



June 2, 2015

Parents' Bulletin No. 14

Re: **AAVA Stickers – Statement of DLSZ's Position**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is to provide further updates regarding the issuance by Ayala Alabang Village Association, Inc. (*AAVA*) of carpool passes and car stickers. While the resolution of the issues remains uncertain, we believe that updated information will enable your families to prepare for the incoming academic year 2015-2016.

In practical terms, the problem lies in families who are not entitled to stickers under AAVA's sticker policy. See Parents Bulletin No. 13 (<http://www.dlszobel.edu.ph/?p=9241>) for a summary of AAVA's sticker policy. While we are optimistic that the number of families affected will decrease, we cannot, for planning purposes, disregard the likely scenario that there will be families who will not have access to safe and reliable modes of transportation. You are aware that AAVA's sticker policy, as it currently stands, does not address the situation of some of those families.

Upon further evaluation of the situation and the issues raised by parents and guardians, we would like to present to you, as outlined below, the current position of the administration of De La Salle Santiago Zobel School (*DLSZ*) on AAVA's sticker policy and on issues relevant to the policy for the information and guidance of parents and guardians:

- Rationale for Collaboration. As a member of the Ayala Alabang Village (*AAV*) community, DLSZ would like to maintain a good relationship with its neighbors. While traffic congestion may be considered a foreseeable consequence of a school's operations, DLSZ has nevertheless resolved to channel resources toward mitigating the situation of affected residents. The traffic management and community relations plan that we presented to the community during the assembly held on March 7, 2015 includes some of these measures. While AAVA has not accepted the plan to date, DLSZ has, in fact, begun to implement some of the programs included in the plan in furtherance of its resolve to address the issues of the residents. Out of respect for the residents, DLSZ views legal action as a remedy of last resort. DLSZ will seek legal remedies only when it is constrained to do in extraordinary or critical situations (e.g., where fundamental rights are at stake, such as the threatened imposition of the color coding scheme).
- Focus on Students' Education and Well-being. Notwithstanding its collaborative attitude, it is DLSZ's policy to protect and defend the students' right to education and well-being. DLSZ hosted the May 27, 2015 general assembly, conducted a survey regarding AAVA's sticker policy and solicited feedback from parents and guardians in order to have a full understanding of and to have an opportunity to address the situation of parents, guardians and students of DLSZ under AAVA's sticker policy. Parents and guardians of DLSZ can rest assured that DLSZ will give utmost priority to the education and well-being of the students.
- Encouraging Carpooling. We wholeheartedly agree with AAVA that carpooling will bring about a reduction of vehicles around DLSZ. Thus, we continue to encourage parents to find, and allow their children to join, carpools. However, we also understand the concerns and reservations of parents and guardians regarding carpooling and have taken the position that carpooling cannot be made mandatory.

- DLSZ's Objections. As stated in Parents' Bulletin No. 13, DLSZ has objections to AAVA's sticker policy. Based on feedback we received from parents and guardians, we sent AAVA a letter dated June 1, 2015, where we have formally objected to AAVA's sticker policy and expressed in detail our concerns regarding the policy. Attached is a copy of the letter dated June 1, 2015 addressed to the Board of Governors of AAVA.
- Alternative Sticker Program. In the June 1, 2015 letter, we proposed an alternative sticker program. If AAVA accepts the program, DLSZ will be in a better position to provide clear guidance to the DLSZ community. We have invited AAVA to a meeting to discuss the alternative program. Notably, the June 1, 2015 letter is not intended to withdraw support from AAVA or to defy AAVA's authority; it is intended to present a viable alternative sticker program that DLSZ believes will more effectively address the issues at hand.
- Continuing Request for Cooperation from Parents and Guardians. DLSZ's objections to AAVA's sticker policy is not aimed at restoring the old sticker system where parents and guardians of DLSZ students were all qualified to apply for stickers. We believe that it would be exceedingly difficult to persuade AAVA to accept any alternative sticker program that would not demonstrate an ability to decrease the volume of vehicles around AAVA. Thus, we reiterate our appeal to parents and guardians to consider other modes of transportation as alternatives to private vehicles.
- Respect for Traffic and Related Regulations. To address the concerns of DLSZ's neighbors in AAV regarding traffic congestion and other issues associated with the presence of non-AAV resident vehicles in the neighborhood, it is imperative that parents, drivers and fetchers strictly observe traffic and related regulations and accord respect for residents of the neighborhood around DLSZ and their rights. Thus, we have required drivers, fetchers and parents to attend seminars aimed at promoting awareness of traffic and related regulations and the rights of AAV residents. DLSZ will be employing various measures to ensure that these traffic and related regulations will be strictly enforced.
- DLSZ's Caveats. While we continue to request cooperation from parents and guardians, DLSZ has made it clear and hereby restates, out of an abundance of caution, that vehicles used as carpools, staging areas, and school vans for hire are not extensions of the school campus; and DLSZ disclaims any liability or accountability, and will not be liable or accountable, for any injury or damages that may result or arise from incidents that may occur in or in relation to vehicles used as carpools, staging areas and school vans for hire.
- Technology-Driven Safety Measures - School Vans. In order to mitigate risks, operators of school vans for hire are currently discussing the use of technology and equipment to protect the safety and security of student-passengers. Among other devices, operators are currently considering a tracking device that will give parents and guardians real-time information regarding the school van's whereabouts and speed and any diversion from the established routes. While DLSZ cannot be held liable for incidents that may occur in or in relation to the use of school vans for hire, the operators are third party providers who have a direct responsibility and legal obligations to their customers, patrons and passengers.
- Risk of Deadlock. DLSZ realizes that its objections to AAVA's sticker policy may potentially cause a deadlock and further uncertainty with regard to the issuance of stickers. Nonetheless, DLSZ formalized its objections in its June 1, 2015 letter based in part on the feedback provided by parents and guardians.
- Parents and Guardians Against Animosity. DLSZ understands that (i) there are parents and guardians who would like DLSZ to assert the rights of its students, and (ii) those who prefer not to take any adverse position against AAVA. In recognition of the latter, DLSZ will not hinder parents and guardians from working within AAVA's sticker policy. DLSZ will issue further bulletins regarding the issuance of stickers as developments occur—to ensure that DLSZ's efforts to protect the rights of students will not compromise the situation of those who prefer to work within AAVA's sticker policy.

- Role of the Parents' Association. As you know, directors of the DLSZ Parents' Association, Inc. (PA) have been working closely with DLSZ on the AAVA sticker issue. In case you have any concerns or suggestions, PA directors have agreed to make themselves available to discuss any concerns or suggestions with parents and/or guardians.
- DLSZ's Continuing Request for Feedback; Survey Forms. As DLSZ continues to engage AAVA in a dialogue, DLSZ calls upon parents and guardians to continue to communicate with DLSZ regarding specific concerns relating to the issuance of stickers. Any information or insights from parents and guardians will better position DLSZ to engage AAVA in discussions. For this purpose, we continue to accept and encourage further submissions of the survey forms at <http://links.dlszobel.edu.ph/aava-sticker-survey-may2015>.

We regret that the AAVA issue continues to cause anxiety in the community. We will continue to update the DLSZ community of further developments. Any questions, comments, concerns, suggestions or feedback may be sent to DLSZ's Advancement & Communications Office at 771-DLSZ local 748 or adcomm@dlszobel.edu.ph.

Yours in St. La Salle,

Br. Bernard S. Oca FSC
President