



# De La Salle Santiago Zobel School

Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City, Philippines 1780, Tel. No.: 771-DLSZ Website: www.dlszobel.edu.ph

June 1, 2015

## Board of Governors

Ayala Alabang Village Association, Inc.  
Neighborhood Center  
Narra Street  
Ayala Alabang Village

Attention: Mr. Epifanio S. Joaquin, President

## Gentlemen:

*Done*  
*June 1, 2015*  
*AP*

In the interest of resolving the ongoing sticker policy issue and starting the incoming academic year with a clear traffic management plan, we would like to:

- (i) Express our concerns and those raised by parents and guardians of De La Salle Santiago Zobel School (**DLSZ**) regarding the sticker policy proposed by Ayala Alabang Village Association, Inc. (**AAVA**) in its letter dated May 14, 2015 signed by Arturo V. Briones, Village Manager (*the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy*); and
- (ii) Propose an alternative sticker program, as outlined below, that we believe will achieve our common goal of reducing the volume of vehicles during rush hours and throughout each regular school day, without displacing any of our students whose right to education and well-being we have sworn to uphold and defend.

At the onset, we would like to emphasize that we recognize the issues relating to traffic congestion and enforcement of traffic regulations affecting the immediate neighbourhood around DLSZ, and we are committed to employing reasonable short-term and long-term measures intended to mitigate and address the situation of affected residents. Some of these measures are included in the traffic management and community relations plan that we have presented to you.

We have zealously engaged AAVA in continuous discussions in furtherance of that commitment and in our desire to maintain a good relationship with the community at Ayala Alabang Village (**AAV**). We have circulated information regarding the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy, and called a general assembly of parents and guardians on May 27, 2015, to help the DLSZ community understand the said sticker policy. We have also conducted a survey to identify and have an opportunity to address issues that parents and guardians may raise in relation to the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy.

However, after evaluating the results of the survey and the issues raised during the May 27, 2015 general assembly (where approximately 1,000 were in attendance) and in letters we have received from parents and guardians, we have regrettably come to the conclusion that the

Modified AAVA Sticker Policy raises a number of insurmountable issues that will hinder us from achieving our stated goals.

Accordingly, we have outlined below for your consideration an alternative sticker program (*the Alternative Sticker Program*) that, we believe, will help us achieve our objectives.

### **Alternative Sticker Program**

- All efforts, including the Alternative Sticker Program, will be aimed at reducing the volume of private vehicles that transport non-AAV resident students to DLSZ (*Private Vehicles*) during rush hours, i.e., 6 am to 8 am (*Target Volume*), from approximately 1,200 vehicles in the last academic year to approximately 960 vehicles in the incoming academic year 2015-2016.
- On a graduated basis, the Target Volume will be reduced to approximately 850 vehicles by the beginning of academic year 2018-2019.
- Consistent with AAVA's approach of using stickers to regulate the volume of Private Vehicles, DLSZ will implement the Alternative Sticker Program under which the following stickers will be issued: (i) carpool passes and stickers for carpools of at least three (3) students per vehicle; (ii) stickers for students with special circumstances (health, security and family law-related custody issues), (iii) stickers for all pre-kinder and kinder students; (iv) stickers for employees who are unable to carpool due to scheduling issues, and (v) a "managed" number of "regular" stickers for those who are unable to join carpools and do not fall under the second category of stickers.
- The actual number of stickers under the Alternative Sticker Program will depend on the mix of stickers for which applicants will apply. In the aggregate, the number of stickers will serve to keep the number of Private Vehicles within the Target Volume. DLSZ will manage the process of determining the number of stickers to be issued and will support the applications with mathematical computations. Subject to reasonable control mechanisms, each applicant for stickers may apply for more than one (1) sticker on the assumption that, and on the applicant's commitment to allow, only one (1) vehicle per family or carpool to enter AAV at any given time.
- The number of "regular" stickers will depend on the number of carpool passes and other stickers applied for and issued. In case the number of applicants exceeds the number of "regular" stickers allotted, there will be a pre-set priority system based on various factors, such as (i) commuting distance, (ii) number of students per vehicle, (iii) scheduling constraints, and (iv) other relevant factors. Thus, a family with two (2) young students living in Tanauan, Batangas will be ranked much higher than a family living in a subdivision in close proximity to AAV with one (1) senior student who is not engaged in extra-curricular activities.
- The Alternative Sticker Policy may be supported by mechanisms that will allow prevention and detection of breaches of the mechanism. The following are a couple of potential mechanisms that may be used to ensure that the Target Volume will be achieved.

- Any proven willful violation of relevant restrictions under the Alternative Sticker Program will be penalized with the revocation of all stickers issued to the carpool and/or the family for the remainder of the term. To ensure compliance, parents and guardians will be required to sign a written undertaking to strictly comply with the terms of the Alternative Sticker Program.
- If five (5) randomly conducted checks confirm and verify that the number of Private Vehicles unjustifiably, consistently and substantially exceed the Target Volume on multiple school days, DLSZ should be notified in writing and given an opportunity to reduce the volume of Private Vehicles. In case the volume of Private Vehicles is jointly confirmed to remain substantially higher than the Target Volume on multiple days after an opportunity is given to address the issue, “regular” stickers may be revoked, upon the implementation of a revised “regular” sticker program with a reduced number of “regular” stickers to be issued based on mutually acceptable criteria.
- Pricing of stickers will be rationalized and structured to effectively encourage carpooling. Our proposed pricing scheme is detailed as follows:
  - Car passes P 500
  - Carpooling stickers P 1,000
  - Special stickers
    - Medical/Health P 3,000
    - Security P 3,500
    - Family-Law Related Custody Issues P 3,500
    - Pre-kinder and kinder students P 3,000
  - Employees P 2,000
  - Regular stickers P 3,500

This pricing scheme will achieve or even exceed the financial targets set forth in Board Resolution No. 2015-02-01 adopted by AAVA’s board of governors.

This pricing scheme also attempts to bridge the gap between the price of stickers issued by the homeowners’ associations of other subdivisions in Makati and by AAVA. This is an attempt to address reasonableness issues raised against the initial pricing scheme proposed by AAVA in the May 14, 2015 letter. Notably, under the proposed pricing scheme, only the carpool sticker prices are lowered precisely to provide a real incentive to carpooling.

*(We understand that our proposed pricing scheme will require AAVA to reconsider the pricing scheme set forth in AAVA’s May 14, 2015 letter, which we do not believe will cause an issue considering that the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy already departed from Board Resolution No. 2015-02-01 in light of issues that appear not to have been foreseen when the said board resolution was adopted. Board Resolution No. 2015-02-01 initially contemplated the issuance of one (1) carpool sticker per carpool.*

*We also understand that there may be a desire for a uniform pricing scheme for all schools – perhaps, to correct the differential treatment of schools in the past. We believe that the Alternative Sticker Program may also be implemented in the other schools.)*

- Consistent with and subject to the traffic management and community relations plan, which we have proposed and has yet to be accepted by AAVA, we propose that the Alternative Sticker Policy be supplemented by traffic rules and regulations, a proposed population cap, and other programs (e.g., seminars for parents, drivers and fetchers, periodic consultations with neighbors, creation of a traffic management and community relations committee, etc.).

In essence, this Alternative Sticker Program will (i) give the DLSZ community the flexibility to make voluntary adjustments within a set framework that ensures consistency with stated goals, and (ii) dispense with the process of case-by-case adjudications of applications that we have discussed in a previous private meeting—that may be prone to disputes and provoke strong opposition and controversy.

#### **Issues Against the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy**

While we have eagerly promoted support for the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy in the past several weeks, our decision to propose the Alternative Sticker Policy is based on our evaluation of the issues outlined below (many of which we have previously raised):

- Students with no reasonable access to a safe and reliable mode of transportation. As previously noted, there are students who do not have access to or cannot rely on school vans for hire, carpools and other safe and reliable modes of transportation. Students under this category include, among others, students (i) who reside in remote locations (e.g., Tanauan and Lipa, Batangas, or Kawit, Cavite), (ii) whose parents cannot participate in carpools because of scheduling issues, (iii) who have on-campus activities after regular class hours, (iv) whose extra-curricular activities require them to bring bulky items or equipment, and (v) whose families have other legitimate issues, such as trust-based issues.
- Carpooling will be encouraged but not all carpools can be assumed to be safe and reliable. We fully agree that students may enjoy a lot of benefits from carpooling for which reason, among other things, DLSZ has exerted considerable effort to encourage carpooling. For example, DLSZ has used an online portal to help families identify carpools, organized a meet-and-greet for potential carpoolers, and issued bulletins to encourage families to carpool. Nonetheless, we maintain that families cannot be compelled to carpool. Parents and guardians can have legitimate issues against carpools, including, without limitation, behavioral concerns, driving habits, and scheduling. Thus, while it is common among students of Metro Manila schools to carpool, we do not believe any of DLSZ's peer schools make carpooling mandatory.
- Students and parents cannot be compelled to use staging areas in public places. While parents and guardians can volunteer to use public places (such as Molito, Alabang Town Center, and Westgate) as drop-off and pick-up points, there are undeniable risks that

students may be exposed to in these areas, including, without limitation, security and accident risks. DLSZ cannot compel students to use these staging areas without incurring risks of liability that may arise in case of any untoward incidents.

- DLSZ does not have resources to operate a system of shuttle buses for students. Under current circumstances, DLSZ has limited or no resources to operate a system of shuttle buses for students, which will require (i) a fleet of safe and reliable shuttle buses, (ii) trained and dedicated personnel (e.g., drivers, helpers, conductors, security guards, traffic marshals, etc.), and (iii) a safe, private pick-up and drop-off points outside AAV, among other resources. DLSZ is open to outsourcing the function of operating a system of shuttle bus for students, but in the interest of efficiency, the process is best commenced upon a plan acceptable to AAVA and other concerned parties.
- Lining up at the AAV entrance gate will expose AAV residents to more traffic and other security risks. If a substantial number of Private Vehicles will, on a daily or regular basis, enter AAV via visitors' lanes, the security process (that will presumably include presenting and retrieving identification documents) will cause congestion both among entering and exiting vehicles. Moreover, allowing cars without stickers to enter AAV during rush hours will expose the school and AAV residents to security risks, as security personnel will not have adequate time to scrutinize the identification documents and verify the identity of the passengers and their intended destinations. Stated differently, the sticker system cannot be used solely as a mechanism for reducing vehicles at the expense of the security of the community. If AAVA will cause the sticker system to depart from its function as a security device, AAVA may be held accountable in case of any untoward incident that may result from the misuse of the sticker system.
- The "trial-and-error" or experimental approach to addressing issues may be avoided. While we have expressed our desire to cooperate with AAVA, we believe that the "trial-and-error" or experimental approach may be avoided through a thoughtful process of anticipating and addressing issues as part of the process for adopting a sticker policy. As we have previously noted, DLSZ would like to avoid abrupt changes to policies in the middle of the school year, which will cause confusion and divert focus away from not just the education of the students but also the management of traffic and community relations issues that affect DLSZ's immediate neighbors. On further thought, we believe that the approach of adjudicating applications for stickers on a case-by-case basis follows the "trial-and-error" approach. From a practical standpoint, the frequent changes to policies last year and the uncertainties created by such changes appear to have caused students to withdraw from DLSZ and DLSZ to suffer damages. We have also received feedback that residents themselves raised issues regarding the changes to the policies.
- Unreasonable and cumbersome measures are tantamount to denying students access to the school. While there can be apparent ways to address the specific issues (e.g., issuance of color-coded carpool passes, deployment of ID collectors at the entrance gates, etc.), measures that unduly complicate the routine of security personnel, students, parents, guardians, residents and/or school personnel are unrealistic and make the routine of going to school a cumbersome process. Such measures only hinder the achievement of our mutual objectives.

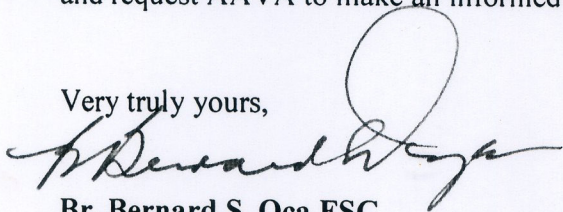
- Fundamental rights are violated. Parents, guardians and students whose access to the school will be hindered by cumbersome processes, procedures and other obstacles (e.g., discriminatory practices, cost-prohibitive or unreasonably-priced stickers, etc.) will have a legitimate cause of action against AAVA, and its officers and personnel, for violations of rights to education and well-being and other rights under Philippine law. While we have, during the May 27, 2015 general assembly, emphatically discouraged legal action, we have no control over the individual or collective decisions of parents and guardians who have openly expressed legitimate sentiments against the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy. Moreover, where the education and well-being of our students are placed at risk, it will be incumbent upon us to stand by our students and their families.

Although we are deeply concerned about the risk of offending the officers of AAVA and losing the goodwill that we believe we have regained in the past few weeks, we have made a decision to formally object to the Modified AAVA Sticker Policy in the interest of taking a more effective approach to addressing relevant issues. As we approach the opening of the incoming academic year, it is imperative that we lay out a reasonable traffic management plan, and a reasonable position on the issues that parents and guardians have raised—without in anyway setting aside our commitment to DLSZ's neighbors.

In our humble view, the Alternative Sticker Policy presents a reasonable opportunity for us to achieve our desired results without compromising the rights and well-being of our students and their families. We are hopeful that the Alternative Sticker Policy will merit your favorable consideration and will not be unduly misconstrued as an affront against the authority of AAVA and its officers.

In view of the foregoing, we invite you to one (1) final meeting among officers of AAVA, DLSZ administrators, members of the DLSZ traffic committee and volunteer parents, preferably on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, where we can present details of the Alternative Sticker Program and request AAVA to make an informed and judicious decision once and for all.

Very truly yours,



**Br. Bernard S. Oca FSC**  
President

cc Mr. Antonio C. Laurel, Vice President, AAVA  
Mr. Godofredo Galindez, Treasurer, AAVA  
Mr. Eugene T. de la Cruz, Governor, AAVA  
Mr. Nelson G. Mendoza, Governor, AAVA  
Mr. Constantino A. Mercaida, Governor, AAVA  
Mr. Briccio S. Tamparong, Governor, AAVA  
Mr. Arturo V. Briones, Village Manager, AAVA  
Mr. Albert Vincent Y. Yu Chang, Esq., SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan  
Board of Directors, DLSZ Parents Association, Inc.  
DLSZ Community  
AAV Community

*Handwritten initials: J. M. 6/1/15*