



## MEDIA RELEASE

January 27, 2026

Dear Editor/ Head of Department

### **Ministry of Education Reaffirms Commitment to Safe, Secure and Ongoing Learning**

The Ministry of Education wishes to assure parents, guardians and the wider public that schools across Trinidad and Tobago continue to operate in a safe and secure manner, with learning activities ongoing in all education districts.

Attendance data reflects steady student participation nationwide, with the majority of enrolled students present for instruction. The Ministry of Education confirms that all 143 operational Government and Government-Assisted Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres remain open, with curriculum delivery actively underway.

Additionally, several Primary and Secondary education districts have recorded encouraging levels of student attendance. In particular, Caroni and St. George East reported good student turnout, while Victoria and South Eastern also demonstrated positive levels of both teacher and student presence.

The Ministry further advises that only one per cent (1%) of Primary and Secondary schools experienced early dismissal, underscoring the overall stability and continuity of operations across the education system.

The National Schools Dietary Services Limited (NDSL) continues to provide meals to students, with approximately 56,000 breakfasts served, representing around 90% coverage, and approximately 57,000 lunches served, representing around 75% coverage as of January 27th, 2026. No incidents or security threats have been reported, and we remain committed to ensuring the safety of our schools through ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Education's security systems and the Police in Schools initiative.

The Ministry of Education has noted a recent variation in teacher attendance, which differs from the usual trend of approximately 91%. The collective agreement between the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA) for the period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2023 has been fully ratified, and all necessary implementation guidance has been issued by the relevant authorities. The agreement is now firmly in the implementation phase. As such, there is no indication that any withdrawal of labour is warranted at this time.

Teachers occupy a vital role of public trust, with responsibilities that extend beyond contractual matters to include professional, ethical and moral obligations to the students in their care. Actions that interrupt the school day can have far-reaching effects on students' learning, place additional strain on parents and families, and impact the overall stability of the education system.

This is a particularly critical period in the Academic Calendar. The Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (approximately eight weeks away), and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations commence on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Disruptions at this time risk disadvantaging students at key transitional and certification stages of their education.

As stated by the Minister of Education, Dr. the Hon. Michael Dowlath, "*We remain steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding the education of our nation's children, and we expect all stakeholders to uphold this shared responsibility.*" Minister Dowlath added, "*I take this time to sincerely thank the many teachers who reported for duty and continue to support students' learning, particularly during this sensitive period in the academic calendar. Your actions reflect a strong sense of professional responsibility, duty of care, and commitment to student success.*"

The Ministry therefore expects all teachers to report for duty and ensure that schools remain open and fully operational. The continuity of teaching and learning is non-negotiable, particularly for vulnerable students who rely on the stability and support of the school system.

The Ministry emphasises that student safety and well-being remain paramount. School environments remain safe, supervised and secure, and established protocols continue to be observed to ensure the smooth functioning of daily operations.

The Ministry will take all necessary steps to safeguard the education of students and to maintain the orderly functioning of schools nationwide.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to continue sending students to school, as the Ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to providing a stable, supportive and secure learning environment for all.

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