



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

## MEDIA RELEASE

June 8, 2022

Dear Editor / Head of Department,

### **Disciplinary Action Taken in Relation to the Incident Involving Students of Williamsville Secondary School**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken the decision to expel the female student of Williamsville Secondary School who stabbed her schoolmate outside of the school earlier this week. This decision was taken based on the heinous nature of the action, perpetrated even as the student was actively receiving the support of the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) at school. The MoE has referred the family to the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) for intervention.

Maintaining a safe and secure learning environment is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and the provisions of the Education Act and existing National Code of Conduct will be utilized in furtherance of this. However, suspension and expulsion of students are not desired outcomes. Even with the measures instituted at schools to encourage positive behaviour in students, the importance of parents discharging their duty to regulate their children's behaviour cannot be overstated.

The Student Support Service Division (SSSD) is staffed with over 700 personnel such as Guidance Counsellors, School Social Workers, Special Education Instructors, Psychologists and Diagnostic Specialists. These officers operate throughout approximately 625 public primary, secondary and special schools. While existing vacancies are being filled, it must be noted that the work of these officers is most effective with the cooperation of parents, and interventions at the level of the family.

As such, families of all students who are displaying negative behaviour will be referred to MSDFS for intervention outside of the school environment, as the students' behaviour is often

linked to family issues, and the problems they present with cannot be solved simply at the level of the school.

Though it is factual that intervention of Community Police in 14 schools has reduced the level of serious fights within their compounds, the Ministry is closely monitoring the schools without a history of violence that are now having disturbances, and the growing trend of students leaving the school compound, where patrols and vigilance have been heightened, to fight in the streets. The MOE has formally requested that the TTPS increase patrols in all districts at the close of the school day.

The Ministry of Education will continue to collaborate and partner with all stakeholders, Ministries and their agencies, as we do what is required to maintain the safety and security of our nation's schools.

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