



Ministry of Education

National School Code of Conduct



CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Principles	3
3.	General	4
4.	Responsibilities of School Personnel	5
5.	Standards of Behaviour	11
6.	Range of Consequences	37
7.	Appendix I - Rights and Responsibilities of the Child	46
8.	Appendix II - Guidelines for Effecting Suspension	48
9.	Appendix III - Identifying Warning Signs of Potential Violence	51
10.	Appendix IV - Health, Safety and Security	53
11.	Appendix V - Teachers Code of Conduct	55

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education believes school is an appropriate setting for all children and youth to learn and develop holistically. It should be a place that promotes the values of responsibility, respect, civility, academic excellence in a safe, learning and teaching environment, as well as promote equity, justice and fairness. The National School Code of Conduct is designed to support this concept and as such comprises principles, standards of behaviour, responsibilities, student and staff expectations, roles of school personnel, consequences for violation as well as prevention and intervention strategies.

The National School Code of Conduct sets the context and provides the framework for the development and implementation of national and school level discipline policies with reference to guidelines, regulations under the Education Act, national policies and circular memoranda. Reference is made to “school personnel” throughout this Code. *The term “school personnel” includes students and all adults whose roles or jobs place them in contact with students in school settings and school activities.*

The Ministry of Education will ensure that each principal, in consultation with staff, students and parents, implements the National School Code of Conduct in a manner that is sensitive to diversity and the cultural environments of the school.

PRINCIPLES

Respect

It is expected that school personnel will exhibit behaviour that shows respect for the rights, property and safety of themselves and others.

Responsibility

It is expected that school personnel will accept personal responsibility for their behaviour in order to maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

Rights

It is expected that school personnel will honour the rights of others through the process of learning and demonstrating appropriate behaviours in the context of social responsibility.

Integrity

It is expected that school personnel will treat with each other in fairness and honour and adhere to all applicable policies of the Ministry of Education. School personnel will also be honest in the performance of their duties and with each other.

Courtesy

It is expected that school personnel will treat each other and stakeholders in a manner that maintains each other's dignity.

Productivity and Performance

It is expected that all school personnel will subscribe to excellence in all aspects of work acknowledging each other's contributions.

The above principles are supported by the Education Act under several sections including the preamble.

GENERAL

Visitors to the Schools

Parents/guardians and other patrons of the community are welcome and encouraged to visit the schools. All visitors are expected to report to security officers before proceeding to the principal's office. Visitors to the schools must respect the learning environment and maintain proper behaviour and decorum. All visitors are expected to be appropriately attired. Disruption of the orderly process of the school is prohibited. The principal or his/her designee is authorised to deny access, ban or bar future access, remove or request the removal of any visitor whose behaviour is disruptive to the educational/working environment of the school. All security codes should be adhered to by visitors. Any visitor to the school who has been denied access or who has been asked to leave may appeal to the school supervisor of the district. Final appeals may be heard by a district administrator.

Academic Integrity Position

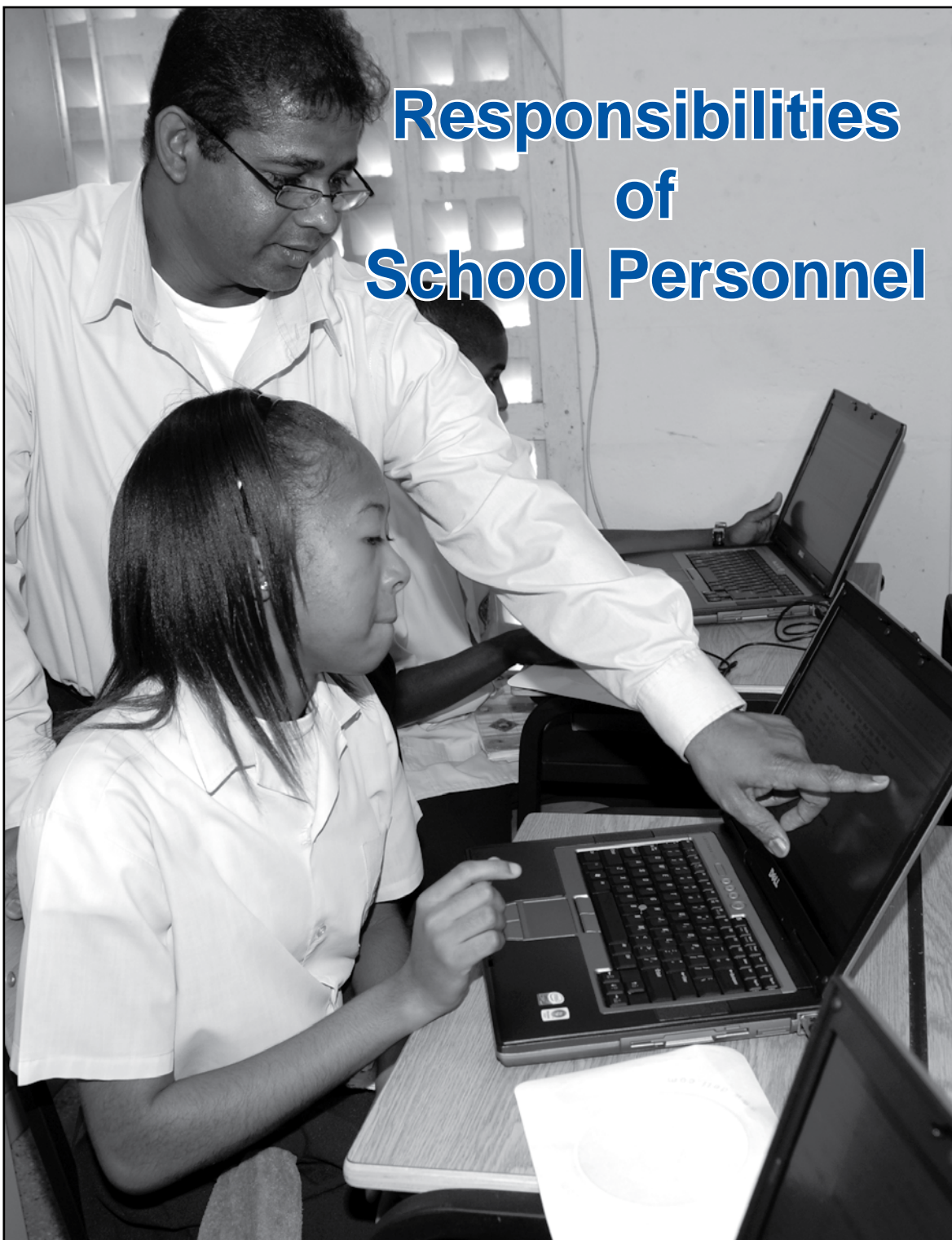
Academic integrity is a fundamental value of teaching, learning and behaviour. Maintaining high standards of academic integrity ensures the sustainability of the educational process. Therefore, all school personnel are expected to commit to and be responsible at all times for demonstrating the six fundamental principles previously identified.

Inclusive Education

In recognition of the global commitment to provide access, equity and quality in education, and in support of its efforts to reform, expand and modernise the education system, the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago shall support the delivery of inclusive education in all schools by providing support and services to all learners. It shall also take appropriate steps to ensure that education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all learners.

It is thus the policy of the Ministry of Education that all schools shall admit and accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, economic, emotional or other conditions. This includes:

- Children with a diverse range of learning difficulties and/or challenges
- Children identified as gifted learners
- Children living with HIV/AIDS
- Homeless children
- Children from remote and impoverished populations
- Children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities
- Children from other disadvantaged or marginalised geographic areas or groups.
- Children who are victims of crime



Responsibilities of School Personnel

STUDENTS

The student is responsible for:

1. Behaving in a manner that does not interfere with the rights of others.
2. Abiding by expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations established by the school.
3. Attending school daily and on time.
4. Adhering to the principles of respect, responsibility, integrity, courtesy, productivity and performance.

PARENTS

The parent is responsible for:

1. Making sure the student attends school daily and on time, properly attired in full uniform and equipped for effective learning to take place.
2. Reading and reviewing school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations with family members.
3. Cooperating with school officials regarding matters of discipline.
4. Seeking from school and community agencies help in correcting a student's misbehaviour.
5. Informing school officials of concerns relative to student behaviour and medical conditions that may affect the child's well-being or performance.
6. Promoting the healthy lifestyles of their children.
7. Supervising and ensuring the completion of homework and other assignments and for providing an appropriate environment for learning at home.
8. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children's Act and Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000.

TEACHERS

A teacher's conduct shall at all times be such as would not bring the Service into disrepute.

The teacher is responsible for:

1. Being regular in attendance, punctual and prepared to perform his/her teaching duties.
2. Treating each student with dignity and respect.
3. Creating a healthy, nurturing and safe environment for students in his/her charge.
4. Consistently fostering and modelling school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
5. Reviewing with students the school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
6. Establishing a culture of appropriate behaviour conducive to effective learning in the classroom.
7. Rewarding and recognising appropriate behaviour and communicating with students and parents if student behaviour is not appropriate.
8. Reporting promptly to appropriate school authorities continuing student misbehaviour and reporting immediately any misbehaviour that will or may result in suspension or expulsion.
9. Reporting any suspected child abuse or situation of neglect in accordance with the Children's Act and Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000.
10. Adhering to the dress code as outlined in this document.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education is responsible for:

1. Providing a safe, secure and healthy learning environment for all school personnel.
2. Providing quality governance to support the maintenance of good discipline and conduct.

PRINCIPALS

According to Section 27 of the Education Act (No.1 of 1966), Principals shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of their school which includes supervising the physical safety and discipline of pupils.

The principal is responsible for:

1. Creating and maintaining a safe and peaceful environment for students that is conducive to learning.
2. Establishing school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations in alignment with national policy and guidelines from the Ministry of Education.
3. Communicating the school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations to parents, staff, and students and all other critical stakeholders.
4. Ensuring consistency in formulation and implementation of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
5. Discussing with parents, with support from the teacher, student behaviour and developmental difficulties.
6. Assisting teachers and parents to resolve student behaviour problems.
7. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children's Act and Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2000.
8. Engaging various stakeholders in the development and implementation of preventive programmes to manage school discipline in accordance with policy guidelines.
9. Liaising with Student Support Services Division to provide assistance for students with psycho-social difficulties.
10. The keeping of proper records.

COMMUNITIES

The community is responsible for:

1. Maintaining a standard of conduct for adults, youth, and children that will foster appropriate behaviour.
2. Cooperating with the Ministry of Education and the school personnel in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Providing educational and recreational opportunities to allow for the development of appropriate student behaviour.

SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF

Support Services staff is responsible for:

1. Treating each child with dignity and respect.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Assisting teachers and parents in resolving student behaviour problems.
4. Reporting any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children's Act and Sexual Offences Amendment Act.
5. Providing support for students through prevention and intervention strategies.

SCHOOL SUPERVISORS

School supervisors are responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity and respect.
2. Communicating to the school leadership team, the National School Code of Conduct and all policies related to school discipline as well as the treatment of students and other school personnel.
3. Monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
4. Ensuring prompt action and timely responses to issues brought to them.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Local school boards are responsible for:

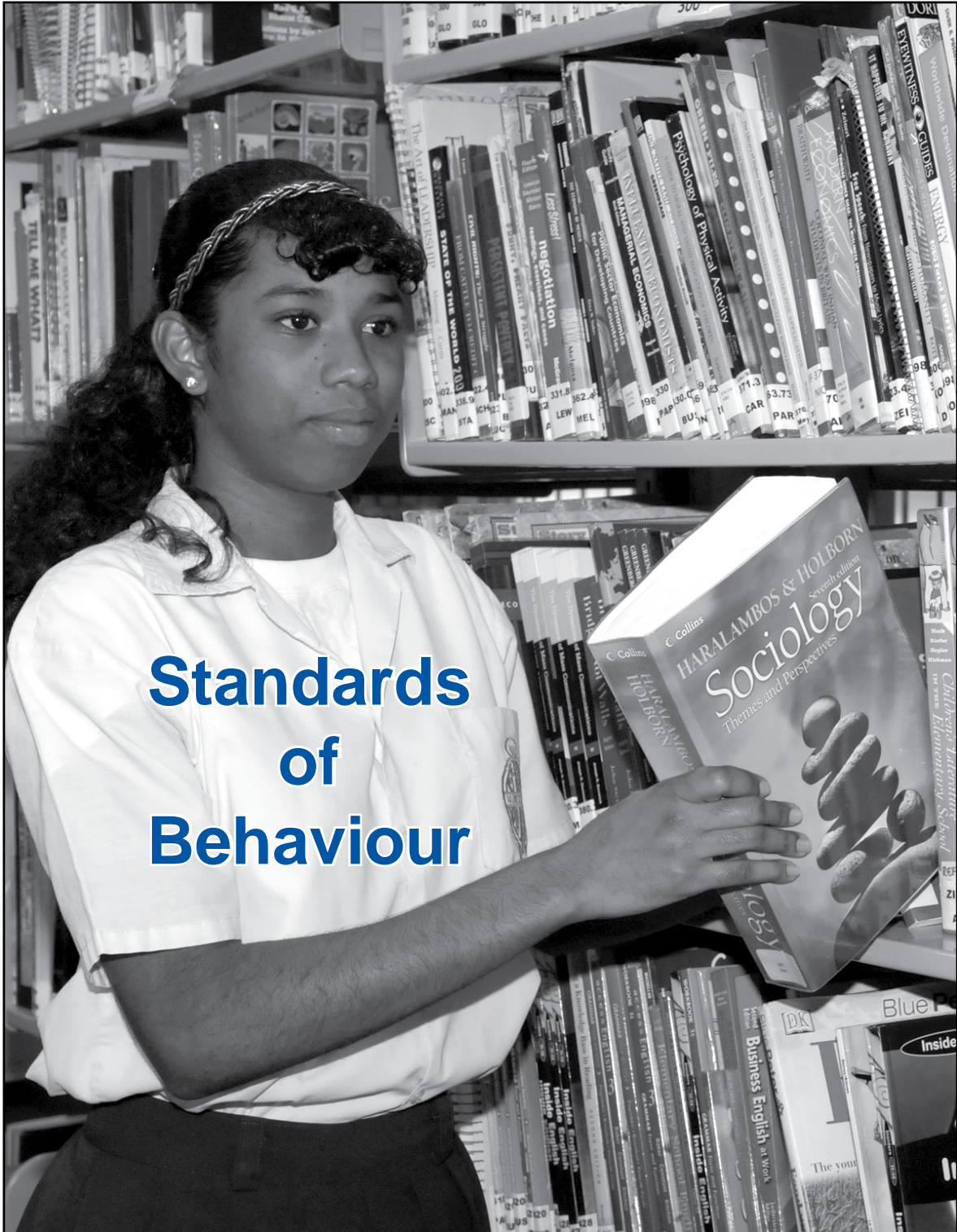
1. Treating all school personnel with dignity and respect.
2. Supporting the school leadership in communicating the National Code of Conduct to all stakeholders and personnel.
3. Assisting school leadership and Ministry of Education in monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.

AUXILIARY STAFF

Auxiliary staff includes security, maintenance, school safety officers and other non-teaching staff.

Auxiliary staff are responsible for:

1. Treating each child with dignity and respect.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules and regulations.
3. Informing school officials of concerns relative to student behaviour.



Standards of Behaviour

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO USE

It is the policy of the Ministry of Education that the school environment shall be smoke free and drug free. This policy position is consistent with the Ministry's overall objective of:

- (i) Creating a safe, learning and teaching environment in all schools.
- (ii) Taking a holistic approach to the development of all children in the school system; that is, paying adequate attention to the total well-being of the child.

Under this policy, no one shall be permitted to have on their person or under their control, an illegal drug either for personal use, trafficking or any other reason. Alcohol may be used in specific instances, only with prior approval of the Ministry.

Specifically, smoking is prohibited in all school buildings including classrooms, laboratories, offices, work areas, study areas, reception areas, staff-rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, stair-wells, eating areas, hallways and sports facilities. **"NO SMOKING"** signs shall be placed in strategic areas in the reception areas, classrooms and offices.

Moreover, smoking is prohibited in all buildings and offices of the Ministry of Education. Smoking can only be done beyond the gates of all offices and buildings of the Ministry of Education. The Smoke-Free Work Environment Policy shall also apply to vehicles belonging to the Ministry of Education.

Controlled or restricted drugs shall be permitted for a particular individual where prescribed for that individual by a licensed medical practitioner and dispersed by an authorised pharmacist.

It is the duty of all personnel on the school compound, to treat the possession or use of tobacco, controlled and illicit drugs on school premises, as a serious violation on this policy. As a consequence, all personnel are expected to fully uphold this policy and in no way whatsoever, either by word, deed or omission, sanction, encourage or support the possession or use of any illegal, controlled or restricted drugs and tobacco products on school compounds.

Consistent with this policy, all schools shall be encouraged to develop programmes designed to create **drug free, smoke free learning environments**.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent conference
- Support services intervention
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

- Referral to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Other consequences (see Appendix V)

References:

1. *School Policy on Drug Abuse and Prevention - Towards a Smoke-Free Environment (June 12, 2005)*
2. *Circular memorandum #29 (March 09, 1999).*
3. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 Part VIII No. 77.*
4. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*



ARSON - ACTUAL / ATTEMPTED

School personnel are entitled to learn in a safe environment with others who respect their well-being. The following is considered an extremely serious violation which threatens a safe and secure learning environment.

The use, intent to use, or threat to use an explosive, including, but not limited to, fireworks, smoke/stink/scratch bombs, or any device contributing to a fire or representation of an explosive device, including a bomb threat, is prohibited. These actions include bringing the items on school property or to a school-sponsored event.

The use or intent to use any material (matches, lighters, etc.) which may result in a fire on school property or setting fire to the property of students, staff, or volunteers, is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Conference with parent
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Suspension
- Extended suspension
- Law enforcement agencies
- Confiscation
- School community service
- Restitution
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Explosives Act 16:02*
2. *Firearms Act 16:01*
3. *Circular memorandum # 4 (January 14, 1997) which addresses student discipline in and out of school.*

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality and regular attendance at schools are fundamental values of the Ministry of Education which impact directly on teaching, learning and student success. Therefore, it is the policy of the Ministry of Education that all school personnel must be punctual in attending school, classes and all school related activities and must be regular in attendance.

ATTENDANCE

Students and all school staff are required to attend all assigned classes every day. For students irregular attendance is defined as more than one day or two half days per week in any four week period in which school is in session. For teachers, the Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 states that an act of misconduct is in effect “if a teacher is absent from office or official duties without leave or valid excuse or is habitually irregular in the time of arrival or departure from the place of employment.”

PUNCTUALITY

Students and all school staff are required to be punctual to school and all school related activities. They are required to report for duty at the assigned times as indicated by the appropriate regulations.

Recommended consequences - one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parent
- Support Services intervention
- Student behaviour contract
- Removal of privileges
- In-school suspension

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

- Referral to the EAP
- Other consequences (see Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act - Section 78 Compulsory School Attendance and Inspection*
2. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 Part VIII No.77.*
3. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

DANGEROUS OBJECTS AND FIREARMS

All students have the right to learn in a safe environment with others who respect their well-being. The following categories are considered extremely serious violations which threaten a suitable and secure learning environment.

- A.** Students are forbidden knowingly and intentionally to bring to school, possess, handle, transmit or use any knife or other dangerous weapons or objects. Dangerous objects include the representation of items commonly understood to be inappropriate to school activities. These items include, but are not limited to, bullets, machetes, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, box cutters, other sharp objects, mace, firecrackers, fireworks, stink bombs, etc. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event. Violation of this rule may result in a recommendation for suspension or expulsion. Authorised objects for school activities include mathematical instruments and other such objects for technology studies. Misuse of any of these objects will be considered a violation and may result in a recommendation for suspension or expulsion.
- B.** The possession of look-alike weapons, including, but not limited to, cap guns, squirt or water guns, toy pistols, comb knives, etc., is prohibited on school property. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event.
- C.** The possession, use or representation of a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, operative or inoperative, on any school property or during any school activity, is prohibited. Possession includes bringing a firearm onto school property or to a school-sponsored event and storing it in a bag, locker or other receptacle. Firearms include any device which meets the definition of firearm in Firearms Act of Trinidad and Tobago.
- D.** The possession or representation of any explosive or flammable material considered to have the capacity to create an explosion or to start a fire, including, but not limited to, firecrackers, lighter fluid and other flammable substances, is prohibited. Possession includes bringing the item(s) onto school property or to a school-sponsored event.

Violation of these rules may result in immediate suspension and the calling in of Law Enforcement agencies or eventually expulsion.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Conference with parent
- Support Services intervention
- Suspension up to seven days
- Extended suspension
- Confiscation
- Arrest by law enforcement agencies
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Firearms Act – 16:01*
2. *Circular memorandum # 29 (March 09, 1999) reissue of Circular memorandum #4 (January 14, 1997) which addresses student discipline in and out of school.*
3. *Education Act – Section 44 which addresses suspension and expulsion of pupils.*
4. *The Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 Part VIII No. 77.*
5. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

DISORDERLY CONDUCT/DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

School personnel are entitled to a learning environment free of unnecessary disruption. Any physical, written or verbal disturbance, communication or activity, within the school setting or during related activities, which may interrupt or interfere with teaching and orderly conduct of school activities, is prohibited.

- A.** Any event, action, or statement which relies on chance for the monetary advantage of one participant at the expense of others is gambling. This violation includes exchanging items of value as well as currency and extends to keeping score for later settlement.
- B.** The possession or distribution of print or electronic materials which are obscene, violent, inappropriate or significantly disruptive to the educational process is prohibited. Included are inappropriate student expression, threats, hit lists, distribution of non-authorized literature and illegal assembly.
- C.** Cursing, threatening, or using abusive language or remarks intended to demean a person by either a teacher or student is prohibited. This violation includes, but is not limited to, actions, displays or written material of an obscene, violent or inappropriate nature and the wearing of adornments, including inappropriate jewellery, which themselves convey either violent or sexually suggestive messages or offensive statements towards school personnel.
- D.** Failure to respond appropriately to written or verbal directions given by school personnel, or law enforcement officers is considered insubordination. Also included is disobedience or defiance of reasonable requests made by school personnel.
- E.** Other activities which disrupt the orderly functions of the school include, but are not limited to: demonstrating hostile or disruptive behaviour, habitual offences (repeat violations of the National School Code of Conduct), unauthorised sales by students, possession of inappropriate toys, inappropriate use of school lockers and facilities, and setting off false fire alarms.
- F.** Gang-related activity will not be tolerated. Symbols of gang membership are expressly prohibited (i.e., clothing that symbolises association, rituals associated with, or activities by an identified group of students).
- G.** Inappropriate teacher/student relationships will not be tolerated.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for student)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parent
- Support Services intervention
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven days
- Law enforcement agencies
- Confiscation
- School community service
- Removal of privileges

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

- Referral to EAP
- Other consequences (See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act – 39:01 Section 44 (1)*
2. *Circular memorandum #4 – student discipline in and out of school (January 14, 1997)*
3. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*

DRESS AND GROOMING

It is the position of the Ministry of Education that all school personnel should be appropriately attired and groomed; students should wear school uniforms and their grooming should be modest, clean and consistent with healthy, sanitary and safety practices. School personnel (including administration staff, teachers, assistants, etc.) are required to project a professional image. This requires a dress code that sets a positive tone, establishes a common standard, highlights moral leadership, enhances respect and speaks to health and safety in the workplace.

STUDENTS

Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or which endangers the health or safety of the students or others is prohibited. Failure to wear the prescribed school uniforms and to be appropriately groomed as set out by the individual school rules is a violation of the National School Code of Conduct and will warrant the appropriate consequence.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for STUDENTS)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parents
- Detention
- Removal of privileges
- School community service
- In-school suspension

TEACHERS

Teachers shall dress in a manner consistent with the dignity and honour of the teaching profession. They should always bear in mind that they are role models for their students and engender, in part, respect through their comportment.

In general:

- (i) Persons should always be clean and well-groomed.
- (ii) Clothing and footwear should be neat, clean and in good repair and appropriate for the particular body type; footwear should be consistent with clothing and overall appearance.

(iii) Makeup, jewellery and all clothing should be appropriate for the school and not serve to distract from the learning environment; attention should be taken to avoid:

- Excessive inappropriate display of body form
- Revealing necklines and dress/skirt slits
- Inappropriate lengths of skirts/dresses/trousers
- Excessive use of perfume or cologne
- Exposed undergarments or see-through tops.

(iv) Principals must continue to offer these guidelines to new teachers.

While the Ministry of Education offers these guidelines, principals are expected to take the lead to engage staff on dress standards which acknowledge diversity and are appropriate to the requirements of the varying activities associated with the curriculum and physical conditions; these guidelines are by no means exhaustive.

Consequences for teachers are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education (Teaching Service) Amended Regulations, 2000 Section 77 (1)*
2. *T&TUTA Code of Ethics*



FIGHTING/ASSAULT/THREATS

School personnel are entitled to a school environment free from threat, aggression and assault.

- A. Actions, comments or written messages intended to cause others to fight or which may result in a fight are prohibited.
- B. Intentionally hitting, shoving, scratching, biting, kicking, blocking the passage of, or throwing objects at school personnel, is prohibited.
- C. Conveying by gestures, notes or verbal comments, the intent to cause bodily injury or to deprive any member of school personnel of his/her rights or demonstrating hostile acts, is prohibited.
- D. Fighting involving two or more parties in conflict, when they are striking each other for the purpose of causing harm or injury, is prohibited. This action may extend to mutual shoving, wrestling, or other aggressive actions which may result in the danger of harm or injury to either party, bystanders, or school property.
- E. The wilful use of physical violence which is intended to result in bodily injury, or the use of a dangerous object in an effort to cause bodily injury, is prohibited.
- F. Assault upon a member of staff or other school personnel is prohibited. **VIOLATION OF THIS RULE WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC RECOMMENDATION FOR SUSPENSION AND EVENTUAL EXPULSION.**
- G. The wilful use of physical or verbal threats or physical abuse intended to result in an involuntary transfer of money or property to another student is prohibited.
- H. Unsafe conduct which endangers either oneself or others is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student Conference
- Parent Contact
- Conference with Parent
- Student Support Services Intervention
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven (7) days
- Extended Suspension
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- In-school Suspension
- School Community Service
- Expulsion

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Education Act – Section 44 – suspension and expulsion of pupils*
2. *Circular memorandum #4 – student discipline in and out of school (January 14, 1997)*
3. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
4. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*



INTEGRITY

School personnel are expected to perform honestly through the production of their work. They should also demonstrate respect for the belongings and rights of others.

The following acts are prohibited:

- A.** Cheating includes the actual giving, receiving, or use of any unauthorised aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- B.** Plagiarism includes using or copying the language, structure, idea and/or thought of another and representing it as one's own original work.
- C.** Falsification includes, but is not limited to a verbal, written or electronic transmission (i.e., e-mails, images), including the production or use of forgery, counterfeiting or misrepresentations of parents and guardians.
- D.** Stealing includes acquiring another's possessions without right or permission. The possession of stolen property is considered theft.
- E.** Attempts toward completion of any act described above would constitute a violation and may be punishable to the same extent as if the attempted act had been completed.
- F.** Wilful or malicious false accusations/reports against school personnel or other students.
- G.** Any other action that compromises responsibility, civility, respect and academic excellence.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact conference with school personnel
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven days
- In-school suspension
- Removal of privileges
- School community service
- Restitution
- Student behavioural contract
- Law enforcement

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
2. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Ministry of Education to maintain a working and learning environment which provides for fair and equitable treatment, including freedom from sexual harassment, for all its employees and students. It is also the policy that there should be no inappropriate sexual misconduct or behaviour at schools, at school related activities or on the way to and from school.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other inappropriate verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. A student/employee shall not sexually harass another student/employee or any volunteer, visitor or any other person present in school facilities, at school functions or on the way to and from school.

It is prohibited for any student or employee, male or female, to harass another student or employee by making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours, or engaging in other verbal, written, electronic or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is also prohibited for any student or employee to engage in sexually explicit behaviour at school or school related activity. Examples of activities which could constitute sexual harassment/inappropriate sexual behaviour include, but are not limited to:

1. Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations or propositions.
2. Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions.
3. Graphic comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation.
4. Offensive sexual drawings, pictures or gestures.
5. Spreading sexual rumours.
6. Inappropriate or suggestive sexual gestures.
7. Offensive touching of an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way.
8. Displaying sexually explicit behaviour.
9. Using the electronic media to send any sexually explicit/offensive communication

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Parent conference
- Counselling
- Suspension
- Extended suspension
- Law enforcement
- In-school suspension
- Student behavioural contract
- Employee conference

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Sexual Offences Amendment Act (2000)*
2. *Children's Amendment Act -Chapter 46:01 (2000)*
3. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
4. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

The Ministry of Education fully subscribes to the provisions in the Children's Amendment Act and Sexual Offences Amendment Act (2000) which calls for mandatory reporting to law enforcement regarding inappropriate sexual behaviour against children under the age of 16. In addition, principals are empowered to enquire into received reports and follow established procedures. Where the allegation is against the principal himself/herself, the school supervisor will conduct the appropriate investigations and follow established procedures in conjunction with Public Service/Teaching Service Regulations.

According to the Sexual Offences Act No. 27 of 1986, indictable sexual offences include:

- Rape
- Sexual intercourse with a female under 14 years of age
- Sexual intercourse with a female between 14 years and 16 years
- Sexual intercourse with a male under 16 years
- Incest
- Sexual intercourse with an adopted minor
- Sexual intercourse with a minor employee
- Buggery
- Indecent assault
- Serious indecency

With reference to **Circular memorandum No. 76**, there are three main stages of the procedure for all school personnel regarding matters of Child Sexual Abuse. These are as follows:

1. Reporting

- School personnel have the responsibility to report, NOT to investigate, determine fact, or make judgments of innocence or guilt.
- When a report is made by a student/adult, school personnel are required to listen, get the facts and record the information as given by the person making the report (victim or any other person).
- Information should be recorded consistent with the provisions of Act 31, 2000, section 31B.
- Principal and person(s) informing the principal (teacher, parent, student and other adults), **MUST** then make a formal report in person at the police station. Principal is to inform parents **AFTER** making report to the station.
- Principal must then report to the Ministry via normal reporting channels. Copies of all reports, including supporting documents, must be forwarded to the Legal Division of the Ministry of Education for appropriate advice and direction.
- Principal must simultaneously make appropriate referral to the Student Support Services Division at the district level so that support for student and family could be provided.

2. Investigating

- The police are responsible for investigating and determining whether charges should be laid. The police enforce the law. They are also to inform parents.

3. Determining

- The magistrate/judge determines guilt or innocence.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Parent conference
- Counselling
- Suspension
- Extended suspension
- Law enforcement
- In-school suspension
- Student behavioural contract
- Employee conference

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Sexual Offences Amendment Act (2000)*
2. *Children's Amendment Act - Chapter 46:01 (2000)*
3. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
4. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*
5. *Circular memorandum No. 76 - Procedures for all school personnel regarding Matters of Child Sexual Abuse (Sept. 02, 2008)*
6. *International Child Abduction Act 2008 Act No. 8 of 2008*
7. *Children's Authority (Amendment) of 2008*
8. *Children's Bill (before Parliament)*
9. *The Community Residences, Foster Homes and Nurseries (Amendment) Bill Act No. 15 of 2008*

STANDARD USE OF MOBILE HANDHELD ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

The Ministry recognises the value of mobile handheld electronic communications devices (MHECD) as useful tools in the teaching, learning, research, and management of schools. The Ministry also recognises the risks associated with the use of these devices in schools and at school activities.

It is the policy of the Ministry therefore that MHECDs be used to support the effective and efficient delivery of education in schools and at school related activities, as well as to promote knowledge and use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), providing they are used in a managed, responsible, safe and legal manner, in schools and at school related activities.

The following are guidelines for the use of MHECD in schools and during school activities.

1. Security for MHECDs is the responsibility of the adults and students bringing them on the school's compound and/or to a school-related activity. Parents and guardians wishing to allow their charges (students) to carry MHECDs to school or to a school-related activity (on or off the school compound), must understand that such devices are the responsibility of their charges while at school and at school-related activities.
2. All MHECDs must be powered off before entering the school's compound or any school-related activity, unless permission is specifically granted by the school's principal or the "person in charge".
3. The principal may delegate the duties associated with these guidelines to teachers or other school officers.
4. Permission for the use of MHECDs on schools' compounds and at school-related activities should be clear and specific relative to the purpose of use. Permission to use these devices must be guided by the need for:
 - i. A safe school or a safe school-related activity;
 - ii. The promotion of effective and efficient teaching, learning, research, assessment, and management.
 - iii. Non-interference with, or disturbance of, school learning and school activities. The goal of this policy guideline being not to discourage technology, while at the same time not allowing students and school work to be distracted either.
 - iv. Emergency communication, ill health, and security.
5. Teachers should be supported and encouraged by the school principal to use MHECDs for delivery of the pedagogical approach to education and in the conduct of field studies/research.

6. The Ministry shall support the use of MHECDs in the learning process through programmes such as Open and Distance Education, the integration of ICTs into the curriculum, etc.
7. Permission to use MHECDs should be avoided within the immediate environs of an examination, where matters of a confidential nature are being conducted, or during the singing of national or religious songs.
8. When permission is granted for the use of MHECDs, these devices and their storage media must be used in an ethical and responsible manner, exhibiting respect for the law, persons, and property.
9. Principals of schools must ensure that educational campaigns involving students, teachers, parents and the community, be carried out annually (or more frequently if required) to provide guidance on the responsible and safe use of these devices, on the associated risks involved with their use, and to promote their use as effective educational tools. This would include the posting and distribution of signs and multiple mode print based communications, so that all concerned will be constantly reminded.

Violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Parent contact
- Confiscation
- Removal of privileges
- Behavioural contract
- School community service
- In-school suspension

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Policy on Use of Mobile Handheld Electronic Communications Devices in Schools (2007).*
2. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
3. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET

School personnel should use technology and the internet in an appropriate manner. Technology is an integral part of a student's educational experience and must be used in support of education and research consistent with educational objectives. Technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, other hardware electronic devices, software, internet email, all other networks, etc. Student use of technology is a privilege. Students are responsible for appropriate use of all computers to which they have access. Obscene, pornographic, threatening, or other inappropriate use of technology, including, but not limited to, email, instant messaging, web pages, and use of hardware and/or software which disrupts or interferes with the safety and welfare of the school community, is prohibited, even if such uses take place off school property (i.e., home, business, private property, etc). Altering the pre-set Ministry of Education software image is prohibited.

A. General Terms and Conditions of Use

1. Transmission of any material in violation of national laws and the Ministry of Education policy, is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: copyrighted material, cyber bullying, threatening, violent, obscene, or pornographic material, material protected by trade secret, and uploaded or created computer viruses.
2. Use of technology for commercial activities is prohibited unless explicitly permitted. Commercial activity includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. any activity that requires an exchange of money and/or credit card numbers;
 - b. any activity that requires entry into an area of service for which the school will be charged a fee;
 - c. any purchase of sale of any kind; and
 - d. any use for product advertisement or political lobbying.
3. Altering/modifying the original Ministry of Education pre-set software image and/or taking apart the computer for access to internal parts is prohibited.

B Acceptable/Safe Use Policy

The following rules are in effect for all Ministry of Education computers unless otherwise directed by a teacher or administrator:

1. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that student-loaded files and programmes do not consume hard drive space needed for instructional or educational requirements.
2. School personnel are prohibited from accessing or attempting to access instant messages, chat rooms, forums, email, message boards, or hosting personal web pages during the instructional day. Teachers may authorise students to use internet communication that includes filtered email for instructional purposes only.

3. Pornographic, obscene or vulgar images, sounds, music, video, language or materials, including screensavers, backdrops and/or pictures, are prohibited.
4. Downloading, uploading or importing games, screen animations, as well as programmes or files that can be run or launched as a stand-alone programme is prohibited at all times.
5. Downloading, uploading, importing music and videos are allowed outside of school hours, so long as it does not violate copyright law or contain words or images that are pornographic, obscene, graphically violent or vulgar.
6. Illegal use of transfer of copyrighted materials to a school owned computer, including lap tops, is prohibited. Students should only download/import music or materials (files) that they are authorised or legally permitted to reproduce or for which they have the copyright.
7. School personnel are prohibited from playing games during the instructional day unless otherwise directed by a teacher or administrator.
8. File sharing must be approved and directed by the teacher.
9. Headphones may be used during the instructional day with teacher's permission as long as the use does not interfere with the instructional programme.
10. Laptops are to be used for instructional purposes only.
11. Students are not allowed to connect a laptop to ethernet jacks in the school unless instructed by the teacher or administrator.
12. Students shall not deface the laptops in any way. This includes, but is not limited to, marking, painting, drawing, marring, or placing stickers on any surface of the laptop.
13. Additions, modifications or deletion of files, except in the student's 'directory' or 'home directory' are prohibited.
14. Students are prohibited from sharing passwords with one another for any reason and should make every effort to keep all passwords secure and private.
15. School personnel should not knowingly introduce or knowingly allow the introduction of any computer virus to any Ministry of Education computer.
16. Putting non-school related materials (files) on a school file server is prohibited.
17. Capturing of pornographic scenes in or out of school and displaying such is strictly prohibited.

C. Personal Responsibility and Integrity

All who use Ministry of Education technology resources must recognise that the work of all users is valuable; therefore, every user must respect the privacy of others. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent or assume the identity of other users.

To protect students while at school and home, all students are expected to behave responsibly and with integrity when using technology. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Using technology for school-related purposes only during the instructional day.
2. Refraining from revealing unauthorised personal information about yourself or others.
3. Not copying, changing, reading, or using files in another user's storage area (such as hard disk space, diskettes, mail, server space, personal folder, etc.) without the user's permission.
4. Refraining at all times from cyber bullying.

D. Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority. Attempts of a user to log on to the Ministry of Education's network using another's identity are prohibited. Bypassing or attempting to bypass Ministry of Education filtering software is prohibited. All security problems must be reported to an administrator.

E. Privacy/Copyright

The illegal use, distribution or transfer of copyrighted material on Ministry of Education computers is prohibited.

F. Alteration of Pre-set Software Image

Altering/modifying the original Ministry of Education pre-set software image is prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. loading/installing any software applications
2. changing the desktop picture
3. changing the computer name
4. changing or removing operating system extensions
5. altering security software
6. altering the pre-loaded operating system or applications
7. taking apart the computer for access to internal parts

Violations of these regulations will result in serious disciplinary action and may also result in criminal charges if the violation of the regulation is also a violation of national law or ordinance. Examples of such dual violations are (i) computer hacking or trespassing, (ii) harassment, threats, or cyber bullying via computer and (iii) computer fraud. Ignorance of these regulations will not excuse an infraction.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Detention
- Suspension
- Restitution
- School community service
- Revocation of computer access and use
- Removal of privileges

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *Computer Misuse Act. Chapter 11:17*
2. *Information and Communications Technology Act.*
3. *Ministry of Education Handbook on the Guidelines on the Use of Mobile Handheld Electronic Devices*
4. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*

TRANSPORTATION

It is the intention of the Ministry of Education that proper behaviour is required to, from and at bus stops and while riding the bus, to assure that the rights of others, residential or otherwise, are respected.

The Ministry of Education, through the Public Transport Service Corporation, provides transportation (bus/maxi taxis) for some primary and secondary school students using a ticket system which is managed and distributed by the principal of the school. This service is conducted specially for transport to and from school, on the general public transportation system and for instructional field and sporting trips. Other students use taxis or are transported by private hired buses/taxis. Some schools, including special schools, have their own buses and provide transportation mainly for sporting and instructional or field trips.

Students are to conduct themselves appropriately on all forms of transportation involving school activities. They are prohibited from damaging the buses/taxis and from using or behaving in an obscene or disorderly manner while awaiting or being transported. The driver of the bus/taxi/maxi taxi has the authority and responsibility for maintaining order and providing a safe environment. Potentially harmful situations must be reported by the driver to the principal of the appropriate school.

Many students walk to and from school. Student walkers are prohibited from violating the rights of others including homeowners, apartment dwellers and businesses on their way to and from school.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parent
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven days
- Extended suspension
- Restricted use or loss of transportation services
- Restitution
- In-school suspension
- School community service

Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
2. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VII.*

VANDALISM

Members of the school community are entitled to enjoy a suitable learning environment free from the abuse of others.

Vandalism is the wilful marring, defacing, or destruction of school property, including any employee's or other person's property. This section includes, but is not limited to, the building, both exteriors and interiors thereof, books, computer equipment and software, school buses, private automobiles, school grounds and property as designated above. Causing, intent to cause or attempt to cause damage to school or personal property of others, is prohibited.

Recommended consequences – one or more may apply (for students)

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parent
- Suspension
- Law enforcement agencies
- Court referral
- Restitution
- School community service

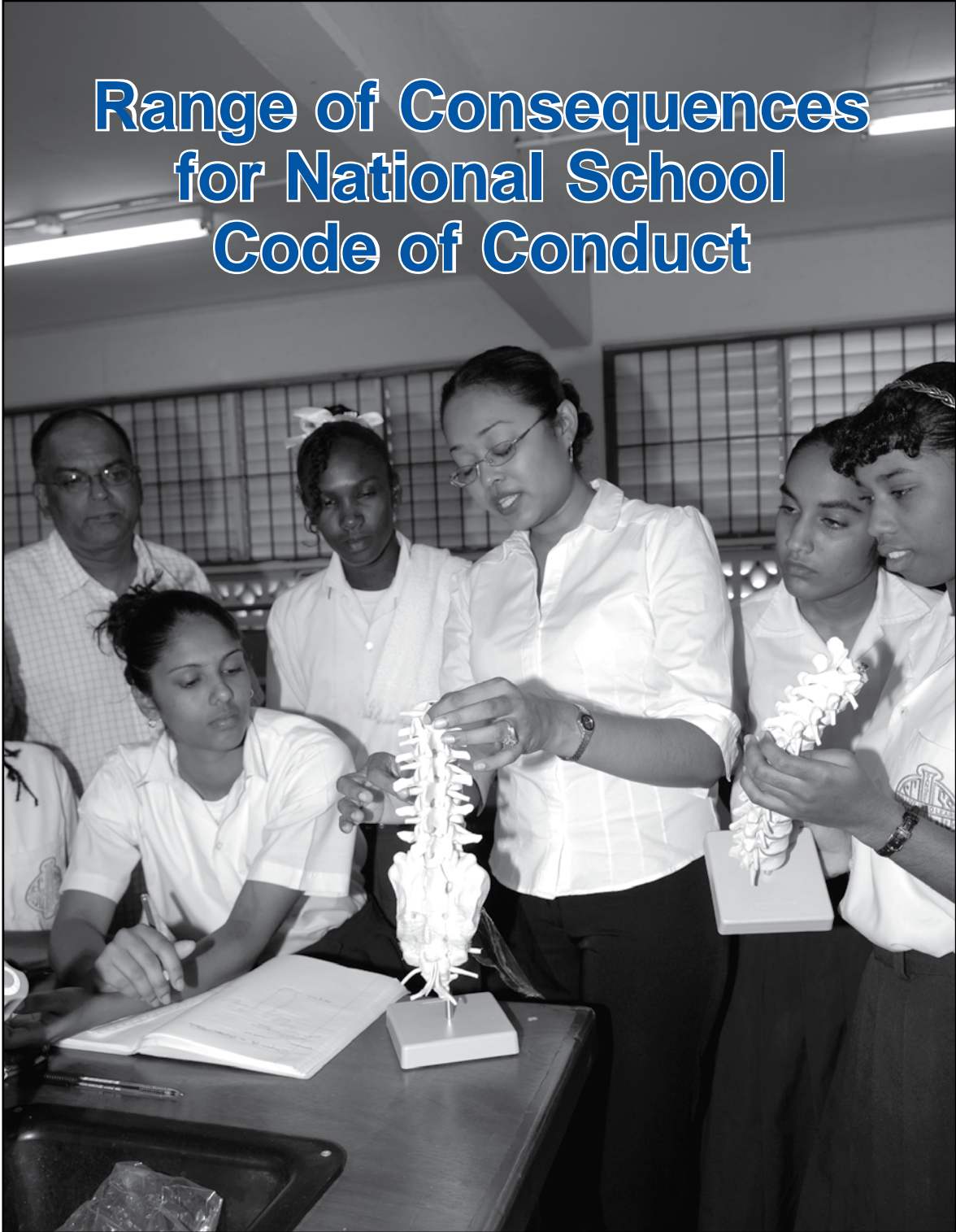
Consequences for other school personnel are contained in the appropriate regulations.

(See Appendix V)

References:

1. *The Education (Teaching Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2000, Part VIII No. 77.*
2. *Public Service Regulations Chapter VIII.*

Range of Consequences for National School Code of Conduct



RANGE OF CONSEQUENCES FOR BREACH OF NATIONAL SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT – STUDENTS –

The following chart shows the consequential actions that may occur for each infraction. A range is given for a first offence, and a separate range for a repeated offence or a serious violation. In determining the appropriate consequence for a violation within the given range, the age of the student and the past pattern of behaviour will be considered. Consequences will be timed and will be appropriate for the student's stage of development.

The document applies to all primary and secondary schools. Each school is authorised to determine specific consequences of guidelines unique to that school that are not in conflict with this code.

Students are subject to discipline for conduct at school, while travelling to and from school, at school sponsored events, while at other schools in the country and while off campus, whenever such conduct has a direct effect on the discipline or general welfare of the school.

If a student has demonstrated excellent behaviour and then becomes involved in an infraction, school officials will consider the student's positive behaviour record prior to taking any action. If a student has continually repeated or been involved in inappropriate conduct, then consequential action will probably be the maximum action listed. For students with diagnosed disabilities, behavioural consequences will be made appropriate taking the disability into consideration.

Consequences specifically forbidden are:

- Corporal punishment
- Use of evaluation procedures as a disciplinary procedure re: arbitrary assigning a test to an individual or class that is behaving inappropriately

Consequences range from:

- Student conference
- Parent contact
- Conference with parent
- Support Services intervention
- Detention
- Suspension up to seven days
- Extended suspension
- Confiscation
- Restitution
- Arrest by law enforcement
- Community service probation

Offence	Occurrence	Minimum	Maximum
ALCOHOL or DRUGS	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Law enforcement Law enforcement
Using, possessing, selling, distributing, soliciting or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, other intoxicants or any look-a-like substances. Possessing any drug paraphernalia.			
ARSON	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Law enforcement Law enforcement
Using fire to destroy or attempt to destroy property. The Fire Department and law enforcement will be notified of any incident.			
ASSAULT	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Law enforcement Law enforcement
Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing physical injury to another.			
BOMB THREATS FALSE ALARMS	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Law enforcement Law enforcement
Law enforcement will be notified of any incident.			
DEFIANCE OF AUTHORITY	First Repeated	Parent conference Parent involvement	Suspension Suspension
Refusal to follow reasonable requests of any school adult and/or designated authority.			
DISORDERLY OR DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT	First Repeated	Informal talk Parent involvement	Suspension Expulsion
Language or behaviour which disrupts and/or interferes with the educational environment or process.			

Offence	Occurrence	Minimum	Maximum
NON COMPLIANCE WITH DRESS CODE	First Repeated	Informal talk Parent involvement	Detention Suspension
The principal, staff and parents are responsible for determining the school uniform. Dress and grooming are primary responsibilities of students and parent/guardians.			
EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Law enforcement Expulsion
The use, or threat of use, possession (carrying or concealing) or sale of explosive material or look-a-like devices. Violation shall result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.			
EXTORTION	First Repeated	Suspension Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
Demanding money, or something of value (e.g., lunches) from another person in return for protection from violence or threat of violence.			
FIGHTING	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
A hostile physical encounter between two or more individuals.			
FIRE STARTING EQUIPMENT	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
Bringing onto school property or possessing any of the following is prohibited: matches, lighters, fuses, or any other device capable of starting fires. Violation may result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency. (Approved materials for science or any such subjects are not included.)			

Offence	Occurrence	Minimum	Maximum
FORGERY	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
Writing or giving false or misleading information to school officials by forging parent's, guardian's or any other person's signature on any letter or other school document, cheating, plagiarising, turning in another person's papers, projects, computer programmes, etc., as the student's own, and/or any other misrepresentation of the truth.			
GAMBLING	First Repeated	Informal talk Suspension	Suspension Suspension
Participating in games of chance for the purpose of exchanging money and other things of value.			
LEWDNESS	First Repeated	Informal talk Suspension	Suspension Suspension
Indecent exposure and/or the use of obscenity, profanity, whether oral, written or gestured.			
INTIMIDATION MENACING	First Repeated	Informal talk Suspension	Suspension Suspension
An intentional, serious threat by word or act (including physical and/or verbal bullying/threatening), which places another person in fear of imminent serious physical injury. This includes, but is not limited to, words or conduct directed toward another person because of their race, gender, colour, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.			
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Suspension
Sexual harassment is prohibited conduct. It may be verbal, visual, written, or physical in nature and includes unwelcome sexual advances.			

Offence	Occurrence	Minimum	Maximum
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	First Repeated	Parental Involvement Suspension	Suspension Law Enforcement Expulsion
Sexual misconduct refers to, but not limited to, all the offences listed in the Sexual Offences Amendment Act.			
TOBACCO or SUBSTITUTES	First Repeated	Conference Detention	Suspension Suspension
The use or possession of tobacco in any form.			
TARDINESS	First Repeated	Informal Talk Conference	Conference Detention
Arriving late to school and/or class.			
TECHNOLOGY MISUSE	First Repeated	Informal Talk Parental Involvement	Suspension Suspension
Failure to comply with the district Electronic Communication Agreement.			
THEFT	First Repeated	Parent Involvement Suspension	Suspension Law Enforcement
Taking, giving, or receiving property not belonging to you. Knowingly possessing any stolen property or property reported lost or missing.			
WEAPONS	ANY	Suspension & Law Enforcement	Law Enforcement Expulsion
Violation shall result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.			

Offence	Occurrence	Minimum	Maximum
TRESPASSING	First Repeated	Informal talk Parental involvement	Suspension Suspension
<p>Being present in unauthorised places or refusing to leave when asked to do so by the district personnel and/or designated authority, entering or remaining unlawfully in school buildings or on any part of school property or adjacent areas.</p>			
UNEXCUSED ABSENCE	First Repeated	Informal talk Parental involvement	Parent involvement Suspension
<p>Any absence which has not been excused by a parent or legal guardian and/or appropriate school official.</p>			
THREAT OF VIOLENCE	First Repeated	Parent involvement Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
<p>Communicating intent to commit serious bodily harm to self or others. Parents of threatened student are to be notified in writing. Violation may result in referral to an appropriate law enforcement agency.</p>			
VANDALISM	First Repeated	Conference Suspension	Suspension Expulsion
<p>Intentionally damaging, defacing, (including tagging/graffiti), or destroying property. Vandalism is the wilful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property. The student and the parent or parents having legal custody of the student may be liable for the amount of the assessed damages not to exceed \$5,000 plus costs, if legal action is required.</p>			

RANGE OF CONSEQUENCES FOR BREACH OF NATIONAL SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT – TEACHERS and PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF –

The procedure to be followed in cases where disciplinary proceedings are brought against any teacher must be in keeping with the Public Service Commissions Regulations, Chapter 1:01, as amended by the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 1990 (Appendix V refers).

- In accordance with Regulation 85 of the Regulations at 1 above, permanent secretaries and heads of departments are given jurisdiction to hear and determine acts of misconduct by civil servants.
- Permanent secretaries and heads of departments are required to report to the Director of Personnel Administration any allegations of misconduct or indiscipline made against members of the teaching service, and in the case of civil servants, any violations of the disciplinary rules other than those which the permanent secretaries and heads of departments have jurisdiction to hear and determine.
- Heads of division/unit and principals are required to submit comprehensive reports on the allegations of misconduct or indiscipline committed by members of their staff to the Permanent Secretary for further action.
- In an effort to prevent any incident from progressing to a level requiring more serious disciplinary action, however, respective officers and/or administrators may address acts of misconduct relative to poor job performance and work conduct through a process of progressive disciplining. The procedural steps in progressive disciplining, which may include counseling, verbal warning, written warning and disciplinary action in accordance with the Public Service Commission regulations, are detailed in Circular memorandum Number 37 dated March 31st 2004.

References

1. *Revised Green Paper on: Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of All Schools (January, 2007)*



Appendix 1**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE CHILD****Rights of the Child**

Every person under the age of 18 born in Trinidad and Tobago, or born to, or adopted by parents who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, is regarded as a child and is subject to care and protection under the law regarding, but not limited to:

1. the right to live, survive and grow;
2. the right to be registered at birth or upon adoption, and to be a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago;
3. the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of age, race, origin, colour, religion or sex;
4. the right not to be discriminated against or punished because of the belief or actions of one's family member;
5. the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by one's parents;
6. the right not to be separated from one's parents against one's will, other than by a court of law;
7. the right to privacy in one's own family home and in respect of one's correspondence;
8. the right to hold ideas of one's own, including religious beliefs and to express those views freely in matters affecting oneself;
9. the right to associate with other people for peaceful purposes;
10. the right not to be treated with violence by a family member, a teacher, a public officer or by any other person;
11. the right to free education up to the age of 12;
12. the right not to have to work at anything that is dangerous or that will interfere with education;
13. where the child has broken the law and is in custody, the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading punishment. A child under the age of eleven giving evidence in a court matter shall not be subject to the laws governing punishment. A child under the age of 11 giving evidence in a court matter shall not be subject to the laws governing perjury and shall have the option of giving evidence by electronic means;
14. the right not to be subject to capital punishment, nor to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole;
15. the right of a child offender not to be placed in custody with adult prisoners.

Responsibilities of the Child

All persons under the age of 18 in Trinidad and Tobago, having the special protection under the law granted to a child, have responsibilities under the law which shall be observed subject to their age and understanding, including, but not limited to the following:

1. to respect and to obey the law;
2. not to take or to harm the property of another person without the person's permission;
3. to learn about human rights and to respect the rights of others;
4. to respect the guidance of parents, except where the law says otherwise;
5. to attend school until the age of 12;
6. to learn about and to respect their culture, language and country;
7. to express their views about matters which affect themselves;
8. to respect the environment;
9. to respect their own religious beliefs and the religious beliefs of others.

Appendix II**GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTING SUSPENSION**

- A. LEGAL FRAMEWORK** - Education Act 1966 Ch. 39 : 01
Section 27 (a) (d)
Section 43 - 46
- B. CIRCULARS** - No. 54 - 27th May 1999
No. 29 - 9th March 1999
No. 4 - 14th January 1997
No. 86 - 20th April 1997
- C. GUIDING PRINCIPLE/PHILOSOPHY**
- Best interest of the child is a primary concern
 - Safety and security of other students, members of staff and all other persons present on the compound.
 - Preventive/protective
 - Not punitive
- D. RESPONSIBILITY OF PRINCIPAL**
- Investigate all reported incidents.
 - Obtain written statements.
 - Must have good reason to believe allegations are true and an offence was committed.
 - Complete prescribed form in triplicate – “Notice of Suspension From Attendance At School”.
 - Notify parents immediately – original copy of completed prescribed form.
 - Notify minister immediately through district office – copy of completed prescribed form accompanied by a preliminary report.
 - A full report including a written narrative of the incident (summary statement), findings of investigation, statements from the aggrieved, the alleged perpetrator and witnesses, must reach the district office within three days of the incident.
 - Student to be removed from school compound at the end of the school day, or during school hours with parent’s consent/knowledge.
 - In case of extended suspension – further investigation after the initial report.
 - Requests for Extended Suspension must be made on the same form (insert extended suspension requested).
 - Notify parent/student of Minister's decision to extend suspension.

The Case Conference:

After an act of serious misconduct by a student:

- (a) Extended suspension is requested by the principal and/or advocated by the school supervisor III, and is formally granted by the Minister of Education following which the student along with his parents/guardians are duly informed.
- (b) At the district level, a case-conference format consisting of a small team, the school supervisor III, guidance officer II, and school representative, should be used as the mechanism for conducting further investigation into the matter.

The suspended student along with his/her parents/guardians should meet with this team.

- (c) The following data should be made available to the team prior to the commencement of the case conference:
 - (i) Student Cumulative Record Card
 - (ii) Progress Report
 - (iii) Principal's/School's Report on the incident.
 - (iv) Student's written version of the incident (where possible)
 - (v) Any diagnostic measures administered by guidance officer/teacher
- (d) The overall objectives of the case conferences should be:
 - (i) To allow the student/parent/guardian an opportunity to review and discuss the allegation of the incident.
 - (ii) To allow the student an opportunity to experience justice and fair play through the process of the case-conference.
 - (iii) To provide the panel with a holistic appraisal of the student so as to act in the student's best interests.
 - (iv) To make recommendations to the Minister on the continuation of the educational development of the student.
- (e) The roles of the various personnel should be as follows:
 - School supervisor III –**
 - Chairperson/investigator of the proceedings.
 - Makes final recommendations to the minister.

School representative –

- Presents general information on the student and clarifies matters surrounding the student's involvement in the alleged incident.

Guidance Officer II –

- Advocates for the student.
- Clinically reviews the student's behaviour and performance.
- Performs a consultative role and makes recommendations to the chairperson, school supervisor III.

- (f) At the end of the case conference, the team confers and appropriate recommendations are made to the minister.

Appendix III**IDENTIFYING WARNING SIGNS
OF POTENTIAL VIOLENCE**

Warning signs mean that a child appears to be troubled, and violence might be one of the possible outcomes of this distress. Do not stigmatise children nor assume that they are violent just because they are at risk for such behaviour, other warning signs may also exist. Consequently, this list should not be considered all inclusive, and certain items and combinations may be far more indicative of a potential problem than others. The signs include:

- Violent behaviour in the past.
- Tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts abnormal for someone that age.
- Anti-social behaviours that began at an early age.
- Maintains friendships with others who have repeatedly engaged in problem behaviours.
- Name-calling, cursing, or abusive language.
- Has brought a weapon or has threatened to bring a weapon to school.
- Violent threats when angry.
- Substance abuse problem.
- Frequent truancy or suspension.
- Preoccupation with weapons or violence, especially associated with killing humans than with target practice or hunting.
- Few or no close friends despite having lived in the area for sometime.
- Sudden decrease in academic performance and/or interest in school activities.
- Abuse to animals.
- Little parental supervision given the pupil's age and level of maturity.
- Victim of abuse or neglect by parents/guardians.
- Repeatedly witnessing domestic abuse or other forms of violence.
- Trauma or loss in their home community.
- No attention to the feelings or rights of others.
- Intimidation of others.

- Victim of intimidation by others.
- Perceived slights, rejection, or mistreatment by others; blames others for his/her problems and appears vengeful.
- Pre-occupation with TV shows, movies, video games, reading materials, or music that express violence.
- Excessive anger in writing objects.
- Involvement in a gang or anti-social group.
- Depression, withdrawn, or severe mood or behavioural swings, which appear to be of greater magnitude, duration, or frequency than those typically experienced by pupils that age.
- Sadistic, violent, prejudicial, or intolerant attitudes.
- Threatened or actually attempted suicide or acts of unfashionable self-mutilation.

References:

http://www.ineesite.org/toolkit/docs/doc_1_HelpingChildrenwithAggressiveBehaviour.pdf.



Appendix IV

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

General Principles

The Ministry of Education has as one of its major goals the provision of a safe, secure learning environment for all the children of the nation. The Education Act, Section 27(a), gives principals the responsibility for supervision of the personal safety of pupils as well as of the school plant.

Health and Safety of Students

1. Proper precautions shall be taken to prevent injuries. All safety equipment and safety features of the facility shall be set in place and properly maintained.
2. The school administration shall ensure that qualified personnel conduct a safety/emergency/disaster drill on a termly basis.
3. The school administration shall ensure that qualified personnel (Fire Services) conduct a review of the safety/emergency/disaster procedures at least annually. Safety inspections of site, buildings, and equipment must be conducted annually.
4. All schools must have an official evacuation site clearly designated and known to all students and staff for use in case of an emergency (fire or bomb threat, etc.). Evacuation to this site must be part of the drill.
5. The school administration shall make arrangements for the school to be sprayed regularly for pests and vermin as necessary. Steps must be taken to ensure that students are not exposed to dangerous chemicals used.
6. The Ministry is working toward compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act.
7. The administration shall ensure that the school environs are kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and conducive to the promotion of good health.
8. The school administration shall provide proper, secure receptacles for the collection of garbage.
9. Water tanks at all schools shall be drained and cleaned on a termly basis and the water quality tested after the tanks are refilled.
10. A safety audit shall be conducted at all schools every two years for schools that are 10 years old or under, and annual safety audits for schools over 10 years old.

Communicable Diseases

1. Notwithstanding any rule of law to the contrary, no person may be admitted into any nursery school or primary school unless he produces to the principal, thereof, a certificate of immunisation with respect to every communicable disease, save that where a person produces a certificate of a medical practitioner certifying that immunisation against any

particular communicable disease or communicable diseases is not advisable on medical grounds, no certificate of immunisation is required to be produced with respect to that communicable disease or those communicable diseases, as the case may be.

2. A principal of any nursery school or primary school who admits any person to such school in contravention of subsection (1) or section 5 is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$1000.

(TT LAWS Ch. 28:03 Sec. 3, s 3. Certificate of immunisation required for admission to nursery schools and primary schools)

Security

1. Premises must be kept secure.
2. Schools shall be assigned an adequate number of security officers in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education. A system must therefore be put in place for ensuring that the allocated number of officers is kept on duty.
3. Security lights shall be strategically placed so as to augment the security on the school compound.
4. The security officers are responsible for the following; inter alia:
 - maintaining a courteous relationship with students and staff while performing their duties scrupulously;
 - investigating security incidents;
 - controlling keys and access to all areas on the compound;
 - preventing the illegal removal of equipment and materials from the compound;
 - preventing unauthorised visitors from entering the compound;
 - recording incidents and reports in the relevant security logs;
 - informing the principals or agents of the Ministry of Education of all incidents and/or reports of loss, theft or damage to property;
 - patrolling the compound at half-hour intervals.
5. Vehicles entering and leaving the compound may be subject to search.
6. Persons entering the school compound are subject to security checks.
7. Any pupil/student leaving the compound during normal school hours must have a written excuse from a parent/guardian and the written permission of the Principal or vice-principal.
8. Any person collecting a child from school during normal school hours must have the written approval of the principal or vice principal.

Reference:

*Revised Green Paper on:
Standards and Guidelines
for the Operation of All
Schools, January, 2007.*

Appendix V

THE EDUCATION (TEACHING SERVICE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2000

TEACHERS CODE OF CONDUCT

General Conduct

Under Section 62 of the 'Regulations', a teacher's conduct shall at times be such as would not bring the Service into disrepute.

Gifts, Rewards

Section 72 stipulates that except with the permission of the permanent secretary, a teacher shall not accept any gift or reward from any member of the public or from any organisation for services rendered in the course of performing official duties.

Section 73 makes the Exception that a teacher may accept a present offered:

- (a) by a representative of a foreign government on the occasion of an official visit to that country;
- (b) by a community organisation on a social occasion where the gift represents the work or achievement of that organisation; or
- (c) on his marriage, retirement, transfer, or other social or celebratory occasion.

Accepting Bribes

Under Section 74 of the Regulations:

- (1) A teacher shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any property, benefit or favour of any kind for himself or any other person in consideration for the performance of his duties or on the understanding that the performance of his duties is influenced in any manner.
- (2) A teacher who is offered a bribe shall immediately inform his principal in writing, and the principal so informed, shall notify the permanent secretary who will make the report to the police.

Definition of Misconduct

According to Section 77 of the Regulations, a teacher commits an act of misconduct when:

(1) Without reasonable excuse does an act which-

- (a) amounts to failure to perform any required lawful duty in a proper manner;
- (b) contravenes any of the Regulations;

- (c) contravenes any law relating to the performance of the duties of this office;
- (d) is otherwise prejudicial to the efficient conduct of the Service or tends to bring the Service into disrepute.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of sub regulations (1), a teacher commits an act of misconduct if he/she:

- (a) is absent from office or official duties without leave or valid excuse, or is habitually irregular in the time of arrival or departure from the place of employment;
- (b) wilfully disobeys or disregards any lawful order made or given by any person having authority to make or give such order;
- (c) is unfit for duty through drunkenness or the illicit use of drugs;
- (d) is inefficient or incompetent through causes which are within his control;
- (e) commits any immoral, obscene or disorderly conduct in office;
- (f) performs the required duties in a negligent manner;
- (g) exercises authority unreasonably, or abuses that authority in the course of performing required duties;
- (h) uses, without the authority of the principal or in his/her absence the vice-principal, any property or facilities provided for the purposes of the service, for a purpose not connected with his official duties;
- (i) has a criminal charge proved against him/her; or
- (j) participates in the meeting of any political organisation while on duty or while on official business.

References:

Revised Green Paper on: Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of All Schools (January, 2007)

National School Code of Conduct

May 2009

Ministry of Education
18 Alexandra Street, St. Clair
Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

