

QC identifies safe zones for children

The Quezon City government has identified 19 safe zones where children aged five and above may spend time for outdoor games, sports, physical exercises, swimming and other leisure activities while accompanied by fully vaccinated adult guardians.

The Philippine Star · 12 Jul 2021 · 9 · By NEIL JAYSON SERVALLOS

On Friday, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases eased restrictions on the movement of children in areas under general community quarantine and modified GCQ, except for places under GCQ with heightened restrictions.

For the month of July, only Cavite and Laguna remain under GCQ with heightened restrictions. Metro Manila is under GCQ with some restrictions.

In a memorandum, Mayor Joy Belmonte identified the Quezon Memorial Circle and Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife as “child-friendly safe zones” where children can engage in outdoor activities.

The other safe zones are the Quezon City Hall urban farming area, Amoranto Stadium as well as parks in barangays Project 6, Masambong, Manresa, Dapitan, Project 4, Roces, Toro Hills, IBP, Camerino, Bernardo, Hayaville II, Blueridge B, Mira Nila and C.P. Garcia.

Belmonte said city-owned parks and spaces inside residential subdivisions could also be designated as safe zones.

She ordered the **Business Permits and Licensing Department (BPLD)** to designate outdoor activity areas, swimming pools, tourist sites, alfresco dining and other open-air spaces in malls as safe zones.

“After more than a year of being confined at home, we saw the need to give children a chance to go out and get some fresh air in areas that are deemed safe,” Belmonte said.

She said the move was in response to the Unicef Philippines’ appeal for local governments to allow children to engage in outdoor activities to promote their physical and mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Belmonte said children may enter the safe zones accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult guardian.

“The guardian should be able to present a vaccination card and ID,” Belmonte said, adding that groups that converge within the safe zones should not exceed 10 people.

Representatives of parks may apply with the BPLD to be declared as a child-friendly zone.

A zone administrator is tasked to enforce health protocols such as the use of face masks, maintaining physical distancing, regular disinfection of high-touch objects and the use of contact tracing system.

“The zone administrator is also encouraged to implement an hourly scheduling system to ensure compliance with capacity limits and employ marshals to remind visitors of health protocols whenever necessary,” Belmonte said.

The **City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (CESU)** is authorized to revoke or modify a facility’s safe zone designation in case of health protocol violations or COVID-19 outbreaks. The operation of the zone will be suspended if its location is placed under lockdown.

Belmonte directed the BPLD, **Department of Public Order and Safety, Quezon City Police District**, CESU and the barangays to conduct inspections to check compliance with the COVID protocols.

“Non-compliance may result in the revocation of designation as a child-friendly safe zone,” Belmonte said.