5. School personnel report cases using the intake sheet.	4.48	.66	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Overall Mean	4.55	.56	<i>Highly Observed</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49-2.50 - Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 11 presents the extent of observation in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices in terms of school personnel commitment, with an overall mean of 4.55, interpreted as “highly observed.” This indicates that school personnel demonstrate a strong level of commitment and active involvement in implementing child protection policies within the school.

The findings reveal that most indicators related to school personnel commitment are highly observed. School personnel are well-informed about the Child Protection Policy, demonstrate positive attitudes toward its implementation, and actively cooperate in carrying out child protection initiatives. Their participation in school-based activities, such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, further reflects their willingness to enhance their knowledge and strengthen their capacity to implement the policy effectively.

This is supported by the statement of one participant:

“Opo, masasabi ko po na committed kasi lagi naman po, at the beginning of the school year, meron kaming LAC session. May mga nagbabahagian ng kaalaman at may mga sharing tungkol sa Child Protection Policy, lalo na ang advisers,” TIGI

which indicates that teachers are actively engaged in continuous learning and collaborative efforts related to policy implementation. This suggests that structured professional development activities, such as LAC sessions, play a significant role in strengthening both awareness and commitment among school personnel.

However, reporting cases using the intake sheet obtained a mean of 4.48, interpreted as “moderately observed,” indicating a variation in the procedural aspect of policy implementation. This suggests that while school personnel are generally committed to implementing the policy, certain technical requirements—such as the consistent use of standard documentation forms—are not always uniformly practiced. This may be due to factors such as limited familiarity with reporting procedures, time constraints, or the additional workload associated with documentation.

These results indicate that school personnel demonstrate strong commitment, positive disposition, and willingness to support child protection initiatives; however, procedural consistency, particularly in documentation and reporting, requires further

strengthening. This finding is consistent with DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which emphasizes not only awareness and commitment but also adherence to proper procedures in implementing child protection policies.

The findings suggest that while school personnel are highly engaged in policy implementation, there is a need to improve consistency in procedural aspects, particularly in documentation and reporting processes. In several cases, these procedures are not uniformly applied, which may affect the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of records. This inconsistency may be attributed to factors such as varying levels of familiarity with reporting protocols, workload demands, and differences in training among personnel.

Improving consistency in these areas is essential to ensure proper case handling, adherence to established guidelines, and reliable documentation of child protection incidents. Moreover, systematic and accurate reporting supports better monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making, which are critical in responding effectively to child protection concerns. Strengthening procedural compliance through clear guidelines, regular training, and monitoring mechanisms will contribute to more consistent and effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

Table 12

Extent of Observation in the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices in terms of Community Involvement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The community actively participates in CPP-related activities.	4.32	.73	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
2. Parents support the school in implementing the Child Protection Policy.	4.37	.75	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
3. Barangay officials coordinate with schools in addressing child protection issues.	4.30	.80	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
4. The school collaborates with community organizations for child welfare.	4.46	.71	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
5. The community supports CPP implementation.	4.23	.87	<i>Moderately Observed</i>
Overall Mean	4.34	.65	<i>Moderately Observed</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (Highly Observed) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (Moderately Observed) 3.49-2.50 - Moderately Agree (Somewhat Observed) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (Slightly Observed) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (Not Observed)

Table 12 presents the extent of observation in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices in terms of community involvement, with an overall mean of 4.336, interpreted as moderately observed.

The findings reveal that all indicators of community involvement are observed at a moderate level. Specifically, the community participates in CPP-related activities, parents support the school in implementing the Child Protection Policy, and barangay officials coordinate with schools in addressing child protection issues. In addition, schools collaborate with community organizations for child welfare, which obtained the highest mean among the indicators. This is supported by a guidance personnel statement indicating that parents and community members are involved in reporting and resolving cases:

“actually very active naman po, especially parents... they report it to us immediately... kaya nagagawan namin ng paraan na ma-resolve,” GC1G2

Moreover, collaboration with external stakeholders is also evident through partnerships with local institutions and organizations. As one participant explained:

“meron kaming MOA... kasama ang barangay at iba pang stakeholders para sa child protection,” (GC3, G5)

highlighting the role of formal agreements in strengthening community involvement.

Despite these positive practices, the moderate level of observation indicates that community involvement is present but not consistently sustained or fully institutionalized. This suggests that stakeholder engagement is often situational rather than continuous. This is supported by a teacher who shared that:

“kapag may mga kaso na ganun... saka lang po kami nagkakaroon ng usapan,” T5G5

indicating that participation tends to occur mainly when issues arise rather than through regular engagement.

Furthermore, the variation in engagement reflects differences in commitment, coordination, and level of participation among stakeholders. As noted:

“may mga magulang na hindi kooperative... ipinaglalaman pa rin ang anak kahit mali,” T5G5

which suggests that involvement is not uniform across stakeholders.

As emphasized in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, active participation and collaboration among parents, community members, and local officials are essential in ensuring effective child protection. However, the moderate ratings highlight a gap between policy expectations and actual practice. This is further reflected in a teacher’s observation, indicating limitations in sustained and consistent collaboration as noted:

“kinakausap po namin ang parents... pero may mga pagkakataon na hindi sila agad nakikipag-cooperate,” T4G1

From a systems perspective, the interaction among the family, school, and community plays a crucial role in supporting child protection efforts. The findings suggest that while these systems are present and interacting, their collaboration remains partially developed.

These results underscore the need to strengthen partnerships with parents, barangay officials, and community organizations by improving communication strategies, institutionalizing regular engagement activities, and promoting shared responsibility. As emphasized by a participant, highlighting the importance of active parental involvement:

“sana ang mga magulang ay hindi nakakalimot sa responsibilidad nila,” T7G6

The findings suggest that while community involvement in implementing the Child Protection Policy is evident, its effectiveness is limited by inconsistent engagement and coordination, with participation often occurring only during specific incidents rather than through sustained collaboration.

Table 13

Level of Child Protection Outcomes Following the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The Child Protection Policy is properly disseminated to all school personnel and stakeholders.	4.57	.61	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
2. Teachers and school heads consistently follow the guidelines of the Child Protection Policy.	4.65	.57	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
3. Reporting and documentation procedures for child abuse cases are effectively implemented.	4.50	.67	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
4. The school has an active Child Protection Committee that monitors compliance with the policy.	4.58	.63	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
5. The Child Protection Policy helps reduce cases of bullying, discrimination, and other forms of child abuse.	4.56	.65	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.57	.55	<i>To a Great Extent</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 13 presents the level of child protection outcomes following the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices, which is interpreted as to a great extent, with an overall mean of 4.57.

The findings reveal that all indicators related to child protection outcomes are practiced to a great extent. Specifically, the Child Protection Policy is properly disseminated to all school personnel and stakeholders, while teachers and school heads consistently follow CPP guidelines, which obtained the highest mean. Additionally, reporting and documentation procedures for child abuse cases are effectively implemented, schools maintain an active Child Protection Committee that monitors compliance, and the CPP helps reduce cases of bullying, discrimination, and other forms of child abuse.

These results indicate that the implementation of the Child Protection Policy has led to positive and effective outcomes in the school setting. The high level of compliance, active monitoring mechanisms, and proper dissemination of the policy demonstrate that schools are successfully institutionalizing child protection practices.

This is supported by the statement of a participant:

“Yes po, kasi pinapriority namin ang welfare ng mga students, kaya talagang naiimplement po namin at nagkakaroon ng healthy environment ang school.” T6 G3

This statement highlights that prioritizing students’ welfare supports the effective implementation of the Child Protection Policy and promotes a safe, supportive school environment.

These findings are aligned with the mandates of the Department of Education, particularly as outlined in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which emphasizes the importance of policy dissemination, adherence to established guidelines, the formation of Child Protection Committees, and the establishment of effective reporting systems to ensure the safety and well-being of learners.

Moreover, these results can be interpreted through the lens of Ecological Systems Theory, which suggests that positive outcomes arise when various systems—such as school leadership, teachers, and stakeholders—work together in a collaborative manner. The robust implementation across these systems significantly enhances child protection outcomes.

This indicates that the effective implementation of policies, coupled with the active involvement of school personnel and stakeholders, leads to observable improvements in child protection practices, such as reductions in abuse cases and increases in student safety.

The findings indicate that the Child Protection Policy is being implemented effectively and is yielding substantial positive results. To ensure long-term effectiveness and protect learners, it is crucial to sustain these practices and continuously enhance implementation mechanisms.

Table 14

Extent of Child Protection Outcomes After the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices in terms of Awareness and Practice

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Teachers are aware of the provisions and objectives of the Child Protection Policy.	4.60	.57	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
2. School personnel regularly attend seminars and orientations about child protection.	4.35	.79	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
3. Teachers apply Child Protection Policy principles in their daily classroom interactions.	4.58	.59	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
4. Teachers and school heads promote awareness of child rights among learners and parents.	4.63	.58	<i>To a Great Extent</i>
5. Staff and stakeholders can recognize abuse and know how to report properly.	4.48	.65	<i>To a Moderate Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.53	.55	<i>To a Great Extent</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 14 reveals the level of child protection outcomes after the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices in terms of awareness and practice, with an overall mean of 4.53, interpreted as to a great extent.

The findings indicate that most indicators related to awareness and practice are observed to a great extent, reflecting a high level of understanding and application of the Child Protection Policy among school personnel. Teachers demonstrate strong awareness of the policy’s provisions and objectives and consistently apply its principles in their daily classroom interactions. Moreover, teachers and school heads actively promote awareness of child rights among learners and parents, which emerged

as the most evident practice among the indicators. School personnel also regularly participate in seminars and orientations related to child protection, further strengthening their knowledge and competencies.

These findings are supported by a participant who stated:

“Opo, talagang implemented kasi kapag nakita ng mga bata ang rules and regulations na ini-implement, nasusunod nila, kaya malaking tulong po sa amin ang rules” T7G6

indicating that clear communication and consistent implementation of rules reinforce awareness and compliance among students and teachers. This highlights the importance of visible and consistent policy enforcement in shaping behavior and strengthening adherence to child protection standards.

However, the indicator stating that staff and stakeholders can recognize abuse and know how to report it properly is only moderately observed, indicating a gap in procedural awareness and reporting competence. While general awareness of the policy is high, the application of specific technical skills, such as identifying signs of abuse, properly documenting cases, and following correct reporting procedures, remains inconsistent. This suggests that awareness has not been fully translated into operational competence, particularly in handling actual child protection cases.

This finding implies that although school personnel are knowledgeable about child protection principles, they may require additional support in applying these principles in real-life situations. The gap between awareness and practice highlights the need for more focused, practice-oriented training that emphasizes case handling, reporting protocols, and decision-making processes. Strengthening these competencies will ensure that responses to child protection concerns are timely, accurate, and consistent.

Furthermore, participants perceived the Child Protection Policy as effective in promoting a safe and supportive school environment. Many noted that the policy has increased awareness and reporting of child protection concerns and contributed to a more positive school climate. However, some concerns regarding disciplinary limitations were also raised, highlighting the need to balance child protection measures with effective classroom management. This finding is supported by research indicating that while child protection policies enhance teacher awareness and strengthen school-based interventions, they may also present challenges in classroom management and consistent policy implementation (Han-Awon, 2023; UNICEF, 2019).

These findings are consistent with the mandates of DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, which emphasizes awareness-building, capacity development, and the integration of child protection principles into school practices. From the perspective of Ecological Systems Theory, awareness and behavior are shaped by interactions within various systems, such as the school and the community. The high level of awareness among teachers reflects strong internal support systems, while the moderate level of reporting competence suggests that procedural and support mechanisms require further strengthening.

The findings indicate that awareness and practice of the Child Protection Policy are effectively implemented and contribute to positive child protection outcomes. However, enhancing procedural knowledge and reporting skills remains essential to improve the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of policy implementation. Addressing this gap will ensure that school personnel are not only aware of child protection policies but are also fully equipped to implement them consistently and effectively in practice.

Table 15

Level of Child Protection Outcomes Following the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child-Friendly Practices in Promoting Child-Friendly Schools.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school provides a safe and inclusive environment where students feel protected and respected.	4.65	.57	<i>To a great Extent</i>
2. The school has clear rules and policies against bullying and violence.	4.63	.61	<i>To a great Extent</i>
3. Facilities and classrooms are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of students.	4.56	.64	<i>To a great Extent</i>
4. The teachers promote a safe and inclusive learning environment through respect, empathy, and kindness.	4.69	.54	<i>To a great Extent</i>
5. The school provides quality learning opportunities and supports children’s active participation in school life.	4.65	.54	<i>To a great Extent</i>
Overall Mean	4.63	.52	<i>To a great Extent</i>

Legend: 5.0-4.50 - Strongly Agree (To a Great Extent) 4.49-3.50 - Agree (To a Moderate Extent) 3.49-2.50 – Moderately Agree (To Some Extent) 2.49-1.50 - Disagree (To Little Extent) 1.49-1.00- Strongly Disagree (To No Extent)

Table 15 shows the level of child protection outcomes after the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and child-friendly practices in terms of promotion of child-friendly schools, with an overall mean of 4.63, interpreted as to a great extent.

The findings reveal that all indicators related to the promotion of child-friendly schools are observed to a great extent, indicating strong implementation of practices that support learners' safety, well-being, and active participation. Schools provide a safe and inclusive environment where students feel protected and respected, and establish clear rules and policies against bullying and violence. In addition, school facilities and classrooms are designed to ensure learners' safety and well-being.

Notably, teachers' promotion of a safe and inclusive learning environment through respect, empathy, and kindness emerged as the most evident indicator, highlighting the critical role of teachers in fostering a positive school climate. Furthermore, schools provide quality learning opportunities and encourage children's active participation in school life, reinforcing a holistic approach to child development.

These results indicate that schools have achieved a high level of implementation in promoting child-friendly environments where learners feel safe, valued, and engaged. The strong emphasis on inclusivity, safety, and positive interpersonal relationships reflects a school culture that prioritizes both the protection and holistic development of learners.

This is supported by the statement of a participant:

“As a student po, kitang-kita ko ang improvement ng school sa healthy space. Nakikita ko pong inaalagaan nang maayos ang mga bata, at ang mga programs ay nagiging child-friendly.”SL2G3

This statement suggests that students themselves perceive noticeable improvements in the school environment, particularly in terms of safety, care, and the implementation of child-friendly programs. It indicates that child protection and child-friendly practices are not only evident at the policy level but are also meaningfully experienced by learners in their daily school life.

Furthermore, these findings highlight that positive child outcomes are strongly influenced by supportive environments and interactions within the school system. The strong implementation of child-friendly practices reflects a well-functioning school environment that effectively integrates protection and development. This implies that schools have successfully embedded child-friendly principles into their practices, resulting in a positive school climate, enhanced student well-being, and increased learner participation. It also indicates that when learners feel safe, respected, and supported, they are more likely to engage actively in learning and demonstrate positive social behaviours.

The findings suggest that promoting child-friendly schools to a great extent significantly contributes to positive child protection outcomes. Sustaining these practices and continuously enhancing inclusive and supportive environments will further strengthen the overall effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy. Moreover, ongoing capacity-building, regular monitoring, and active stakeholder engagement are essential to ensure that these gains are maintained and adapted to emerging challenges within the educational setting.

Table 16

Significant relationship between the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Outcomes

Implementation of the CP Policy	Child Protection Outcomes			
	Implications	Awareness & Practice	Promotion of CFS	Overall CP Outcomes
Awareness	.476**	.551**	.496**	.533**
Report	.602**	.608**	.609**	.636**
Guidance	.619**	.657**	.676**	.682**
Overall Teachers' Role	.633**	.676**	.664**	.689**
Monitoring & Recording	.565**	.549**	.548**	.581**
Policy Enforcement	.586**	.599**	.579**	.617**
Support System	.591**	.587**	.563**	.609**
Overall School Heads' Role	.606**	.603**	.587**	.628**
Reporting & Referral of Classes	.545**	.618**	.549**	.599**
Monitoring and Feedback	.541**	.628**	.542**	.598**
Counseling & Rehabilitation Support	.544**	.621**	.533**	.594**

Overall Community Role	.570**	.653**	.568**	.626**
Overall Implementation of CPP	.687**	.736**	.689**	.738**

The findings demonstrate a strong and statistically significant relationship between stakeholder roles and the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP), as well as child protection (CP) outcomes. The roles of teachers ($r = 0.689$), school heads ($r = 0.628$), and the community ($r = 0.626$) are all moderately to strongly correlated with CPP implementation, while overall implementation shows an even stronger association ($r = 0.738$), all significant at $p < .01$. These results indicate that effective and coordinated participation among stakeholders enhances the quality of CPP implementation in schools. This further suggests that policy effectiveness is not dependent on a single actor but on the collective and synchronized efforts of all involved stakeholders.

Additionally, CPP implementation is significantly correlated with CP outcomes, including implication ($r = 0.687$), awareness and practice ($r = 0.736$), and promotion ($r = 0.689$), all significant at $p < .001$. This suggests that stronger implementation is associated with improved awareness, more consistent protective practices, and increased promotion of children's rights within the school environment. It also implies that when policies are properly executed, they translate into tangible behavioral and institutional changes that directly benefit learners.

Notably, teachers' roles show significant correlations with CP outcomes, particularly in awareness and practice ($r = 0.676$), implication ($r = 0.633$), and promotion ($r = 0.664$), highlighting their central role as frontline implementers of child protection policies. Similarly, the significant relationship involving school heads underscores the importance of leadership in ensuring consistent policy implementation through monitoring, communication, and supervision. Effective leadership not only enforces compliance but also fosters a culture of accountability and support within the school.

In addition, the significant contribution of the community indicates that partnerships with parents, local authorities, and child-focused organizations strengthen reporting, awareness, and support mechanisms for child protection. These findings demonstrate that CPP implementation is strengthened when stakeholders actively fulfill their roles and responsibilities in a coordinated manner. Such collaboration bridges gaps between school and community, enabling more comprehensive and context-sensitive responses to child protection concerns.

The strong relationship between CPP implementation and child protection outcomes suggests that improvements in stakeholder engagement, leadership support, and teacher involvement directly contribute to safer and more responsive school environments. These results emphasize the importance of sustained collaboration and shared accountability among stakeholders in achieving effective and continuous child protection efforts in schools.

Table 17

Significant relationship between the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and challenges that affect the implementation of the CPP and child-friendly school practices

Correlations	Challenges in the Implementation of CPP			
	Resource Constraints	School Personnel Commitment	Community Involvement	Overall Challenges
Awareness	.425**	.485**	.470**	.504**
Report	.469**	.550**	.575**	.582**
Guidance	.505**	.638**	.639**	.649**
Overall Teachers' Role	.521**	.623**	.628**	.646**
Monitoring & Recording	.464**	.551**	.509**	.556**
Policy Enforcement	.426**	.560**	.483**	.533**
Support System	.477**	.563**	.565**	.586**
Overall School Heads' Role	.477**	.582**	.542**	.583**
Reporting & Referral of Classes	.531**	.515**	.616**	.611**
Monitoring and Feedback	.482**	.505**	.618**	.589**
Counseling & Rehabilitation Support	.531**	.489**	.675**	.625**
Overall Community Role	.540**	.527**	.668**	.638**
Overall Implementation of CPP	.587**	.656**	.703**	.712**

This shows that all computed correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant, indicating that there is a meaningful relationship between CPP implementation and the identified challenges. This suggests that variations in resource constraints, school personnel commitment, and community involvement are closely associated with how effectively the Child Protection Policy is implemented in schools. It further implies that challenges do not merely hinder implementation but are integral factors that shape the consistency, quality, and sustainability of policy execution across schools.

Specifically, the overall CPP implementation shows a strong positive correlation with community involvement ($r = .703$), followed by school personnel commitment ($r = .656$) and resource constraints ($r = .587$). Among these, community involvement demonstrates the strongest relationship, indicating that active participation of parents, local officials, and community stakeholders plays a critical role in influencing the effectiveness of policy implementation. This implies that schools with stronger community engagement are more likely to achieve better coordination, reporting, and support for child protection initiatives.

Similarly, all components of implementation—such as awareness, reporting, guidance, monitoring and recording, policy enforcement, and support systems—show moderate to strong positive correlations with the identified challenges. Notably, guidance ($r = .649$), teachers’ overall role ($r = .646$), and monitoring and recording ($r = .556$) exhibit relatively higher correlations, suggesting that these areas are particularly sensitive to existing challenges. This indicates that limitations in resources, inconsistencies in personnel practices, and varying levels of stakeholder involvement can directly affect the consistency and quality of these implementation processes. These findings highlight that operational aspects of policy implementation are highly dependent on both human and structural factors within the school system.

These findings emphasize that challenges are not isolated but are significantly linked to how well the Child Protection Policy is carried out in schools. For instance, limited resources may affect the availability of facilities and support services, while variations in personnel commitment may influence consistency in reporting and monitoring practices. Likewise, inconsistent community involvement may affect coordination, communication, and timely response to child protection concerns. This interconnectedness suggests that addressing one challenge in isolation may not be sufficient, as improvements in one area are likely to influence outcomes in others.

The results indicated that addressing these challenges is essential to improving CPP implementation. Strengthening community engagement, ensuring consistent personnel commitment, and improving resource support are likely to enhance the effectiveness, consistency, and sustainability of child protection practices in schools.

Table 18

The mediating effect of challenges to the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and the Promotion of CPP and child-friendly school practices

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a x b	0.341	0.045	0.252	0.430	7.521	<.001	44.109
Direct	c	0.433	0.056	0.322	0.543	7.692	<.001	55.891
Total	c+ a x b	0.774	0.045	0.686	0.862	17.238	<.001	100.000

Path Estimates

	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		z	P
				Lower	Upper		
CPPImp	CHALLENGE a	0.851	0.053	0.747	0.956	15.971	<.001

CHALLENGE	CProO	b	0.401	0.047	0.309	0.493	8.525	<.001
CPPImp	CProO	c	0.433	0.056	0.322	0.543	7.692	<.001

Mediating effect of challenges on CPP implementation and CP Outcomes

The results indicate that challenges partially mediate the relationship between CPP implementation and child protection (CP) outcomes. The indirect effect ($a \times b = 0.341$, $p < .001$) shows that challenges significantly influence how CPP implementation translates into outcomes, indicating that part of the effect of CPP implementation operates through the presence of implementation challenges. This suggests that even when policies are properly implemented, their effectiveness is shaped by contextual factors that either facilitate or hinder their impact.

At the same time, the direct effect ($c' = 0.433$, $p < .001$) remains significant, indicating that CPP implementation continues to positively influence outcomes even without considering challenges. This confirms a partial mediation, as both the indirect and direct effects are statistically significant. It further implies that while challenges affect implementation, they do not completely negate the benefits of effective policy execution.

The total effect ($c = 0.774$, $p < .001$) reflects the overall impact of CPP implementation on child protection outcomes. These findings suggest that while CPP implementation directly contributes to improved awareness, safer school environments, and better protection practices, its effectiveness is also shaped by existing challenges such as resource limitations, personnel constraints, and varying levels of community involvement. This indicates that the strength of policy outcomes depends not only on implementation itself but also on how well schools are able to manage and minimize these constraints.

In practical terms, this means that even when schools effectively implement child protection policies, challenges such as heavy workload, limited access to trained personnel, and inconsistent stakeholder participation can reduce the extent to which positive outcomes are achieved. These challenges may affect the consistency, timeliness, and quality of responses to child protection concerns, particularly in areas requiring technical procedures such as reporting and documentation.

Therefore, improving child protection outcomes requires not only strengthening CPP implementation but also addressing the challenges that hinder its effectiveness. This includes enhancing resource allocation, improving personnel capacity, strengthening coordination among stakeholders, and ensuring that systems for reporting, monitoring, and support are consistently applied. Addressing these factors will help maximize the positive impact of CPP implementation and ensure more effective, responsive, and sustainable child protection practices in schools.

Table 19

Thematic Analysis

MAIN THEME: Implementation of Child Protection Policy

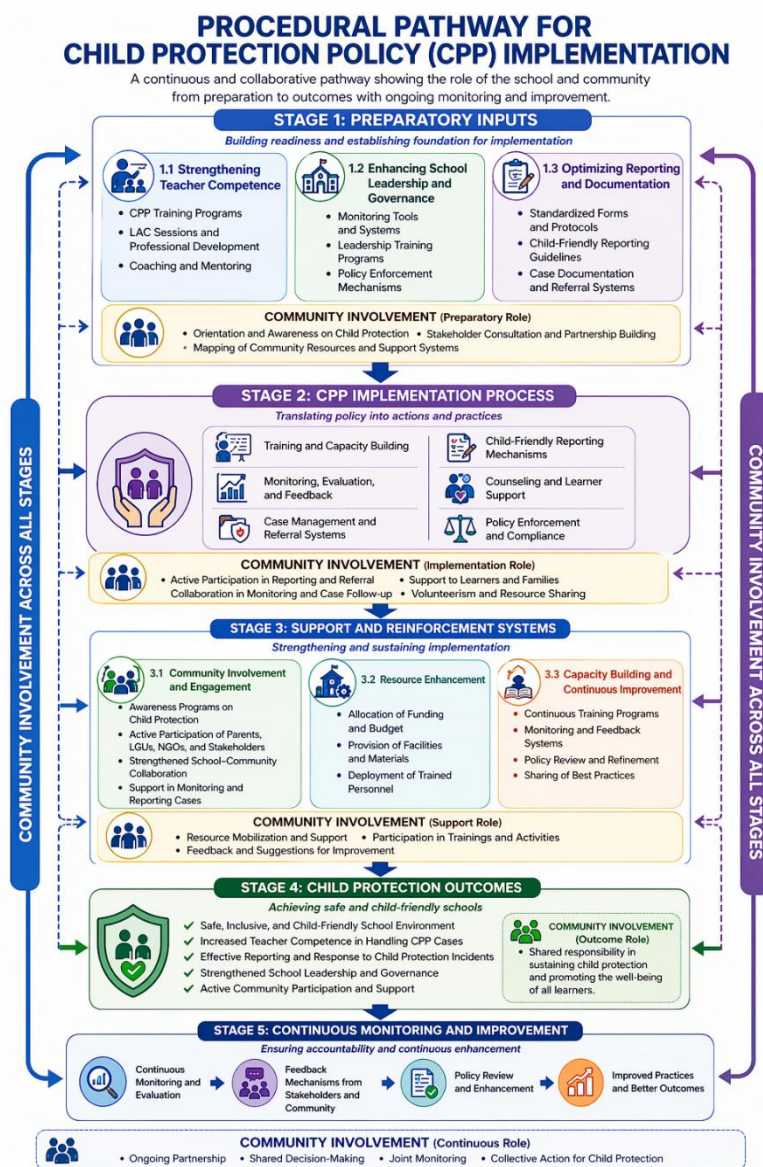
Sub-Theme	Description of Responses	Sample Statements (Summarized)	Participant Codes
1. Familiarity with CPP	Participants show general awareness but varying depth of knowledge	“Familiar but not fully detailed”; “guided by policy and seminars”	T1, T2, T3, GC1, SH1
2. Process of Handling Cases	Step-by-step approach: adviser → guidance → parents → documentation	“Adviser handles first, then guidance”; “with records and interviews”	T4, T5, GC2, SH2
3. Support for Victims	Emotional support, counseling, follow-ups	“Kinakamusta ang bata”; “offered counseling and guidance”	T6, T7, GC1
4. Role of Student Leaders	Assist in reporting, peer support, initial mediation	“We listen first then report to adviser”	SL1, SL2, SL3
5. Monitoring and Documentation	Use of anecdotal records, intake sheets, reports	“All cases are documented”; “kept in guidance office”	SH1, GC2, T8
6. Challenges in Implementation	Time constraints, uncooperative parents, policy limitations	“Hard to discipline due to restrictions”; “lack of time for investigation”	T1, T9, GC1

Sub-Theme	Description of Responses	Sample Statements (Summarized)	Participant Codes
7. Effectiveness of CPP	Generally effective but with limitations	“Students feel safe”; “discipline is weaker now”	T2, SH3, SL4
8. School Support System	LAC sessions, trainings, policy revisions	“Discussed in LAC”; “continuous revision of rules”	SH2, T3
9. Community & Parent Involvement	Mixed cooperation from parents	“Some parents are supportive, others defensive”	T5, GC2
10. Suggested Improvements	More parent involvement, better time management, stronger discipline balance	“Need cooperation from parents”; “improve implementation consistency”	T6, SH1

Proposed Pathway Model for Child Protection Policy (CPP)

Figure 4

Proposed Procedural Pathway Model for Child Protection Policy (CPP) Implementation, Illustrating the Interconnected Stages from Preparatory Inputs to Outcomes with continuous Monitoring and Improvement based on the findings of the Study. AI Disclosure: ChatGPT AI-generated images, (April 2026)



CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) is generally effective, particularly in terms of awareness, policy enforcement, and the promotion of a safe and child-friendly school environment. However, this

effectiveness is not uniform, as gaps remain in technical areas such as reporting procedures, documentation, monitoring systems, and community engagement.

Teachers, school heads, and the community play significant roles in CPP implementation. Teachers serve as frontline implementers but require further development in procedural competencies. School heads contribute through leadership and monitoring, ensuring accountability and consistency. The community supports reporting and coordination; however, its participation is not consistently sustained and is often situational. These findings confirm that stakeholder roles significantly influence the level of CPP implementation.

Despite strong implementation in several areas, challenges such as resource constraints, workload demands, limited personnel, and coordination gaps affect the consistency and quality of implementation. These constraints do not prevent implementation but reduce its effectiveness, indicating that challenges significantly influence CPP implementation.

Furthermore, the study establishes that CPP implementation has a significant and strong relationship with child protection outcomes, including awareness, compliance, and the promotion of child-friendly practices. However, the findings also confirm that challenges partially mediate this relationship, meaning that while CPP implementation directly improves outcomes, its effectiveness is influenced by existing constraints that reduce—but do not eliminate—its impact.

The study rejects all null hypotheses, as significant relationships were found between CPP implementation and outcomes, stakeholder roles and implementation, and challenges and implementation, including a confirmed partial mediation effect. These results highlight that effective child protection depends on strong stakeholder involvement and consistent implementation, supported by adequate resources and coordinated efforts to address existing challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the implementation of the Child Protection Policy (CPP) and enhance child protection outcomes:

1. Teachers may undergo regular, competency-based training focused on identifying signs of abuse, proper documentation, and adherence to standardized reporting procedures. Emphasis should be placed on developing practical skills in case handling, reporting protocols, and intervention strategies to strengthen their role as frontline implementers.
2. School heads may strengthen monitoring and supervision systems by implementing regular evaluation mechanisms, ensuring completeness and accuracy of records, and designating trained Child Protection focal persons. They may also reinforce clear policy communication and ensure consistent implementation across all school processes.
3. Schools may establish structured and sustained partnerships with parents, local government units (LGUs), and external agencies through regular coordination meetings, awareness programs, and collaborative activities. Efforts may focus on transforming community involvement from reactive participation to proactive and continuous engagement.
4. The Department of Education may provide targeted institutional support, including dedicated funding for child protection programs, clear designation of personnel, standardized training modules, and improved data management and reporting systems. Strengthening these support mechanisms will enhance consistency and sustainability in implementation.
5. Schools may develop targeted action plans to address identified challenges, including resource limitations, training gaps, and coordination issues. Strategies may include workload management, capacity-building programs, and improved inter-agency coordination to ensure more consistent and effective implementation.
6. Future studies may explore additional variables influencing CPP implementation, including digital safety, school context, and emerging risks. More comprehensive research designs may also be used to further examine the relationship between implementation processes and child protection outcomes.

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