

AMENDED GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE DSWD DESK AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

DSWD DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 15, s. 2000, December 01, 2000

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I

Rationale

Pursuant to R.A. 7610 entitled, "An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, Providing Penalties for its Violation and for Other Purposes," the DSWD was mandated to issue travel clearance to minors traveling alone to a foreign country as a preventive measure against child trafficking.

Child trafficking is defined as an act of trading and dealing with children including, but not limited to, the act of buying and selling of a child for money, or any other consideration, or barter. It is usually committed when a family can no longer cope with responsibilities due to financial problems that they resort to other means in order to meet their basic needs and other requirements in life. Child trafficking cases that were documented by the DSWD involve children who are brought out of the country by the alleged mother and given to childless couples for a fee through syndicates.

The issuance of a travel clearance is to protect a child from abuse and exploitation when he/she travels abroad by ensuring that such travel is for a legitimate reason and with an authorized person thus preventing child trafficking. Moreover, Sec. 14 of RA 7610 states that the Department shall provide assistance to unaccompanied children at the point of embarkation hence the need to re-open the Desk of the International Airport.

II

Objectives of the Operation of the DSWD Desk:

1. To provide immediate protection to unaccompanied minors against child trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation.
2. To assist immigration officials in the assessment of unaccompanied children without travel clearance.
3. To provide appropriate assistance to off-loaded minors/victims of child trafficking.

III

Implementing Procedures:

1. DSWD Field Office shall orient the social workers assigned at the airports. These social workers are selected on the basis of their knowledge and skills in child welfare, personality and integrity.
2. The Social Worker's Desk should be situated before the Immigration area so that the screening of the minor and his/her travelling companion shall be undertaken before immigration.
3. The social worker has the following functions:

3.1 Provide assistance to unaccompanied minors travelling abroad:

a. Unaccompanied Minor without Travel Clearance

- Interview the unaccompanied minor and travelling companion to determine the purpose of the travel, duration of travel and who will care for the minor while in another country and assess the relationship of the minor with his/her travelling companion.
- Require the child and the traveling companion to present travel documents as indicated in the requirements for the issuance of travel clearance e.g. passport, birth certificate, affidavit of consent of natural parents among others. If satisfied, endorse the travel of child (using the prescribed form) to the Immigration Officer on duty. If not, refer to the concerned DSWD - Field Office for them to comply the needed requirements.

b. Referral from Immigration Officers in Case of Doubt/Question of Travel Clearance

- Interview the child and the travelling companion to determine the purpose of child's travel, duration of travel and who will care for the minor while in another country.
- Counter check travel clearance with regards to correctness of data and authorized signatories. In case of negative findings, verify with the concerned DSWD Field-Office the veracity of the documents.

3.2 Provide counselling services to off-loaded minors to cope with the trauma, anxieties, frustrations, etc.

3.3 Disseminate accurate information on the requirements and procedures in securing travel clearance for minors travelling abroad.

3.4 Maintain network with DSWD - Field offices and other appropriate agencies towards efficient delivery of service.

4. Supervision of the social workers is directly under the Operations Division of the concerned Field Office. Technical Assistance shall be provided by the Programs and Projects Bureau.

5. A monthly report from DSWD Field Offices (DSWD/OCT 002) shall be forwarded to the DSWD indicating statistical data, progress of the work at the airport, needs and problems encountered.

Adopted: 1 Dec. 2000

(SGD.) DULCE Q. SAGUISAG
Secretary

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