



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Education

National School Code of Conduct

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Foreword

National School Code of Conduct

A safe, orderly, and respectful school environment is fundamental to the success of any education system. Schools must be places where students are able to learn without fear or disruption, where teachers are supported in the exercise of their professional responsibilities, and where the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning are consistently maintained.

The National School Code of Conduct (NSCC) has been established to support these objectives by providing a clear framework that guides behaviour, promotes mutual respect, and reinforces the shared responsibilities of all members of the school community.

Education extends beyond the transmission of academic knowledge. It is also concerned with the development of character, responsibility, and citizenship. Schools therefore serve not only as centres of learning, but also as communities in which values such as respect, accountability, integrity, and self-discipline must be cultivated and sustained. The standards that govern behaviour within schools must reflect these principles while ensuring that the rights and well-being of every student and member of staff are protected.

The NSCC sets out clear expectations for behaviour within the school environment and establishes a structured framework for addressing misconduct in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. By defining acceptable standards of conduct and outlining procedures for responding to disciplinary matters, the NSCC provides essential guidance to principals, teachers, students, and parents alike.

At the same time, the NSCC recognises that discipline must always serve the broader purpose of supporting the growth and development of students. While accountability for behaviour is necessary to maintain order and safety, it must be exercised in a manner that is proportionate, respectful of due process, and mindful of the best interests of the child. For this reason, the NSCC incorporates principles that encourage early intervention, restorative practices, and constructive support for students who may be experiencing behavioural or social challenges.

The contemporary school environment is also shaped by significant social and technological change. The widespread use of digital devices and online platforms has introduced new dimensions of interaction that extend beyond the physical classroom. Issues such as cyberbullying, the misuse of digital technologies, and inappropriate online conduct can have serious consequences for the well-being of students and the integrity of the learning environment. The NSCC therefore provides guidance on responsible digital behaviour and emphasises the importance of ethical and respectful conduct in both physical and virtual learning spaces.

Maintaining positive school climates is a shared responsibility. While schools play a central role in guiding student behaviour, the partnership between educators and families remains essential. Parents and guardians are critical partners in reinforcing the values and expectations that underpin a disciplined and respectful learning environment. When schools and families work

collaboratively, students are better supported in developing the attitudes and behaviours necessary for both academic success and responsible citizenship.

This NSCC therefore serves not simply as a regulatory instrument, but as a framework that promotes a culture of respect, responsibility, and accountability within our schools. By establishing clear expectations and consistent standards across the education system, it contributes to strengthening the conditions under which meaningful learning can take place.

The Ministry of Education expresses its appreciation to the many educators, administrators, policy specialists, and stakeholders whose insights and experience informed the development of this document. Their contributions reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that our schools remain environments in which students are supported, teachers are empowered, and learning can flourish.

It is my sincere expectation that the NSCC will guide the continued cultivation of safe, disciplined, and supportive school communities across Trinidad and Tobago, enabling every student to benefit from an environment that is conducive to learning, personal growth, and the development of responsible citizenship.

Dr. Michael R. Dowlath

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Minister of Education
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Executive Summary

The National School Code of Conduct (NSCC) is a foundational policy framework developed by the Ministry of Education to promote safe, secure, inclusive, and disciplined learning environments in all schools across Trinidad and Tobago. Rooted in the principles of child protection, equity, and the best interest of the child, the NSCC establishes a consistent national standard for student behaviour, outlines the responsibilities of school personnel and stakeholders, and provides clear guidance for managing misconduct in Primary and Secondary Schools.

This revised edition (2026) of the NSCC reflects significant legislative, technological, and social developments that have influenced the education sector. It incorporates updated legal requirements including the *Children Act, 2012*, the *Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28*, Section 31(1), as amended by the *Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019*, and *Data Protection Act, 2011*, and addresses contemporary issues such as cyber-safety, digital citizenship, child protection, and school-based criminal activity. Additionally, this version merges the 2018 NSCC, the School Discipline Matrix, and the Follow-up Measures for Student Re-integration as a single unified document to improve clarity, accessibility and ease of use for all stakeholders. In applying this Discipline Matrix, schools shall expressly consider and document the age, developmental stage, disability status, prior interventions, and individual circumstances of the student.

In response to a marked increase in violent incidents and serious infractions in schools, with over 22,000 suspensions recorded between 2022 and 2025, and to recent policy shifts, this NSCC firmly enshrines a zero-tolerance approach. This approach applies to acts of violence, possession of illegal items, assault, and criminal behaviour, particularly where the safety of students or staff is compromised. Such acts will result in swift and proportionate disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, and referral to law enforcement and child protection agencies.

The NSCC also defines the roles and responsibilities of new and existing categories of safety personnel. School Health Safety and Security Officers (SHSSOs) support Principals in implementing school-specific safety plans, patrolling premises, managing risk, responding to emergencies, and promoting secure school environments. School-Oriented Police Officers deployed to high-risk schools are responsible for enforcing criminal law, responding to serious incidents, and coordinating with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and support services. They are required to uphold students' rights, operate within the law, and support restorative efforts where appropriate.

The NSCC is designed to support school leaders, teachers, parents, and support personnel in creating environments where students feel safe, respected, and can thrive academically and socially. It balances the need for structure and accountability with a rehabilitative ethos, ensuring that every child's right to education and dignity is protected while preserving the integrity and safety of the school system

Introduction

This National School Code of Conduct (NSCC) is issued by the Ministry of Education to provide guidance on the expected standards of behaviour and discipline in all primary and secondary schools within Trinidad and Tobago. Its purpose is to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment.

The NSCC is a guideline and does not in itself create legal rights or obligations, nor does it establish any criminal liability and does not override or modify any law, regulation, or contractual obligation, including, without limitation, the Education Act, any regulations made under it or collective agreements, affecting teachers or students.

School personnel including principals, teachers, and administrative officers, retain full discretion in the exercise of disciplinary and administrative powers, subject to applicable law. The guidance provided by the NSCC is intended to assist in the exercise of this discretion, not to prescribe mandatory action. School authorities may depart from the guidance where circumstances justify it, provided decisions remain reasonable, fair, and consistent with law.

This NSCC is to be used in conjunction with applicable laws, regulations, and school policies. It is intended to serve as a benchmark of best practice regarding the standards of conduct, disciplinary procedures, and measures to be applied, and adherence to it is encouraged to ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency in school governance in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Importance of a Comprehensive National School Code of Conduct

A well-defined and consistently enforced NSCC is essential to the effective functioning of the education system. It establishes a common understanding of expected behaviours, promotes accountability, and ensures equity and fairness in disciplinary processes. By articulating clear standards and consequences, the NSCC cultivates a positive and respectful school culture, minimises disruption to teaching and learning, and safeguards the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of all members of the school community.

In particular, the NSCC empowers school leaders, middle managers, teachers, support staff, and parents by providing them with a shared framework for creating and maintaining safe, orderly, and productive school environments. It ensures that all responses to student misconduct are proportionate, legally compliant, and consistent with both the rights of the child and the broader objective of public safety.

Unless otherwise expressly stated, all references in this NSCC to zero-tolerance, suspension, expulsion, police referral, removal from school, or other serious disciplinary measures shall be interpreted as:

- (a) subject to due process and procedural fairness;
- (b) proportionate to the offence and the age, developmental stage, and circumstances of the

student;

(c) consistent with the best interests of the child; and

(d) where applicable, requiring referral to and decision by the Minister of Education in accordance with the Education Act.

Context: Triggers for Revision

This revised NSCC is a direct response to several critical developments that have reshaped the educational and social landscape of Trinidad and Tobago. These developments necessitated a comprehensive review to ensure legal compliance, operational relevance, and a robust response to emerging threats.

These include:

- **The Imperative for Zero-Tolerance:** Suspension data from 2022 to 2025 reveals an alarming increase in school violence. Infractions categorised as “fight without weapon” and “assault without weapon” have become increasingly prevalent. The highest incidence occurs during unsupervised periods such as lunch and after-school hours. This disturbing trend underscores the urgent need for a zero-tolerance approach to acts of violence, possession of illegal items, and other severe misconduct that endanger the safety and integrity of the school environment. This NSCC reinforces the position of the Ministry of Education that such behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances and shall result in firm and immediate disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, and referral to law enforcement and child protection agencies.
- **New and Revised Legislation:** The introduction and amendment of key statutes impacting child protection and school safety – such as the *Children Act, 2012*, the *Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1)*, as amended by the *Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019*, and *Data Protection Act, 2011* – require the full integration of the NSCC with existing legal frameworks and mandatory procedures.
- **Pervasiveness of Digital Technologies:** The widespread use of the internet, mobile devices, and social media has led to new forms of misconduct such as cyberbullying, data breaches, and online exploitation. The NSCC addresses these challenges by establishing safeguards for online conduct and data privacy, thereby ensuring student safety both in and outside the classroom.
- **Evolving Educational Approaches:** Educational policy in Trinidad and Tobago has increasingly shifted towards School-Based Management, positive parenting strategies, and evidence-based interventions. As a result, the NSCC incorporates a modern approach to school discipline: combining restorative practices and inclusive supports with strong deterrents against violence and disruptive behaviour.

Consequently, this revised document provides a responsive, balanced, and enforceable framework for behaviour management. It affirms the zero-tolerance commitment to violence, illegal activity, and threats to school security, by the Ministry of Education while ensuring that all disciplinary measures remain grounded in the best interests of the child, human dignity, and the right to education.

Principles & Core Values



Principles and Core Values

The NSCC was developed relying upon foundational core values and overarching principles that guide all interactions, decisions, and actions within the school community. These principles and values apply equally to all Ministry of Education and School Personnel, as well as other members of the school community, fostering a shared commitment to a safe, respectful, and inclusive educational environment.

Core Values

1. **Respect:** Demonstrating consideration for the rights, property, and safety of oneself and others, including respect for diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, and personal space.
2. **Responsibility:** Accepting personal accountability for one's actions and their impact on the school environment and making amends where harm is caused.
3. **Rights:** Upholding the fundamental rights of all members of the school community, especially the rights of children as enshrined in national and international law.
4. **Integrity:** Acting with honesty, fairness, and adherence to ethical standards, including academic honesty and transparency in all interactions.
5. **Courtesy:** Engaging with others politely and civilly and preserving the dignity of all individuals.
6. **Productivity and Performance:** Striving for excellence in all areas of work and learning and recognising and valuing the contributions of others.

Overarching Principles

7. **Best Interest of the Child:** All actions and decisions affecting students must prioritise their holistic well-being, development, and reintegration into the school community, rather than focusing solely on punishment.
8. **Human Dignity:** Discipline must be administered respectfully, avoiding humiliation or degradation, and must be consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited.
9. **Equity and Non-Discrimination:** All students are entitled to fair and equal treatment, free from bias based on race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, or other status.
10. **Proportionality:** Disciplinary measures must be proportionate to the severity and nature of the infraction, balancing accountability with opportunities for learning and growth.

Approaches to School Discipline



Approaches to School Discipline

The Ministry of Education adopts a student-centred approach to discipline, aiming to create a school environment that supports academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social responsibility. Effective discipline addresses root causes of misbehaviour, teaches positive behaviour, fosters community involvement, and provides constructive role models. The approaches below are intended to operate in a complementary manner, with an emphasis on prevention, support, and rehabilitation.

A. Restorative Practices (RP)

RP focuses on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and reintegrating students into the school community after incidents of wrongdoing. This approach engages all affected parties – especially those harmed – in identifying needs, responsibilities, and solutions. Positive outcomes depend on visible leadership commitment and ongoing staff training.

B. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL develops students' ability to understand and manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. It should be integrated across the curriculum and reinforced through daily interactions. Key competencies include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (*refer to Appendix F for more details*).

C. Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is a proactive framework that sets clear behavioural expectations, provides tiered supports, and uses data to monitor progress. It engages students, families, and communities in co-creating culturally responsive practices, ensuring consistent implementation and positive school climate (*refer to Appendix G for more details*).

D. Retributive Justice (RJ)

RJ focuses on rule enforcement through punitive measures such as zero-tolerance policies, suspensions, and expulsions. While it can deter certain behaviours, overreliance on this approach may negatively impact student engagement and long-term outcomes. It should be applied selectively, in alignment with child protection principles and proportionality.

Guidelines for Application of Disciplinary Approaches

Retributive Measures (Suspension and/or Expulsion)

These should be applied when:

- The offence falls under the zero-tolerance category, such as possession of weapons, violent assault, sexual misconduct, or trafficking of illicit substances.
- There is a clear and present danger to the safety and security of the school community.
- The behaviour constitutes a criminal act under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.
- The student has engaged in repeated severe infractions despite prior restorative or supportive interventions, demonstrating unwillingness or inability to comply with behavioural expectations.

All acts should involve some form of restoration; however, the severity of the incident will determine if the above options will be utilised.

Restorative or Supportive Interventions

These should be prioritised when:

- The misconduct, while inappropriate, does not threaten the physical safety of others.
- The student demonstrates willingness to accept responsibility and participate in repairing harm.
- The root cause of behaviour is linked to personal, social, or academic challenges that can be addressed through counselling, mentoring, or targeted support.
- The goal is to reintegrate the student successfully into the school community while maintaining accountability.

Integrated Approach

A combined strategy may be used when:

- The misconduct is serious but not in the zero-tolerance category, and both immediate accountability and long-term behavioural change are required.
- Restorative processes are paired with proportionate consequences (e.g., temporary suspension with mandatory re-entry meeting, community service, or participation in behaviour-improvement programmes).

Students



Students

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of behaviour outlined in the NSCC and the integrated Discipline Matrix. This includes abiding by all expectations, guidelines, and rules established by the school in alignment with the NSCC, including those related to digital citizenship and online interactions. These standards of behaviour promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, and failure to comply may result in disciplinary measures as outlined in the Discipline Matrix.

The standards of behaviour for students are:

1. Attending school regularly and punctually, including during examinations. Students must be prepared for all classes and participate fully in all school activities. Unexcused absences or chronic lateness will be addressed under attendance infractions in the Discipline Matrix.
2. Treating all staff, fellow students, and visitors with respect, courtesy, and integrity. Behaving in a manner that does not interfere with the rights of others, including their right to learn in a safe and respectful environment, is essential. Actions that constitute harassment, discrimination, or bullying are subject to corrective or punitive measures under behavioural infractions.
3. Complying immediately with all lawful instructions from school staff. Defiance or wilful disobedience will be addressed under insubordination in the Discipline Matrix.
4. Maintaining a safe learning environment by refraining from physical violence, threats, possession of weapons, or illicit substances. These are categorised as zero-tolerance offences and will result in immediate punitive action, including possible suspension or expulsion.
5. Caring for school property and the property of others. Acts of vandalism or theft will be addressed under property-related infractions in the Discipline Matrix.
6. Dressing in accordance with the approved school uniform policy. Non-compliance will be addressed under uniform and appearance infractions.
7. Using technology, including school devices and networks responsibly and only for educational purposes. Students must respect online privacy and refrain from cyberbullying, understanding the implications of inappropriate cyber-related behaviours. Misuse of technology will be addressed under digital misconduct in the Discipline Matrix.
8. Engaging in honest academic practices by completing all school assignments and homework, and by avoiding cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations will be addressed under academic misconduct.
9. Contributing actively to a positive school climate through empathy and conflict resolution skills, aligning with the aims of education outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 29.

Positive Behaviour Matrix (PBM) for Students – Expectations by Setting

Positive behaviour means making good choices, treating yourself and others with respect, taking responsibility for what you do, and helping to keep school safe and collegial for everyone.

Setting	Expectations	Respect	Responsibility	Integrity	Community
Assembly / Student-led Assembly	Line up appropriately and quietly	Stand at attention for the National Anthem/National Pledge/National Prayer	Be present on time	Learn all that is presented during assembly-time	Actively participate in assembly
	Practise all that is taught during assembly-time	Be active team members			
Class Time	Wait your turn to speak	Raise your hand and wait to be called	Ask before using someone's property	Use your inside voices	Allow others to learn
	Listen when others speak	Bring learning materials to class	Show respect for teacher's instructions	Complete work on time	Ask for help if needed
	Be honest	Be responsible for your behaviour	Take pride in doing your best	Work together so that all will learn	Help those who may need additional assistance
	Respect others' opinions and contributions				
Break Time	Line up in an orderly manner at the cafeteria	Do not place your feet on the desks and chairs	Include others	Respect your peers' choices	Be a good sport
	Show respect for others' space and belongings	Report issues to a teacher/trusted adult		Play by the rules	Be a team player and show sportsmanship
Dismissal	Follow directions of teachers/ trusted adult	Use the sidewalk	Wait for the bell	Exit classroom orderly	Clean up your trash
	Responsible for personal actions	Use appropriate language, volume and tone	Help others		

Setting	Expectations	Respect	Responsibility	Integrity	Community
Online/ Digital	Only talk to trusted persons online	Get permission from authorised persons before posting things online	Keep personal information private	Be mindful of the privacy of others	Carry devices sensibly
	Use devices for learning	Use personal login	Care for devices properly	Create content that can be shared with teacher or peers	Avoid creating/posting harmful content
		Speak up when things do not seem right	Use school approved applications	Utilise resources for schoolwork only	
All the Time	Listen attentively	Consider others' point of view	Choose not to bully or tease	Do not be judgemental	Be kind to others
	Team player/ Sportsmanship	Report anything that makes you feel uneasy or unsafe to teacher/trusted adult	Complete homework on time	Attend school every day	Stay within school boundary
	Think before acting	Wear the correct school uniform	Be resilient	Keep the classroom clean	Allow others to participate
	Treat others as you would like to be treated	Be honest at school and outside	Be mindful of others' values and beliefs	Encourage and support others	Make good choices for the benefit of everyone

Standards of Behaviour for Students

Attendance/Regularity and Punctuality: Why They Matter

Punctuality and regularity in attendance are integral to fostering an effective teaching and learning environment and are directly related to student success. Consequently, it is an expectation that students maintain punctual and regular attendance to school, classes, and all school-related activities.

Attendance

For students, irregular attendance is defined as being absent for more than five (5) days without reasonable excuse within a four-week period (20 days) of the school term.

Punctuality

Students are required to be on time for school and all school-related activities.

Dress Code and Grooming Guidelines for Students

- Wearing of the school uniform in conformity with school guidelines is required unless other attire is authorised by the school administration in keeping with Ministry of Education guidelines.
- Personal grooming should be modest and clean.
- Students should refrain from the excessive use of perfume or cologne: strong fragrances can be distracting or cause discomfort for others.
- Students must follow the dress code and are not allowed to have a physical appearance or wear clothing and accessories that are:
 - Disruptive
 - Provocative
 - Revealing, profane or vulgar
 - Offensive or obscene
 - Dangerous to his/her health or safety, or the health or safety of others

Disciplinary action will be taken for not wearing the school uniform as required and for not following the expected dress code and grooming rules of the school.

National School Hair Code: What You Need to Know

These guidelines aim to ensure that all students maintain neat, clean, and appropriate hairstyles for the school environment. Individual schools are mandated to form a committee to determine their School Hair Rules, which must align with the National School Hair Code.

Key Guidelines:

- **Cleanliness & Neatness:** Hair should always be neat and clean.
- **Length & Safety:** If hair goes past the shoulders, it must be always tied back for safety.
- **Approved Styles:** Styles like locs, twists, plaits, afros, and cornrows are allowed for all students. These styles follow the specific hair rules of the school.
- **Hair Extensions (Female Students):** Female students can wear hair extensions, including weaves and braids, if they comply with the hair rules of the school.
- **Wigs and Dyed Hair:** Generally, wigs and dyed or coloured hair are not allowed. In very special circumstances, the school principal may grant approval.
- **Visibility:** Hairstyles that block others' view are not permitted, unless there is a specific religious reason.
- **Eyebrows & Eyelashes:** Eyebrow markings and eyelash extensions are not allowed.
- **Haircut Designs:** Designs in haircuts must be simple. Intricate designs are not permitted.
- **Hair Ornaments:** Any hair ornaments must follow the individual hair rules of the school.

Examinations: Internal and External

Sanctions for internal examinations differ to that of external examinations.

Key Internal Examination Policies:

- **Cheating:** All forms of cheating, including plagiarism, are strictly prohibited.
- **Mandatory Attendance & Punctuality:** Students must attend all examinations and be punctual.
- **Excused Absences:** If a student misses an internal examination, parents or guardians must submit a written excuse.
- **Equal Opportunity:** Every student will be given the opportunity to write internal examinations.
- **No Unauthorised Devices:** Cellular phones or any other electronic devices that could provide an unfair advantage or access external information are not allowed in examination rooms. This applies to both internal and external examinations.
- **Misconduct in Internal Examinations:** A student found guilty of misconduct, unfair, or dishonest practice may have that examination paper cancelled, or marks deducted.
- **Fair Assessment Practices:** Any act designed to alter a student's actual performance when setting, administering, marking, or reporting on tests is strictly prohibited.

An Examination Committee shall be established to adjudicate matters related to internal examinations. In carrying out its functions, the Committee shall consider the purpose of assessment at the school level, including the analysis of student performance data to inform curriculum enactment, and shall ensure that decisions reflect valid and reliable judgements of student achievement, in accordance with the principles of natural justice, reasonable action, and academic integrity.

External Examinations

CXC Regulations: Students found in possession of past CXC Multiple Choice question papers or "live" CXC question papers (exams not yet administered), whether knowingly or unknowingly, are in breach of Caribbean Examination Council Regulations and will face appropriate penalties.

Confidentiality of External Exams: Gaining unauthorised access to actual questions on external examination papers or divulging or attempting to divulge such information before the official exam start, is prohibited and will incur appropriate penalties.

Further information can be accessed at < <https://www.cxc.org/regulations-and-penalties/> >.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated verbal, physical, social, or emotional behaviour intended to harm, intimidate, humiliate, or exert power and control over another person. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

General Standard

All members of the school community shall be treated with dignity and respect. Behaviour that undermines the safety, well-being, or rights of others is strictly prohibited.

Standards Related to Types of Bullying

Cyberbullying

Digital devices and online platforms must be used responsibly. The use of electronic communication to threaten, harass, intimidate, exclude, embarrass, or harm others, including the sending of messages, posting of content, or misuse of online tools, is prohibited.

Physical Bullying

Acts of physical aggression, including but not limited to hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, or pushing, are prohibited. Students must also respect the personal property of others; deliberate damage, theft, or misuse of property is not permitted.

Social Bullying

Behaviours intended to harm another person's social relationships or reputation are unacceptable. This includes spreading rumours or false information, engaging in gestures, jokes, or mimicry designed to embarrass or humiliate, and encouraging or pressuring others to socially exclude a peer.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal behaviours such as insults, name-calling, teasing, threats, or intimidation are not tolerated. Racist, homophobic, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory language is prohibited. All communication regarding others' appearance, lifestyle choices, abilities, or backgrounds must be respectful.

Disruptive Behaviour: What's Not Allowed

Everyone at school deserves to learn and work without unnecessary interruptions. This means that any physical, written, or verbal actions, communications, or activities that disturb teaching or the orderly flow of school activities, whether on school grounds or during school-related events are not allowed.

Gambling

Gambling will not be tolerated. This includes any activity where people bet money or items of value on chance.

Inappropriate Materials

Wearing jewellery or other items that convey violent, sexually suggestive, or offensive messages is prohibited. One cannot have or share any printed or electronic materials that are obscene, violent, inappropriate, or significantly disruptive to learning. This includes threats, "hit lists," inappropriate toys, and unauthorised literature. Breaches in some of the above rules could lead to prosecution under Part VIII of the Children Act of 2012.

Offensive Language

Using obscene, vulgar, insulting, or abusive language, or making threats or remarks meant to disrespect anyone in the school community is prohibited. This also applies to displaying or sharing obscene, violent, or inappropriate content.

Insubordination

All students must follow directions from school staff or law enforcement officers. Disobeying or defying reasonable requests from school personnel is not allowed.

Keeping Schools Safe: Policies on Serious Misconduct

The Ministry of Education is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for everyone. The following actions are strictly prohibited due to their criminal nature and potential to harm the school community.

The Ministry of Education adopts a zero-tolerance to such violations.

Arson

Arson is a serious offence that directly threatens the safety and the well-being of school personnel.

The following are strictly forbidden on school property or at school-sponsored events:

- **Using or Threatening to Use Explosives/Devices:** This includes using, planning to use, or threatening to use any explosive device or anything that looks like one. Examples include fireworks, smoke bombs, stink bombs, scratch bombs, or any device that could contribute to a fire.
- **Starting Fires or Using Flammable Materials:** This includes using any materials (like matches, lighters, or aerosol sprays) with the intent to start a fire on school property as well as setting fire to anything belonging to students, staff, or volunteers.

Dangerous Objects and Firearms

Bringing, having, using, or even pretending to use the following items on school property, at school events, or on school transportation is strictly prohibited:

- **Weapons and Dangerous Objects:** This includes, but is not limited to, knives, box cutters, other sharp objects, mace, ammunition, fireworks, stink bombs, and any item that looks like it could be a weapon.
- **"Look-Alike" Weapons:** These include items like cap guns, squirt guns, toy pistols, or comb knives.
- **Firearms, whether loaded or unloaded, working or not:** This includes storing them in bags, lockers, or anywhere else. This also applies to any device considered a firearm under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

Note on Authorised Objects: Some items, like mathematical instruments or tools for technology classes, are allowed when used for their intended purpose. However, misusing these items will be treated as a serious violation.

Fighting, Assault, and Threats

The following are strictly forbidden on school property or at school-sponsored events:

- Threats or Inciting Fights: This includes making threats or encouraging others to fight through actions, comments, or written messages (including those on social media).
- Physical Harm or Interference: Intentionally hitting, shoving, scratching, biting, kicking, blocking someone's path, or throwing objects at anyone from the school staff.
- Threats of Harm or Hostile Acts: Using gestures, notes, or spoken words to indicate an intent to cause bodily harm, to deny a person's rights, or showing hostile behaviour.
- Fighting: Engaging in a conflict with two or more parties where they are striking each other with the intent to cause harm or injury. This also includes mutual shoving, wrestling, or other aggressive actions that could harm anyone involved, bystanders, or school property.
- Intentional Physical Violence: Wilfully using physical violence that aims to cause bodily injury or using a dangerous object to try and cause bodily injury.
- Assault on Staff: Any form of assault upon a member of staff or other school personnel. Breaking this rule will lead to an automatic recommendation for suspension and potential expulsion.
- Threats or Abuse Against Students/Staff: Wilfully using physical or verbal threats, or physical abuse, with the intent to cause bodily harm to students or school personnel.
- Extortion: Using physical or verbal threats or abuse that results in an involuntary transfer of money or property to another student.
- Unsafe Conduct: Any behaviour that puts oneself or others in danger.
- Terrorist Threats: Making threats to engage in terrorist acts or related statements.

Gang Activity

Participation in gang activity, including membership, recruitment (especially of minors), intimidation, and use or possession of weapons in furtherance of gang-related offences, is strictly forbidden on school property, during school events, and at any time while representing the school. This includes wearing clothing or symbols associated with gangs, participating in gang rituals, or engaging in activities by an identified group. These activities constitute serious criminal offences under the *Anti-Gang Act, 2021*, and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including suspension, referral to law enforcement, and possible expulsion.

All school personnel have a mandatory obligation to report any suspected gang membership, gang recruitment, or gang-related activities to the principal and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service immediately, in accordance with the Anti-Gang Act. Failure to report may constitute a legal offence.

The school shall maintain vigilance for any activities that may indicate gang recruitment or involvement, particularly targeting minors. Prevention efforts will be coordinated with law

enforcement agencies and community groups, consistent with Anti-Gang Act provisions protecting children and promoting safe school environments.

Misconduct during Official Transportation

Many students use various forms of transportation to get to and from school, as well as for school-related trips like instructional field trips and sporting events. These include buses and maxi taxis provided by the Ministry of Education (through the Public Transport Service Corporation), private taxis, hired buses, and school-owned buses.

When using any form of transportation related to school activities when in school uniform, students must behave appropriately. The following are prohibited:

- Damaging Property: Damaging or defacing buses, taxis, or any other transport vehicle.
- Disorderly Conduct: Behaving in an obscene or disorderly manner while waiting for or being transported.
- Obscene Language: Using obscene language on any form of transportation.
- Violating Rights: Violating the rights of homeowners, apartment dwellers, other pedestrians, students, or businesses while traveling to and from school.

The driver of any bus, taxi, or maxi taxi has the authority and responsibility to maintain order and ensure a safe environment. Any potentially harmful situations must be reported by the driver to the relevant school principal.

Vandalism

Members of the school community are entitled to enjoy a pleasant environment that supports productivity. Vandalism negatively affects this environment and will not be tolerated.

Vandalism is intentionally damaging or defacing any property connected to the school. This includes:

- The school buildings
- Books, computer equipment, and software
- School buses
- Private cars on school property
- School grounds
- Any property belonging to school employees or other individuals at school

Causing, intending to cause, or attempting to cause damage to school property or someone's personal property at school is against the rules and laws and will not be tolerated.

Keeping Our Schools Safe and Healthy: Substance Abuse Policy

The Ministry of Education is committed to providing a safe, smoke-free, alcohol-free, and drug-free environment for everyone in its schools. This commitment is part of a broader goal to support the holistic development and well-being of all children.

This Means for Our School Environment: No Illegal Drugs, Unauthorised Alcohol, or Dangerous Homemade Mixtures:

- No one is allowed to have illegal drugs on school property for any reason, whether for personal use or trafficking.
- The use of alcohol and cigarettes is strictly prohibited on all government school premises.
- This policy strictly prohibits homemade mixtures and concoctions intended for recreational drug use, such as “lean” (also known as “purple drank” or “sizzurp”), as well as drug-laced edibles. These substances, often made from prescription cough syrup containing opioids like codeine mixed with soft drinks, candy or alcohol, are dangerous, addictive and illegal when used without a prescription or in an unauthorised manner.
- No Smoking or Vaping: This policy strictly prohibits smoking (including tobacco, marijuana, and other substances) and the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigs, vape pens, hookahs, vaporisers, or any similar handheld devices) in all school buildings and on school grounds. This includes classrooms, offices, restrooms, sports facilities, etc.

Range of Consequences

Students are subject to discipline for conduct at school, while traveling to and from school, while at other schools in the country, and while at school-sponsored events and school activities on and off the compound, 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 in most cases be the maximum action listed.

For students with diagnosed disabilities, behavioural consequences will be appropriate, taking the disability into consideration.

Consequences specifically forbidden:

- Corporal punishment.
- Use of evaluation procedures as a disciplinary procedure, such as:
 - Arbitrarily assigning a test to an individual or class that is behaving inappropriately.
 - Deduction of student's achievement scores/marks for behavioural issues with exception of issues of academic integrity.

Consequences range from:

- **Student conference:** This involves a direct discussion with the student to address behaviour, clarify expectations, and explore solutions.
- **Parent/guardian contact:** Informing parents/guardians of the behaviour and seeking their cooperation.
- **Conference with parent/guardian:** A formal meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the behaviour, its impact, and collaborative strategies for improvement.
- **Student Support Services Intervention:** Referral to the Guidance and Counselling Unit, School Social Work Unit, Special Education Unit or Development Assessment Intervention Unit (DAIU), for specialised intervention.
- **Detention:** Supervised time outside of regular class hours for reflection and completion of assigned tasks.
- **In-school Suspension Programme:** Structured programmes within the school designed to address specific behavioural issues, teach coping skills, and promote positive alternatives.

- **Suspension up to seven (7) days:** Temporary removal from school attendance, accompanied by mandatory pedagogical support to ensure continuity of learning.
- **Extended suspension:** Longer-term temporary removal from school, with mandatory referral to rehabilitative programmes for assessment and intervention aimed at supporting psychosocial functioning and reintegration.
- **Confiscation:** Seizure of prohibited items or devices.
- **Restitution:** Requirement to compensate for damages or losses caused by misbehaviour, either financially or through service.
- **Withholding of privileges:** Examples of privileges can be participation in clubs, attendance at graduation, representing the school in events, etc.
- **Referral to law enforcement agencies:** For serious offences that constitute criminal acts, ensuring adherence to the Judges' Rules for Children regarding "custody as a last resort" and exploring "alternative means" to criminal proceedings.
- **Community service:** Performing service within the school or wider community to make amends for harm caused and contribute positively.
- **Mediation:** Facilitated dialogue between parties involved in a conflict to resolve disputes and repair relationships.
- **Expulsion Warning Letter:** An expulsion warning letter may be issued by the Minister of Education to the parents of a student to support behaviour modification management.
- **Student behavioural contract:** A formal agreement outlining specific behavioural goals, strategies, and consequences, developed collaboratively with the student and parents. This contract can be developed and implemented at any time.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the school, typically for severe or repeated offences, following due process and consideration of the child's best interest.

Information & Communication Technology



Information and Communication Technology

The Ministry of Education places a high value on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the internet for facilitating the delivery of quality education in schools. These tools are recognised as key parts of teaching and learning, both inside and outside the classroom, aiding in communication, collaboration, and project-based learning, which are vital for developing 21st-century skills. Technology also significantly improves record keeping, data storage, and student record management. All school personnel, including students and support staff, are expected to use computers and the internet for these purposes. Principals and teachers are responsible for ensuring everyone is aware of the ICT in Education Policy, and principals will create specific, aligned school-level ICT policies.

General Rules for Using Technology and the Internet

- **No Illegal or Harmful Content:** Sending material that violates national laws or Ministry of Education policy is prohibited, including copyrighted material, threatening, violent, obscene, or pornographic material, material protected by trade secrets, and uploading or creating computer viruses.
- **No Commercial Use (unless allowed):** Using technology for commercial activities is forbidden unless explicit permission is obtained. This includes illegal financial activities, unauthorised charges to the school, unauthorised buying/selling, product advertising, or political lobbying.
- **School Property:** ICT devices, including school-assigned laptop computers, are the property of the Ministry of Education. Taking these devices off school grounds without permission is against the rules and is considered an offence.
- **Acceptable Use of Technology:** The Ministry encourages responsible use of technology and the internet to improve lesson delivery. Users must be aware of significant risks like hackers, viruses, malware, identity theft, cyberstalking, and cyberbullying. Internet access is provided for students and teachers to find resources, do research, and communicate about learning. Everyone is expected to act responsibly when online.

Rules for Using School Computers and the Network:

- No inappropriate content such as pornographic images/videos or other obscene/vulgar materials.
- No unauthorised downloads of games, programs, or standalone files.
- Respect copyrights; illegal use or transfer of copyrighted materials to school computers is prohibited.
- Students cannot play games on school computers during the school day unless specifically allowed by staff.
- School-provided devices are strictly for instructional purposes.
- Everyone must be verified before connecting to the school network for security purposes.

- Students are not allowed to connect personal devices to the school network via ethernet jacks unless given permission.
- School-assigned devices must not be defaced (marked, painted, drawn, or stickered) or damaged.
- No adding, modifying, or deleting files on school devices.
- School staff must not knowingly introduce a virus or malicious software into any computer system.
- Bypassing the school network security or obtaining Wi-Fi passwords without permission is forbidden.
- Any third-party applications or electronic resources used must have proper licenses and agreements.

No Changes to School Computer Software

Users are not allowed to change or modify original software settings on school computers, including installing new software, changing desktop backgrounds or computer names, changing/removing operating system extensions, altering security software, changing pre-loaded applications, or taking apart the computer.

Mobile Electronic Communication Devices (MECDs)

An MECD is any device capable of sending, receiving, or transmitting voice, text, data, images, or video by electronic means. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, and similar devices.

- **Responsible Use:** MECDs must be used responsibly on school grounds.
- **No Class Time Use** (unless approved): Students cannot use MECDs during class time unless a teacher gives explicit permission.
- **Productive use for Learning:** MECDs can be used on school grounds for productive teaching and learning activities. Such usage should be under the supervision of a teacher or administrator unless permission has been granted otherwise by the administration. Administrators will be responsible for outlining specific guidelines for such usage based on the context of their schools.
- **Power Off Upon Entry:** MECDs should be switched off when entering the school compound, unless authorised otherwise.
- **School Collection Policy:** Schools may require collecting students' MECDs for safekeeping during the school day. Schools that have chosen to adopt this policy must ensure that adequate measures and procedures are in place to ensure security, proper labelling of phones and a seamless system for collection and distribution.
- **No Unauthorised Recording:** Using MECDs to record any audio or video activity on school grounds, including class sessions, without written consent is prohibited.

- **Privacy Zones:** MECDs are not allowed in changing rooms, toilets, or other areas where their use might cause discomfort to others.
- **Student Responsibility:** Students are responsible for their own MECDs; the school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.
- **Policy Applies in Uniform:** Even off school grounds, if in school uniform, students are bound by the Mobile Phone policy of the school.
- **Staff Discretion:** School staff should use their MECDs only for emergencies when teaching or engaged in learning activities.

Any search or confiscation of electronic devices shall be based on reasonable suspicion, authorised by the principal or designate, proportionate in scope, documented in writing, and shall not compel disclosure of passwords. Forensic access shall be undertaken only by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service where legally required.

Cyberbullying

- **Definition:** Cyberbullying uses electronic communication to intimidate, torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass, or to target someone, including spreading rumours, sending unwanted messages, sharing embarrassing content, making threats, and sharing private information.
- **Zero-tolerance:** The Ministry of Education has zero-tolerance for cyberbullying in all its forms, aiming for safe and secure schools.
- **Support and Consequences:** Victims and perpetrators will receive counselling from the Student Support Services Division. Cyberbullying is condemned as it is against the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.
- **School Actions:** All school staff must understand different types of cyberbullying and respectful online communication. Electronic devices suspected of being used for cyberbullying may be searched. Incidents of cyberbullying behaviours such as cyberstalking, or “trolling” (deliberately posting provocative content to upset others) must be reported immediately to the principal.

Data Security and Privacy

- **Commitment:** Schools handle personal information and are committed to protecting privacy for all data stored on electronic devices, securing it from unauthorised access and misuse.
- **Measures:** All personal and confidential data is secured in line with the Data Protection Act, 2011. Schools, with the ICT Division, implement security measures to prevent

breaches. Principals must share information with law enforcement for child protection and criminal investigations as required by law. Usernames, passwords, and access codes should be kept in a safe and secure location. Principals, with the ICT Division, must set up controls to protect information systems from harm or loss.

- **Prohibited Actions:** Trying to gain unauthorised access to information through hacking or phishing is strictly prohibited.

Social Media

- **Understanding Social Media:** Social media encompasses websites and applications that allow users to engage in social networking through various online communication tools, facilitating interaction, content sharing, and collaboration. Examples include blogs, online forums, instant messaging, podcasts, and popular social networking sites like Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok and Snapchat.
- **Impact and Risks:** Social media can positively impact school communities by fostering communication for educational goals. However, every online interaction leaves a permanent digital trail, requiring education on long-term consequences. Risks include cyberbullying, child sexual grooming, cyberstalking, and trolling. Students should never share personal information online. All social media interactions are subject to copyright, data protection, and other relevant laws.
- **General Conduct and Prohibited Actions:** All social media interactions must be courteous, respectful, age-appropriate, and non-abusive, with no slurs related to race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, or physical disability. Online actions contribute to digital footprint and online reputation. Posting negative comments about anyone, including school personnel, is prohibited. Students are strictly forbidden from taking or sharing nude or partially nude pictures of themselves or others. Circulating or possessing pornographic material of minors is a serious offence with severe penalties.
- **School and Staff Responsibilities:** If teachers require social media for learning projects, parents must be notified beforehand. Official school social media accounts, and posts from such accounts, must be approved by the principal. Posting of students in uniform, or out of uniform during official school activities, can only be done through the official social media of the school and with parental permission. Such authorised posts can subsequently be shared by teachers after the initial posting by the school. When implementing platforms, the school will adhere to 'Privacy by Design' principles. Staff must use separate social media accounts for educational interactions and maintain the highest professional standards. Inappropriate communication involving a child on social media must be immediately reported to the principal. Consent from parents/guardians must be obtained before publishing any student-related content online. Teachers must advise students on acceptable social media standards and use.

- **Cultivating Digital Citizenship and Well-being:** The school will implement a comprehensive digital citizenship curriculum teaching safe, responsible, and ethical technology use, including evaluating online information, understanding digital footprints, recognising/reporting cyberbullying, practicing respectful communication, and understanding intellectual property. Through curriculum enactment, students will also develop social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies related to social media use, fostering self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Information for Parents and Guardians:** Parents should be provided information about social media platforms used for educational purposes upon request, including platform, purpose, monitoring, and rules of engagement. The school will encourage parental engagement in children's online activities, including setting controls and discussing online safety, and will provide resources and workshops.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging and transformative technology with significant potential within the educational landscape. It has the capacity to enhance teaching and learning by making educational experiences more personalised, engaging, and efficient. The Ministry of Education recognises that AI, in its various forms, including machine learning and natural language processing, uses algorithms to analyse data, identify patterns, and generate insights. When used responsibly, AI can complement existing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems and further enhance the benefits derived from digital technologies in schools.

Potential Applications of AI in Schools:

- **Personalised Learning Experiences:** AI-powered adaptive learning platforms can adapt educational content and pace to individual student needs, providing customised feedback and resources. This enables personalised learning, allowing students to learn at their own pace and in a way that suits their individual learning styles, which can lead to better outcomes that were previously unachievable at scale. AI tools must complement human learning and skill development and not circumvent the developmental processes, which are critical to authentic learning and to learners meeting acceptable standards.
- **Automated Administrative Support:** AI tools can assist schools by automating routine administrative functions, including scheduling, managing routine student-related matters, and generating reports. By reducing administrative workloads, these tools can enable educators and administrative staff to devote more time to core teaching, learning, and student support activities.

- **Enhanced Data Analysis for Insights:** AI can process and analyse vast amounts of educational data, including student performance, engagement levels, and learning patterns. This can provide valuable insights for teachers and administrators to identify areas for improvement, predict potential learning difficulties, and optimise teaching strategies. This leverages educational data mining and learning analytics for predicting student performance.
- **Content Creation and Resource Curation:** AI can assist educators in generating diverse educational materials, such as interactive quizzes, lesson summaries, or even personalised assignments, contributing to smarter content. It can also efficiently curate relevant and reliable online resources, supporting research and content discovery for both teachers and students.
- **Intelligent Tutoring Systems:** AI-driven tutoring systems can provide students with immediate and individualised support by answering questions, explaining concepts, and offering practice opportunities. These systems may supplement traditional classroom instruction while remaining under the supervision of educators.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** AI technologies can support accessibility through features such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, translation, and other assistive tools. These capabilities can help ensure that educational opportunities are more inclusive for students with diverse learning needs. Such tools may also support language development, including the strengthening of Standard English and Spanish language acquisition within the Trinidad and Tobago context.

Guidelines for AI Integration

As AI technologies are introduced into schools, they will be governed by the overarching principles of accessibility to all students (MOE Form One Laptop Programme), responsible technology use, data security, and ethical considerations. The development of clear policies and guidelines for the responsible and ethical implementation of AI in education is paramount.

Specific guidelines for AI use will include:

- **Ethical Use:** AI applications must be used in a manner that promotes fairness, accountability, and respect for all students. Potential risks such as algorithmic bias, privacy concerns, and data misuse must be carefully monitored and addressed to prevent discriminatory or harmful outcomes.
- **Supervision and Human Oversight:** AI tools should complement, not replace, human judgement and interaction. AI is not intended to replace teachers but rather to assist them in their roles, empowering educators and supporting their professional judgement. Teachers and administrators must maintain oversight and discretion in how AI is implemented and utilised in the classroom.

- **Data Privacy and Security:** AI systems that process student or staff data must comply fully with the *Data Protection Act, 2011* and adhere to recognised principles of *Privacy by Design*. Robust safeguards must be implemented to protect sensitive educational data and ensure responsible data governance.
- **Transparency and Explainability:** AI tools used in education should operate in a manner that is as transparent and explainable as possible, particularly when they influence student assessment or educational pathways. Systems should clearly communicate how decisions are generated, including their underlying logic, limitations, and potential biases, so that educators can understand, evaluate, and appropriately exercise professional judgement in their use.
- **Digital Literacy for AI:** Students and staff will be provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of the capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications of AI technologies. This will support critical thinking about AI-generated content and prepare learners for participation in an increasingly AI-enabled society.
- **Prohibition of Misuse:** AI must not be used to violate school rules or laws, including the creation or dissemination of harmful or misleading content, cyberbullying, academic dishonesty, or attempts to bypass security systems. Any misuse of AI technologies will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures that apply to other violations of ICT and school conduct policies.
- **Academic Integrity and Student Work:** AI tools must not undermine academic honesty or authentic learning. Students may use AI for assignments or assessments only after discussion with, and permission from, the teacher, and must acknowledge such use. Unauthorised AI generated work may constitute academic dishonesty and will be addressed under existing school disciplinary policies relating to plagiarism, cheating, and academic misconduct.

The Ministry of Education will continue to monitor developments in artificial intelligence and will periodically review and update relevant policies to ensure that these technologies are used responsibly, ethically, and in ways that strengthen teaching, learning, and student development within the education system of Trinidad and Tobago.

Responsibilities of Parents and other Stakeholders



Responsibilities of Parents and other Stakeholders

Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the NSCC and integrated Discipline Matrix. The influence of parents on their children's development is greater than any other single socio-environmental factor. They are expected to work collaboratively with school personnel to uphold school policies, reinforce positive behaviours, and address any challenges that may arise, striving for the optimal holistic development of children at all stages of growth. This includes reading and reviewing school expectations, guidelines, and rules, especially those related to digital citizenship and online safety.

The parental role is essential to provide children with love, a sense of identity, a safe and secure environment in which self-expression is encouraged, where universal morals are instilled, and where childhood can be enjoyed.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

1. Ensuring the student attends school regularly and punctually, properly attired in full uniform, and equipped for effective learning. This aligns with the duty of parents to secure their children's education as per the Education Act. Persistent absenteeism or lateness will be addressed in accordance with attendance infractions in the Discipline Matrix, and parents should provide written explanations for all absences.
2. Promoting and modelling respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community and cooperating fully with the school when disciplinary measures are applied, including those for zero-tolerance offenses. This means actively participating in interventions and restorative processes, applying authoritative parenting approaches characterised by warmth and responsiveness coupled with reasonable control to promote prosocial behaviours, and desisting from violent, abusive, or inappropriate interactions with any child or adult on the compound of the school.
3. Monitoring and guiding the student's use of technology to prevent misuse, cyberbullying, or exposure to inappropriate material, as outlined in the digital misconduct category of the Discipline Matrix. Parents should support the policies of the Ministry of Education related to digital safety and responsible online behaviour at home, particularly in mitigating negative media influences.
4. Attending scheduled meetings, disciplinary hearings, and intervention sessions to address academic, behavioural, or social issues. This includes visiting the school promptly when requested and attending all appointments set with the school or other agencies to which the child was referred for further assessment or support.
5. Supervising and ensuring the completion of homework and other assignments, providing an appropriate environment for learning at home, and fostering positive parenting practices. This should include providing consistent family structure and guidance with

clearly defined boundaries, rewards and sanctions and effectively balancing work and family life.

6. Promptly informing the school of any medical, social, or behavioural circumstances that may impact the student's ability to adhere to the NSCC, allowing for appropriate support or accommodations. This also involves routinely updating contact, medical, social, and other relevant information about the child.
7. Mandated reporting of any suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect situation including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial abuse in accordance with the Children Act, Chap. 46:01, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28 (as amended), and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 (as amended).
8. Supporting the child's well-being by promoting and improving his/her health, including mental and emotional health. Parents should seek help from school and community agencies to correct student misbehaviours, recognising the importance of addressing underlying issues as highlighted in the National Parenting Policy (Draft, May 2017), and thereby contributing to the reduction of behavioural and developmental gaps.
9. Maintaining cordial and civil relationships with other parents and providing all reasonable data requested by the school or Ministry of Education to improve service delivery, ensuring data privacy is maintained.

The Education Act (Chap. 39:01)

The Education Act mandates parental duties related to school attendance and the fundamental right to schooling.

Section	Parent Responsibility
Section 77 (Duty to Educate)	It is the fundamental duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age (ages 5 to 16 years) to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, by regular attendance at a school.
Section 78 (Excused Attendance)	A child may be excused from regular attendance if the Minister of Education deems that the child is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere. (This is the legal basis for home-schooling, which requires official approval).
Enforcement	The Act provides for the appointment of School Attendance Officers and establishes legal procedures to act against parents who fail in their duty to secure their child's education.

The Children Act (Chap. 46:01)

The Children Act is the main legal framework for a child's protection, welfare, and legal custody. It imposes broad duties of care and protection on parents and guardians.

Key Responsibility Area	Parent Responsibility
Child Welfare	Any legal proceeding concerning the custody or upbringing of a minor must regard the welfare of the minor as the first and paramount consideration.
Protection from Harm	Parents and guardians are legally responsible for protecting their child from violence, exploitation, and harm, including all forms of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional) and neglect. (This supports the Mandated Reporting requirement outlined in the text).
Provision of Basic Needs	Parents have a legal duty to provide the child with food, clothing, medical care or other remedial care recognised and permitted under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.
Guidance and Upbringing	Parents must demonstrate the capacity and disposition to give the child love, affection and guidance and to continue the education and raising of the child in his or her religion or creed, if any.
Child Offenders (Financial & Legal)	The Court has the power to order a parent or guardian to pay any fine, damages, or costs instead of the child when the child is charged with an offence. The Court may also summon the parent or guardian to attend court proceedings relating to the child.

Community

The community is responsible for:

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

4. Providing support for school initiatives that will lead to the attainment of desired student outcomes, fostering a collaborative environment for child development.

Visitors to Schools

1. Parents/guardians and other patrons of the community are welcome and encouraged to visit the school. All visitors are expected to be appropriately attired and to conform to school policy.
2. Disruption of the orderly process of the school is prohibited.
3. Visitors must adhere to all guidelines established by management. The principal or his/her designee is authorised to deny access, remove, or request the removal of any visitor whose behaviour is disruptive to the educational/working environment of the school.

Local School Boards

The Local School Board is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy.
2. Supporting the school leadership in communicating the NSCC to all stakeholders and personnel, ensuring widespread understanding and adherence.
3. Assisting school leadership and Ministry of Education in monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of school expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations, with a focus on child protection and positive discipline.
4. Receiving information, complaints, and expressions of concern from the public concerning the school and its members, make recommendations, and relate them to competent authority, acting as a liaison between the school and the community.
5. Encouraging, promoting, sustaining, and fostering mutual understanding, fellowship, and cooperation among all persons associated with the school, building a cohesive and supportive community.

Responsibilities of Ministry of Education Personnel



Responsibilities of Ministry of Education Personnel

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is responsible for:

1. Providing adequate and relevant staff and resources.
2. Providing a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for all school personnel and students.
3. Providing quality governance to support the maintenance of good discipline and conduct, aligned with national legislation and international best practices.
4. Developing and disseminating policies and guidelines that promote positive behaviour management, restorative practice, and comprehensive child protection.
5. Ensuring compliance with data protection legislation and promoting digital safety across the school system.

Schools Supervisors

The Schools Supervisor is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy.
2. Communicating to the School Based Management Team (SBMT) the National School Code of Conduct and all policies related to school discipline, child protection, and digital safety, as well as the treatment of students and other school personnel.
3. Monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations of the Ministry of Education as well as those of the school, ensuring adherence to child-centric and restorative practices.
4. Ensuring prompt action and timely responses to issues brought to them, particularly those involving child protection concerns.
5. Making recommendations on matters relating to the school, including improvements to disciplinary policies and support services.
6. Coordinating support for school-related initiatives with an emphasis on creating safe and inclusive environments.
7. Ensuring the operation of all schools in keeping with established regulations and Circular Memoranda of the Ministry, and compliance with all relevant national legislation.

Curriculum Officers

The Curriculum Officer is responsible for:

1. Treating all school personnel with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy.
2. Providing support and training to teachers for the effective enactment of the curriculum, integrating themes of children's rights, digital literacy, SEL, and the MOE core values.
3. Liaising with principals, vice-principals, and heads of department on various aspects of curriculum delivery to ensure alignment with the revised NSCC principles.
4. Assisting with monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation and assessing its contribution to positive student behaviour and development.
5. Providing advice and support to schools on subject syllabi, planning for instructions, school-based assessment, and other forms of assessment to ensure fairness and inclusivity.
6. Assisting in the management of issues related to curriculum implementation in collaboration with principals and school supervisors, to address any challenges that may impact student well-being.



Responsibilities of School Personnel



Responsibilities of School Personnel

School personnel are responsible for the effective implementation of the NSCC which requires all school personnel to understand, uphold, and model the standards of behaviour expected of students. Responsibilities are action-oriented, clearly linked to the Discipline Matrix, and must be carried out with consistency, fairness, and adherence to legal and policy requirements.

Principals

The principal is responsible for:

1. Creating and maintaining a safe, peaceful, and psychologically secure environment for students, free from all forms of violence, injury, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This includes ensuring all external stakeholders who may be called upon to engage in school activities are vetted for integrity and character, including child protection background checks where appropriate.
2. Leading the enforcement of the NSCC and applying the Discipline Matrix consistently, serving as the final point of escalation for disciplinary matters. This includes investigating serious infractions promptly in line with zero-tolerance policies, and formulating and ensuring consistency in implementing school expectations, guidelines, and rules that promote restorative and rehabilitative approaches.
3. Establishing, communicating, and enforcing school expectations, guidelines, and rules in alignment with national policy and Ministry of Education guidelines. Explicitly incorporate the "best interest of the child" and "human dignity" principles, ensuring clarity on digital citizenship and child protection protocols for all stakeholders.
4. Ensure that MOE personnel attend scheduled training sessions associated with the revised NSCC.
5. Communicating disciplinary outcomes to parents/guardians and, where required, the Ministry of Education. This also involves discussing student behaviour and developmental concerns with parents and engaging relevant internal and external stakeholders to resolve these issues, as well as referrals to the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) for counselling and support services.
6. Monitoring school discipline data and implement targeted interventions for recurring issues. Additionally, providing pedagogical direction and support to students on suspension for five or more days to ensure continuity of learning and preparation for reintegration.
7. Reporting all accidents that cause injury to the Ministry of Education and the Chief Inspector of the Occupational Safety and Health Agency. Furnishing the Ministry of Education with all pertinent information and returns, including data related to disciplinary incidents and interventions, and keep proper records in accordance with the *Data Protection Act, 2011*.
8. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect, including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial, in accordance with the relevant Acts (*Children Act*,

2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 45:56 27 of 1999 (as amended by Act No. 8 of 2020), following clear, step-by-step procedures for reporting to the police and the Children's Authority.

9. Engaging various stakeholders to develop and implement preventative programmes focused on positive behaviour management and digital safety. Collaborating with the SSSD and external agencies like the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (Child Protection Unit) to aid students with emotional, psycho-social, and behavioural difficulties, ensuring individualised and inclusive interventions.
10. Following due process for investigations into any reported abuse of students by any member of staff.

Vice-Principals

The Vice-Principal is responsible for:

1. Assisting the principal in the planning and administration of the programme of teaching and curriculum-related activities, integrating digital citizenship and child protection themes.
2. Arranging and/or conducting seminars and workshops to facilitate the all-round development of students, including social-emotional learning and conflict resolution skills.
3. Discussing students' academic and behavioural patterns with deans, teachers, parents/guardians, and personnel from the SSSD, focusing on understanding underlying causes of behaviour.
4. Disciplining and counselling students, employing positive behaviour management and restorative approaches.
5. Receiving and resolving problems between students and teachers and among teachers, promoting mediation and respectful dialogue.
6. Ensuring adequate levels of supervision and instruction for students, including supervision of online activities within the school environment.
7. Communicating the school expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations to parents, staff, students, and all other relevant stakeholders, with a focus on digital safety and privacy.
8. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the *Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 1999 (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 2020.*

Heads of Departments

Heads of Departments are responsible for:

1. Engaging teachers in clinical supervision as a developmental tool to improve the teaching and learning process, inclusive of classroom management and positive behaviour strategies.
2. Developing strategies to improve academic standards of performance (targets) in alignment with the benchmarks, considering the impact of student well-being on academic outcomes.
3. Ensuring the effective administration of internal and external examinations under the supervision of the vice-principal, upholding integrity and fairness.
4. Monitoring students' academic performance and developing a plan of action for improvement, collaborating with the SSSD for students with learning difficulties.
5. Ensuring that curriculum implementation is in keeping with national guidelines and requirements, integrating themes of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), digital literacy, ethics, and child rights.
6. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the *Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 1999 (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 2020.*

Deans

Deans are responsible for:

1. Devising and implementing the School Discipline Plan, ensuring it aligns with the principles of the revised NSCC, emphasising restorative practices, in collaboration with administrators.
2. Monitoring academic performance of students, identifying behavioural patterns that may impact learning.
3. Preparing and delivering instruction and guidance to students whose progress falls below the required standard, including social-emotional support in collaboration with teachers.
4. Monitoring student access and use of school support services, ensuring appropriate conduct and safety.
5. Engaging the SSSD after consultation with the principal, for students requiring specialised behavioural or psychological assistance.
6. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with *the Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as*

amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 1999 (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 2020.

Form Teachers

Form Teachers are responsible for:

1. Promoting student welfare by actively nurturing the social, moral, and emotional development of students. Creating an opportunity for students to celebrate success. Acting as a parental figure, building good relationships, and creating a positive and respectful environment.
2. Maintaining records by taking and monitoring daily attendance and punctuality, while ensuring all absences and tardiness are being properly recorded with Form Teacher intervention and reporting to the Dean when necessary. Updating and maintaining student records, including contact details and academic progress.
3. Encouraging good behaviour by enforcing school rules/policies, including the NSCC. Actively supervising students during assemblies and addressing any minor disciplinary issues.
4. Providing a forum for students to receive important feedback that would aid in resolving conflicts. Allowing students to have a voice in school operations.
5. Tracking students' academic performance across subjects and liaising with other teachers. Monitoring subject-mark entries and comments on report cards.
6. Maintaining open communication with parents and guardians to discuss attendance, behaviour, or academic issues and participating in parent meetings as needed.
7. Acting as the first point of contact for students and offering appropriate support at school. Making referrals to Dean/SSSD when required.
8. Referring to External Services by informing all students about the free and confidential Child Helpline service (800-4321; 800-HELP).
9. Managing the classroom by organising classroom seating, with special attention to students who have physical, visual or auditory impairments. Maintaining the class timetable and reminding students to care for their property as well as that of the Ministry of Education.
10. Advising students on general academic activities including preparation of study timetable and good study practice as well as how to prepare for upcoming academic tests and reinforcing expected conduct.
11. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the *Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 1999 (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 2020.*

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

1. Maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive classroom environment that is healthy, nurturing, and conducive to effective learning. This includes treating each student with dignity and respect to foster a sense of belonging and psychological safety, and ensuring the environment is free from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
2. Adhering to a professional NSCC, including regular attendance, punctuality, and preparedness to perform teaching duties. Teachers must also follow the dress code and conduct themselves in a way that does not bring the Teaching Service into disrepute.
3. Reinforcing and modelling school expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations, consistently promoting positive social behaviours. This involves reviewing these expectations with students to ensure their understanding and providing opportunities for their views to be heard.
4. Addressing minor infractions through immediate corrective action and restorative dialogue. Utilising positive behaviour management strategies and integrate positive behaviour reinforcement into teaching practice by recognising and rewarding appropriate student behaviour and performance.
5. Documenting and reporting repeated or serious misbehaviour to the principal in accordance with the Discipline Matrix. Reporting continuing student misbehaviour promptly and immediately report any misbehaviour that may result in suspension or expulsion.
6. Participating in interventions and follow-up actions for students with recurring behavioural issues. Providing constructive feedback to all students and parents.
7. Integrating digital citizenship education into teaching, guiding students on responsible online behaviour, privacy, and cyber-safety.
8. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the *Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act Chap 45:56 1999 (Amendment) Act No. 8 of 2020.*

Student Support Services Staff

Student Support Services staff is responsible for:

1. Treating all children and school personnel with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations, providing a supportive and therapeutic approach.
3. Assisting teachers and parents in resolving student behavioural problems, employing evidence-based interventions and counselling in a timely manner.

4. Ensuring equity and fairness in addressing student indiscipline in keeping with the principles of inclusive education.
5. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the *Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 45:56 27 of 1999 (as amended by Act No. 8 of 2020)*.
6. Providing support for students through prevention and intervention strategies inclusive of classroom guidance, counselling, consultations, assessment, referral and timely feedback, with a focus on addressing underlying issues contributing to misbehaviour and barriers to learning.

Auxiliary Staff

Auxiliary staff includes security, maintenance, health and safety school officers, clerical staff, and other non-teaching staff/personnel.

The auxiliary staff is responsible for:

1. Treating all children and school personnel with dignity, respect, professional courtesy and interacting with children in accordance with the Children Act of 2012.
2. Cooperating with school authorities in the enforcement of school expectations, guidelines, rules, and regulations, contributing to a safe and orderly environment.
3. Informing school officials of concerns relative to student behaviour or safety, particularly any signs of abuse or distress.
4. Being regular in attendance, punctual, and prepared to perform his/her duties.
5. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 45:56 27 of 1999 (as amended by Act No. 8 of 2020).

School-Oriented Police Officers

Uniformed police officers may be deployed to selected schools to strengthen safety and security within the learning environment. Their presence will serve both a protective and preventative role, addressing incidents of indiscipline and responding decisively to serious breaches of the zero-tolerance policy. This initiative underscores the commitment to ensuring that schools remain safe spaces where teaching and learning can take place without disruption.

School-oriented police officers will be responsible for:

1. Performing policing duties in accordance with the Police Service Act Chap. 15:01 and the Special Reserved Police Act Chap. 15:03 and relevant departmental orders.
2. Transporting arrested and/or detained juveniles to the designated booking centre.

School Health, Safety and Security Officers (SHSSOs)

The SHSSO provides support to the principal and other stakeholders in education by contributing to the establishment and maintenance of a safe, tranquil and disciplined school environment and by extension, the community. Emphasis is focused on the implementation of policies outlined in the School Security Plan such as the engagement of initiatives in matters relating to health, safety and security, mitigation of risks and policy/law enforcement.

SHSSOs are responsible for:

1. Developing a School Safety Plan specific to the school environment assigned, under the direction of the principal.
2. Implementing the School Security Plan, including the enforcement of Health, Safety and Security policies and making recommendations to the principal for enhancement.
3. Conducting risk assessments and identify dangerous situations in and around the school.
4. Responding to all emergency situations on the school compound and rendering emergency aid, where necessary.
5. Investigating and submitting reports on all incidents at the facility and maintaining a register / log of these incidents.
6. Patrolling school compound, deterring student loitering and adopting necessary action to ensure policies are adhered to and preventing theft and property damage.
7. Monitoring and evaluating students' behaviour in cafeterias, restrooms, corridors, halls, parking lot etc. and other open locations.
8. Assisting in the supervision and direction of after-school activities including transportation services for students.
9. Addressing student indiscipline and other challenging situations.
10. Conducting exercises in the handling of emergency evacuations such as fire drills.
11. Promoting Health, Safety and Security through training programmes, lectures and advice/discussions with staff and students.
12. Mandated reporting of any suspected child abuse or neglect situation in accordance with the Children Act, 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019, and the Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 45:56 27 of 1999 (as amended by Act No. 8 of 2020).

National Maintenance and Training Security Officers

Security officers for the purpose of this document means MTS officers or any other security officer from a private company. The security arrangement is directed towards creating and maintaining a safe environment. It is designed to protect physical and personnel resources of both clients and authorised users against loss, damage and injury.

The Security requirements in schools contains six (6) essential elements:

- Sentry Duty
- Gate Duty
- Patrol Duty
- Investigations
- Key controls
- Fire protection and prevention

MTS officers will be responsible for:

Sentry Duty

- Record pedestrian and vehicle traffic entering and leaving the compound.
- Record reports/incidents from the client representative, staff, students and members of the public.
- Handover keys to the respective persons authorised to open doors, buildings, etc.
- Record equipment or materials leaving the compound.
- Assist visitors.

Gate Duty

- Control ingress and egress on the school compound.
- Prevent illegal removal of equipment from the compound.
- Execute spot checks on vehicles entering or leaving the compound in agreement with the principal or his/her representative.
- Protect personnel, property and information.

Patrol Duty

- Prevent unauthorised persons from entering the school compound.
- Check high-risk areas such as workshops, stores, administrative blocks, etc.
- Identify missing or damaged equipment.
- Identify hazardous or unusual conditions.
- Monitor the perimeter fence and identify any potential problems.
- Locate and identify key personnel in each area.
- Familiarise himself/herself with the layout of the facility and to locate and report on the condition of all firefighting equipment.

Investigations of Security Incidents

- Conduct thorough investigations into all incidents and/or reports of theft, loss or damage to property.
- Review school security incident reports.
- Inform the school principal of all major incidents and/reports of theft, loss or damage to property.
- Contact and/or make report(s) to protective services when necessary.
- Identify any school security problems and potential problems.

Key and Access Control

- Control the issuing of keys daily.
- Ensure the return of all keys.
- Maintain in proper order the key register (movement of keys, etc.)
- Ensure that keys are not given to unauthorised persons.

Fire Protection and Prevention

- Conduct routine checks on fire extinguishers as well as the identification and elimination of fire hazards.
- Submit monthly reports on fire extinguishers inspection.
- Take responsibility for evacuation of the school population to safe the predetermined point in event of any emergency such as bomb scare, fire and other natural disasters.

Liaison with Protective Services

- Establish and maintain close liaison with Community Police, TTPS Command Centre, Emergency Response Patrol, Fire Service, Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago.

Whilst it is understood that student discipline is the responsibility of the principal and teaching staff, preventing school disruption is the responsibility of both the school and Security Officers. Security Officers assist in enforcing school rules and regulations by politely advising students of prohibited behaviour and requesting that they abstain, followed by contacting the principal or designate, informing them of the situation if behaviour persists.

Security Officers shall provide reasonable security means, as identified for protecting persons on the school premises, inclusive of the property of the teacher while on duty.

If students who are deemed out of control and do not respond to the verbal entreaties of the Security or the Principal/Teacher to segregate to restore order, the Security Officers will assist in physically removing these students to the administrative office or other appropriate location. In case of serious crimes committed, Security Officers who are precepted and have the power of arrest can lay charges against a student.

Standards of Behaviour for School Personnel



Teachers' Code of Conduct

General Conduct

- Teachers must always act in a manner that does not bring the Teaching Service into disrepute.

Duties of Teachers

- Teachers must be courteous and polite to colleagues, students, and members of the public.

Gifts and Rewards

- Teachers may not accept gifts or rewards for official duties without the permission of the Permanent Secretary.
- Exceptions (may be accepted):
 - From a foreign government representative on an official visit.
 - From a community organisation on a social occasion, where the gift represents the work or achievement of that organisation.
 - On personal occasions such as marriage, retirement, transfer, or other celebratory events.

Accepting Bribes

- Teachers must not solicit or accept property, benefits, or favours in return for performing duties or influencing their performance.
- If offered a bribe, the teacher must:
 - Immediately inform the principal in writing.
 - The principal must notify the Permanent Secretary, who will report the matter to the police.

Misconduct (Acts that Constitute Misconduct)

- General misconduct includes:
 - Failing to properly perform lawful duties.
 - Contravening regulations or relevant laws.
 - Acting in a way that harms the efficient conduct of the Teaching Service or brings it into disrepute.
- Specific examples of misconduct include:

- Absence from duty without leave or valid excuse, habitual lateness.
- Wilful disobedience of lawful orders.
- Being unfit for duty due to drunkenness or drug use.
- Inefficiency or incompetence caused by factors within the teacher's control.
- Immoral, obscene, or disorderly conduct in office.
- Negligent performance of duties.
- Unreasonable or abusive use of authority.
- Unauthorised use of school property or facilities.
- Having a criminal charge proved against him/her.
- Participating in political meetings while on duty or official business.

Dress and Grooming Guidelines

School staff, including administrators, teachers, and other school personnel, are expected to project a professional image that earns respect and prioritise safety in the workplace.

Inappropriate Attire Includes:

- Excessive display of body form: Clothing that is overly tight or revealing.
- Revealing necklines and dress/skirt slits: Necklines that plunge too low or slits that are too high.
- Inappropriate lengths: Skirts, dresses, or trousers that are too short or otherwise unsuitable for a school environment.
- Excessive use of perfume or cologne: Strong fragrances may trigger allergies or cause discomfort for others.
- Exposed undergarments or see-through tops: Undergarments should not be visible, and clothing should not be transparent.

While the Ministry of Education provides these guidelines, principals are responsible for discussing dress standards with their staff. These conversations should consider the diverse needs of the school community and the specific requirements of various curriculum activities and physical conditions. This list is not exhaustive, and principals should use their discretion to ensure appropriate dress standards are maintained.

Integrity: Our Commitment to Honesty and Respect

School personnel are expected to perform their duties with the highest level of integrity. This also means demonstrating respect for the belongings and rights of others. The following acts are strictly prohibited:

Prohibited Acts:

- **Falsification:** This includes, but is not limited to, verbal, written, or electronic transmissions (like emails or images) involving forgery, counterfeiting, or misrepresentations of parents, guardians, or any school personnel.
- **Stealing:** This is acquiring another person's possessions without right or permission. Possessing stolen property is also considered theft.
- **False Accusations:** Making wilful or malicious false accusations or reports against school personnel or other students.
- **Compromising Actions:** Any other action that compromises responsibility, civility, respect, and academic excellence.
- **Manipulating Performance:** Practices designed to alter or misrepresent students' actual performance when setting, administering, marking, and reporting on tests are prohibited.

Drug Free Environment

The Ministry of Education aims to prevent substance abuse before it starts and to foster a culture of well-being within school communities. Thus, it is the responsibility of all school personnel to ensure that never, by their words, actions, or inactions, encourage or allow the possession or use of any illegal, controlled, or restricted drugs, tobacco products, or dangerous homemade concoctions on school compounds.

If, however, an individual has a controlled or restricted drug that has been prescribed for that individual by a licensed medical doctor and dispensed by an authorised pharmacist, it is permitted for his/her personal use.

Consequences for school personnel who breach these guidelines are outlined in the relevant regulations and may include:

- Referral to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Ministry of Education to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in addressing evolving challenges related to substance abuse in the school communities.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour

The Ministry of Education fully supports the *Children Act Chap 46:01 No 12 of 2012* and the *Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019*.

Some of the Indictable sexual offences, according to the *Sexual Offences Act, Chap 11:28, No. 27 of 1986, amended by 20 of 1994; 31 of 2000 ;12 of 2012, and Act No. 19 of 2019*, include:

- Rape
- Grievous sexual assault
- Buggery
- Indecent assault
- Serious indecency
- Incest
- Sexual intercourse with mentally subnormal person
- Causing or encouraging the seduction, prostitution or sexual penetration of a child
- Paying for sexual services of a child
- Causing or inciting prostitution of a child
- Sexual penetration of a child
- Sexual touching of a child
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity
- Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity with an animal
- Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child
- Causing a child to watch a sexual act
- Meeting a child following sexual grooming

Mandatory Reporting

The *Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No. 19 of 2019*, mandates reporting of suspected sexual offenses against minors (under 18).

The list of persons who must report a suspected sexual offense against a minor includes:

- Parents or guardians of a minor
- Anyone with actual custody, charge, or control of a minor
- Anyone with temporary custody, care, charge, or control of a minor for a special purpose, such as an attendant, employer, or teacher
- Medical practitioners, registered nurses, or midwives who have performed a medical examination on a minor
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- School personnel, including supervisors and administrators
- Staff of social services divisions

- Any person who provides childcare services

Penalties and Protection

The *Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1)*, as amended by the *Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019*, fine for non-compliance.

- **Penalty for Failing to Report (Section 31(2)):** Any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the reporting requirements is guilty of an offense and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$15,000 or to imprisonment for a term of seven years, or to both.
- **Freedom from Liability (Section 31(3)):** No person who makes a good faith report to a police officer shall be subject to any action, liability, claim, or demand.

Sexual Harassment Policy

The Ministry of Education aims to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment, promoting fair and equitable treatment for all employees and students. Inappropriate sexual misconduct or behaviour is prohibited at schools, school-related activities, and during travel 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.

Students and employees are prohibited from sexually harassing any student, employee, volunteer, visitor, or any other person present in schools, at school functions, or while traveling to and from school. Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour at school or school-related activities is also prohibited.

Examples of activities that could constitute sexual harassment/inappropriate sexual behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtations or propositions
- Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments, or sexually degrading descriptions
- Graphic comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation
- Offensive sexual drawings, pictures, or gestures
- Spreading sexual rumours
- Inappropriate or suggestive sexual gestures
- Uninvited touching of an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way
- Displaying sexually explicit behaviour
- Using electronic media to send any sexually explicit/offensive communication

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 Commission Regulations, Chapter 1:01*, as amended by the *Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 1990*.

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 when further action is being recommended.

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.

To prevent any incident from progressing to a level requiring more serious disciplinary action, respective officers and/or administrators may address acts of misconduct relative to poor job performance and work conduct through a process of progressive discipline. The procedural steps in progressive discipline, which may include counselling, 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.

Discipline Matrix



Discipline Process Flow Diagram

The Discipline Process Flow Diagram outlines a structured and multi-tiered approach to managing student misbehaviour within the framework of the NSCC. The process commences with the reporting of an incident by staff to the Principal or Dean, followed by an assessment of whether the offence is a first-time infraction or part of persistent behaviour. First offences typically trigger consequences involving restorative practices and support services, such as SSSD (Student Support Services Division), TTPS (Trinidad and Tobago Police Service), and MPSDFS (Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services). For more severe or repeated offences, decisions around extended suspensions are considered, potentially requiring approval and involvement from the Honourable Minister (HM). This approach aligns with the Zero-tolerance policy for major infractions as outlined in the NSCC.

For cases where an extended suspension is recommended and approved, a case conference is convened. Depending on the outcomes, students may either be reinstated, placed in alternative education settings, or transferred to another public school. Throughout the process, emphasis is placed on reintegration and restorative strategies to support student development. The flowchart, shown in the diagram, ensures a clear decision-making path with checkpoints involving external agencies and ministerial discretion, thereby promoting fairness, accountability, and rehabilitation over punitive action.

Timelines for Request for Extended Suspensions

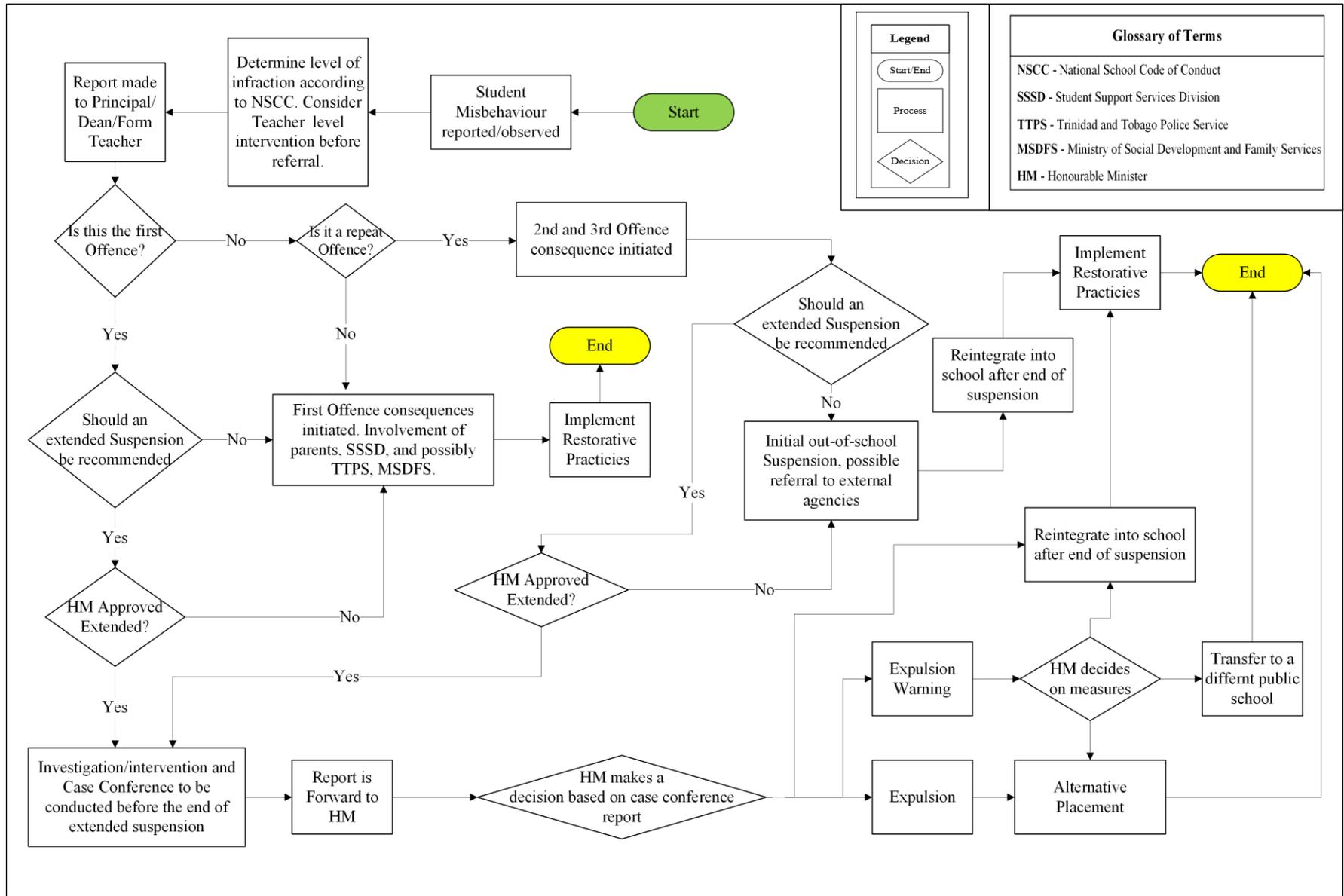
Timeframe	Responsible Officer	Action Required
Within 2 days of 7-day suspension	Principal	Submit all required documents to Schools Supervisor III.
Within next 2 days (by Day 4)	Schools Supervisor III	Prepare and submit student's file to the Minister of Education through the Director, SSMD (the timeline allows for 3 days for feedback from the Minister of Education).
By Day 7 of suspension	Minister of Education / SSMD	Approval for extended suspension must be received. If not received, the student can legally resume school.
Before end of Day 7	Schools Supervisor III	Inform Principal of decision. Principal must notify parent(s). Note: Initial approval is valid for 21 days.
During 21-day extended period	Schools Supervisor III / SSSD	Student receives intervention from SSSD prior to case conference. Arrange case conference (Schools Supervisor, Principal, Guidance Officer II/Senior School Social Worker, Parent/Legal Guardian and Student). Receive approval for reinstatement/ alternative arrangements (possible expulsion warning) or request for further extension (if justified).

Timeframe	Responsible Officer	Action Required
After case conference (to be held within 14-18 days)	Schools Supervisor III	Submit case conference report to Minister of Education through the Director, SSMD. Report may include a request for further extension (if justified).
End of 21-day period	Schools Supervisor III	If reinstatement is approved → reintegrate student (may issue expulsion warning). If conference cannot be held → request further 7-day extension, submitted at least 2 days before expiry. Note that the reinstatement can take place before the 21 days if intervention and case conferencing occur prior.
If 21 day period ends without extension or approval	—	Student can legally resume school.
<i>Schools Supervisor III ensures all extension requests are properly documented in the file as per protocol.</i>		

Measures for Tracking Extended Suspensions

- Create a daily tracking system (shared link with District Office, SSSD personnel, principals) to avoid unauthorised student absences.
- Maintain regular communication with principals and SSSD personnel at each stage.
- Explore virtual case conferences if physical meetings are not possible.
- Seek assistance from the Director, School Supervision and Management Division (SSMD) if needed to complete reports.

Detailed Discipline Process Flow Diagram



Discipline Matrix with Detailed Consequences

The Discipline matrix, detailed below, is for managing student behaviour at all primary and secondary schools across Trinidad and Tobago. It blends zero-tolerance for violence and bullying with progressive discipline, restorative practices, social-emotional learning (SEL), and positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS). It ensures schools respond consistently, fairly, and legally to infractions while supporting students' growth and reintegration.

The Discipline Matrix categorizes student misconduct into four levels ranging from Minor to Moderate to Major to Severe. For each level, there is a range of consequences for each infraction. The range of consequences given for each infraction is based on whether the infraction is a first offence, a repeated offence or a serious violation. In determining the appropriate consequence for a violation within the given range, the age of the student, the past pattern of behaviour and previous interventions will be considered. Consequences will be timed and will be appropriate for the student's stage of development. Each school is authorised to determine specific consequences as guidelines unique to that school that are not in conflict with this code.

Level 1 (Minor Infractions)

This level addresses less severe misbehaviours such as inappropriate displays of affection, unexcused tardiness, inappropriate attire, absenteeism, misuse of technology, disorderly conduct, and class truancy.

- **Consequences:** Typically involve verbal warnings, parent contact, or detention for a first offence, with an emphasis on restorative strategies and no recommended out-of-school suspension. Repeated offences may lead to parent conferences, in-school suspension, SSSD referral, home visits conducted by SSW and community service.

Level 1 (Minor)

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Inappropriate Student/ Student Relationship	Hugging, kissing, hand holding	Verbal warning, parent contact	Parent conference, referral to SSW or G&C	1-2-day(s) in-school suspension, Behaviour Contract (BC), referral to SSW or G&C
Unexcused Tardiness	Late arrival with/without reason	Warning, parent contact	Detention, written explanation, parent conference	Referral to G&C, attendance improvement plan to be implemented

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Inappropriate Attire/Uniform	Excessive makeup, jewellery, non-uniform items, incorrect uniform	Warning, correction	Parent conference, correction, Behaviour Contract (BC) (BC)	In-school suspension if persistent, referral to Guidance and Counselling (G&C)
Absenteeism	Excessive or chronic absenteeism with/without reason	Warning, parent contact	Parent conference, referral to School Social Worker (SSW)	SSW and Children's Authority (CA) referral and monitoring
Misuse of Technology	Phone use, blocked websites, minor recordings without permission <i>(NB: Medical Exemption for use of technology)</i>	Verbal warning, temporary seizure of device, parent contact for return of device	1–2 days (s) in-school suspension, parent conference, BC	1-2-day(s) out-of-school suspension and referral to G&C
Plagiarism	Submitting someone's words, ideas, or work as one's own without giving proper credit to the original source	Student counselling and Referral to G&C for academic guidance	Student and parent conference, BC, counselling and academic guidance	Referral for G&C, in-school suspension
Disorderly/ Disruptive Conduct	Excessive noise, interruptions, rough play	Verbal redirection, parent contact, community service.	1-2-day(s) in-school suspension, parent conference, BC	2-3-day(s) suspension out-of-school and referral to G&C or SSW
Class Truancy	Skipping class	Warning, parent contact	Parent conference, detention, BC	Referral to G&C, in-school suspension
Loitering	Wandering the hallways, stairwells, outside classrooms, restrooms, etc., during class time.	Warning, parent contact	Parent conference, detention, BC	Referral to G&C, in-school suspension

Level 2 (Moderate Infractions)

This level covers more serious behaviours like disrespect/defiance to authority, lewd/inappropriate behaviour, alcohol/tobacco/vaping possession, minor theft, forgery, gambling, repeated obscene language, inappropriate online behaviour, and technology misuse.

- Consequences: First offences may result in parent conferences, SSSD referral, or 1–3 day in-school suspensions. Subsequent offences can escalate to out-of-school suspensions (3–7 days), Behaviour Contracts, and SSSD monitoring.

Level 2 (Moderate)

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Cheating in Internal Exams	Possession of unauthorised materials during exams, copying answers from another student	Student and parent conference, BC, referral to G&C for counselling and academic guidance.	3-5-day suspension, student/ parent conference, BC, referral to G&C for further intervention. Cancellation of exam paper(s) related to the cheating incident	5-day suspension, parent conference, BC, counselling, a warning letter to be issued stating that this incident will be recorded on the student's permanent record for any subsequent infraction of this type
Insubordination/Disrespect/Defiance to Authority	Refusing lawful instruction, walking out, and using obscene gestures	Parent conference, referral to SSW, 1–3 day(s) in-school suspension	3–5 days out-of-school suspension, BC, SSW intervention and monitoring	5-7-day suspension, SSW intervention and monitoring
Lewd/Inappropriate Behaviour	Sexual gestures, crude comments	3-day suspension, referral to SSW, BC	5-day suspension, SSW intervention, and monitoring	5-7-day suspension, SSW intervention and monitoring
Alcohol/Tobacco/Vaping	Possession or use of substances	3-day suspension, referral SSW and monitoring	5-day suspension, SSSD referral, and monitoring	5-7-day suspension, SSSD referral and monitoring
Theft/ Stealing (Minor)	Items under \$100	3-day suspension, restitution, referral to SSW and monitoring	5-day suspension, restitution, SSW intervention and monitoring	5-7-day suspension, SSW intervention and monitoring

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Forgery	Falsifying signatures/documents	2-3-day suspension, referral to G&C / SSW	5-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C / SSW and monitoring	5-7-day suspension, referral to G&C / SSW and monitoring
Gambling	Betting with money or valuables	Confiscation, parent conference	3-day suspension, BC, referral to SSW, monitoring	5-7-day suspension, referral to SSW, monitoring
Obscene Language	Repeated profanity	Warning, parent contact	2-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C, monitoring	3-5-day suspension, referral to G&C or SSW for intervention and monitoring
Inappropriate Behaviour Online	Misconduct in virtual learning spaces	Warning, removal from session, parent contact	2-3-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C or SSW, monitoring	3-5-day suspension, referral to G&C or SSW, monitoring
Social Bullying / Verbal Bullying	Lying and spreading rumours and defamation of character	Warning, parent contact	2-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C and monitoring	3-day suspension, SSSD referral to G&C or SSW and monitoring
Technology Misuse	Phone use during class, accessing blocked websites, listening to music, minor recording and taking photos without consent	Warning, parent contact	2-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C, monitoring	3-day suspension, G&C/SSW intervention and monitoring

Level 3 (Major Infractions)

This level deals with significant misbehaviours, for example bullying/intimidation (including cyberbullying), physical altercation without a weapon, spreading misinformation, threats without a weapon, unauthorised filming/photography, possession of inappropriate materials, and tampering with school systems.

- Consequences: Typically involve 3–5-day suspensions, Behaviour Contracts, and SSSD referral for a first offence. Repeated offences can lead to 5–7-day suspensions, TTPS reports, Ministerial Extended Suspensions (ES), potential transfer, and consideration of expulsion for serious harm.

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Bullying/ Intimidation	Name-calling, exclusion, verbal threats	3-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C, monitoring	5-day suspension, Referral to SSW, monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, possible transfer, SSW intervention and monitoring
Cyber Bullying	Online harassment, slander, threats	3-day suspension, BC, SSSD referral and monitoring	5-day suspension, TTPS report, referral to SSW, monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, SSW intervention and monitoring, expulsion for serious harm
Physical Altercation (No Weapon) / Fight without Weapon	Pushing, slapping, wrestling	3–5-day suspension, BC, referral to SSW, monitoring	5–7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, referral to SSW, monitoring, possible transfer or expulsion
Propagate Misinformation /Mischief	Spreading false rumours or panic	Parent meeting, written apology, BC	5-day suspension, rereferral to G&C, monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, SSSD referral, monitoring
Threat without Weapon	Verbal or written threats	3–5-day suspension, BC, SSSD referral and monitoring	5–7-day suspension, TTPS, referral to SSW, monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, referral to SSW, monitoring, expulsion considered
Possession of Inappropriate Materials	Pornographic, violent, discriminatory content	Confiscation, 3-day suspension and referral to SSW	5-day suspension, referral to SSW and monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, referral to SSW and monitoring

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence	Second Offence	Third Offence
Tampering with School Systems	Hacking Wi-Fi, disrupting tech infrastructure	5-day suspension, BC, referral to G&C or SSW	7-day suspension, TTPS report, referral to G&C or SSW	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, TTPS report, referral to SSW

Level 4 (Severe Infractions)

This level addresses the most serious and potentially criminal behaviours. These include physical assault, assault on staff, fighting/threatening with a weapon, weapon possession/use, arson/explosives, extortion/taxing, robbery-theft, drug use/possession, sexual harassment/misconduct, gang-related activity, severe vandalism, hate speech/threats, bomb threats/false alarms, revenge porn/sextortion, criminal harassment/stalking, and severe breach of data security.

- **Consequences:** These are severe and can include 5–7-day suspensions, immediate TTPS reports, SSSD/CA referrals, Ministerial ES requests, and potential or mandatory expulsion, especially for repeated offences or in criminal cases. Expulsion is mandatory for confirmed assault on staff or in criminal sexual misconduct cases. **Based on the severity of the infraction, First and Second Offences may result in immediate expulsion.**

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence ¹	Second Offence ²	Third Offence
Physical Bullying / Assault	Punching, kicking, repeated attacks	5-7-day suspension depending on severity, TTPS report, SSSD referral, possible transfer	7-day suspension, TTPS/Ministerial ES request, possible expulsion	Expulsion options at any time based on the severity
Assault on Staff	Hitting, throwing object at staff	7-day suspension, TTPS report, ES request and possible expulsion	Expulsion mandatory	Expulsion mandatory
Fight with Weapon	Using object during fight	7-day suspension, ES request, TTPS report, SSSD referral, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, ES request, TTPS report, SSSD referral, possible expulsion	Expulsion
Weapon Possession/ Dangerous Objects	Possession of knife/gun or threatening with weapon	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request and possible expulsion	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request and possible expulsion	Expulsion
Arson/ Explosives	Fire starting, homemade devices	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, TTPS referral, ES request, expulsion possible	Expulsion mandatory if intent to harm proven

¹ & ² Contingent upon the severity of the infraction and the report from TTPS, immediate expulsion may be considered.

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence¹	Second Offence²	Third Offence
Extortion and Taxing	Coercion for money, intimidation	5-day suspension, TTPS report and SSSD referral, restitution	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request, restitution	Expulsion for group coercion
Robbery	Stealing with violence or by force or intimidation	7-day suspension, TTPS report, CA referral, ES request, restitution	7-day suspension, TTPS, ES request, expulsion possible, restitution	Expulsion for repeated or organised theft
Drug Use/Possession	Marijuana, cocaine, selling drugs	5–7-day suspension, SSSD referral and monitoring, TTPS report	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, SSSD referral and monitoring	Expulsion for trafficking or repeated offence
Sexual Harassment/Misconduct	Coercion, sexting, exposure, unwelcome advances	5–7-day suspension, SSSD, CA referral, TTPS report	7-day suspension, TTPS report, Ministerial ES request	Mandatory Expulsion in criminal cases
Threat with Weapon	Wielding or threatening with a weapon	7-day suspension, TTPS report and SSSD referral, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, TTPS report, Ministerial ES request, possible expulsion	Expulsion
Gang-related Activity	Recruitment, threats, gang-related intimidation	7-day suspension, TTPS report, CA referral, ES request, possible expulsion	Possible alternative education/expulsion	Expulsion
Vandalism (Severe)	Major destruction, graffiti, property damage	5–7-day suspension, restitution, SSSD referral and monitoring	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request, restitution	Expulsion if repeated or major damage, legal prosecution if applicable
Hate Speech/Threats/Terrorist Threats	Racial, homophobic, religious threats, threats to engage in terrorist acts	7-day suspension, TTPS report, ES request, SSSD referral, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, TTPS/CA referral, ES request, possible expulsion	Expulsion
Bomb Threats/False Alarms	Making emergency false reports	7-day suspension, TTPS report	7-day suspension, TTPS report, Ministerial ES request	Expulsion for criminal mischief

Infraction Category	Examples of Behaviours	First Offence¹	Second Offence²	Third Offence
Revenge Porn/ Sextortion	Sharing explicit images to shame or blackmail	Immediate TTPS report, SSSD and CA referral, 7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, TTPS report, Ministerial ES request, possible expulsion	Expulsion
Criminal Harassment/ Stalking	Targeted, repeated, fear-inducing behaviour	Immediate TTPS report, CA referral, 7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, possible expulsion	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request, possible transfer or expulsion	Expulsion
Severe Breach of Data Security	Hacking or leaking digital records	Immediate TTPS report, 7-day suspension	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES request and TTPS report	Expulsion, legal prosecution if applicable
Unauthorised video recording or Photography	Recording/posting staff or students on social media	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, referral to SSW, monitoring	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, referral to SSW	7-day suspension, Ministerial ES, referral to SSW, possible expulsion

Reintegration Protocols (Post Suspension)

Suspension Stage	Student Interventions	Parent Interventions	School/SSSD Actions
1st Suspension (Green)	4–6 counselling sessions with guidance officer/counsellor or social worker; participate in group guidance sessions on conflict resolution and school rules	Attend meeting with dean, senior teacher, head of department (primary) and SSSD personnel; sign Behaviour Contract agreeing to expectations	SSSD assigns a lead support staff; behaviour is monitored weekly for 30 days; reintegration meeting held on return
2nd Suspension (Yellow)	6–8 counselling sessions (individual and group); student completes written reflection on offence; participates in 1 restorative circle	Attend PIE (Parenting in Education) sessions focused on student discipline; attend follow-up review meeting	Weekly SSSD check-ins; Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) formally engaged; intervention plan updated with short-term goals
3rd Suspension (Purple)	Develop individualised Behaviour Action Plan; attend career planning and motivational sessions; assigned peer mentor	Attend all SSSD organised meetings; work collaboratively on student pathway plan (academic/behavioural goals)	SSSD/MDT drafts referral to alternative support services (MILAT, etc.); progress is documented and reported monthly
4th+ Suspension (Red)	Final reintegration session; consider psychological evaluation; participate in referral exit interview	Attend expulsion hearing or transfer conference; submit statement of support plan	Principal submits case to Minister for review; alternative placement arranged as needed

Implementation Responsibilities

Officer/Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
Principals/VPs/Deans/Senior Teachers and Heads (Primary)	Lead implementation of this matrix; convene discipline and reintegration meetings; maintain incident logs; submit suspension reports; coordinate with SSSD; ensure policy fidelity regarding requests Ministerial extensions and expulsion warning when necessary
Heads/Form Teachers/Teachers	Set and model expected behaviours daily; provide early intervention for minor infractions; use restorative approaches; refer repeated or major issues to Dean or VP/Senior Teacher/Head (Primary); document all infractions and parent contacts; infuse ESL and reinforce PBIS matrix rules
SSSD Staff	Conduct assessments and therapeutic sessions; lead reintegration meetings; deliver individual and group counselling; coordinate with external agencies; update Behaviour Intervention Logs; attend PIE and MDT meetings; provide feedback and support in a timely manner to the relevant MOE personnel
Parents/Guardians	Attend all scheduled school and SSSD conferences; support behaviour and reintegration contracts; reinforce school values at home; communicate concerns; attend PIE sessions as required
Supervisors/Ministry of Education	Oversee alignment between the NSCC and the development of a school discipline matrix; review suspension and expulsion data and provide guidance and support in school discipline action planning; provide professional development to school leaders; authorise or decline requests for extended suspensions; ensure equity and consistency across schools

Strategic Discipline Guidelines for Principals

This table provides a concise overview of the strategic guidelines for Principals, categorised by short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives for effective school discipline.

Key Focus Area	Strategic Actions
Immediate Response & Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Incident Protocols: Develop and share step-by-step procedures for staff response and reporting. • Robust Investigations: Train staff on basic investigative techniques (statements, two-adult interviews). • Consistent Disciplinary Measures: Conduct calibration sessions for uniform application of consequences. • Immediate Parent and MOE Communication: Establish protocols for swift communication after incidents. • Secure Record Keeping: Implement systematic filing (hard/soft copy) and leverage digital platforms.
Proactive Interventions & System Refinement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Discipline Teams & Data Analysis: Ensure SSSD/Discipline Committees meet regularly to analyse data; empower Deans. • Targeted Interventions: Systematically roll out social-emotional learning (SEL) sessions, peer mediation, and behavioural contracts. • Enhanced Parental Engagement: Organise workshops, implement parent-student contracts, and mandatory meetings. • Refine Suspension & Reintegration: Ensure compliance with documentation timelines; standardise reintegration processes. • Proactive Supervision & Staff Accountability: Implement internal patrols; ensure teachers adhere to supervision and leave structured tasks.

Key Focus Area	Strategic Actions
Systemic Change & Sustainable Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate Positive School Climate: Embed PBIS deeply; promote a shared vision for positive behaviour. • Strengthen SSSD & External Partnerships: Formalise collaboration protocols; advocate for resources and improved communication. • Comprehensive Staff Development & Mentorship: Implement ongoing training and mentorship programmes. • Advocate for Resources & Infrastructure: Regularly assess and report on needs (e.g., isolation rooms, on-site support). • Foster Student Leadership & Voice: Establish and support student-led discipline councils or groups. • Continuous Review & Adaptation: Conduct annual, in-depth reviews using comprehensive data and stakeholder feedback.

Implementation and Monitoring

The successful implementation of the National School Code of Conduct and integrated Discipline Matrix requires coordinated effort across all levels of the education system. The Ministry of Education, school leadership, staff, parents, and students must work collaboratively to ensure consistent application, regular review, and continuous improvement of disciplinary practices.

- The Ministry of Education will provide ongoing guidance, resources, and professional development to support the implementation of the NSCC.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that all staff are familiar with the NSCC, understand its provisions, and apply disciplinary measures consistently.
- Schools must maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all disciplinary incidents, interventions, and outcomes, using Ministry-approved documentation systems.
- Regular reviews of disciplinary data will be conducted at the school and district levels to identify trends, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and recommend adjustments.
- The Ministry of Education will conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance with the NSCC, the application of Zero-tolerance policies, and the proper documentation of all incidents.
- Stakeholder feedback, including input from parents, students, and staff, will be incorporated into annual evaluations of the NSCC.
- The NSCC will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, policy shifts, or emerging best practices.

Laws & Circulars



Laws and Frameworks

National Legislation & Policies

1. Anti-Gang Act 2021
2. Education Act, Chap. 39:01 (Trinidad and Tobago)
3. Children Act, 2012 (Act No. 12 of 2012)
4. The Sexual Offences Act, Chapter 11:28, Section 31(1), as amended by the Sexual Offences Act, No 19 of 2019
5. Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 45:56 27 of 1999 (as amended by Act No. 8 of 2020)
6. Data Protection Act, 2011 (Act No. 13 of 2011)
7. Judges' Rules for Children, 2016
8. Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chap. 88:08
9. Education (Teaching Service) (Amendment) Regulations, 2000
10. National Parenting Policy (Ministry of Social Development and Family Services)

International Conventions & Human Rights Instruments

11. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – esp. Articles 3, 19, 28, 29, and 40
12. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
13. UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines)
14. UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules)

Educational and Behavioural Frameworks

15. Restorative Practices Framework (e.g., International Institute for Restorative Practices)
16. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework
17. PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Programme
18. RULER Programme (Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence)
19. Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – U.S. Department of Education

20. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) – adapted for behavioural and academic support
21. Safe and Supportive Schools Framework – UNESCO and UNICEF recommendations
22. National School Hair Code (2023/24) – Ministry of Education, T&T
23. School-Based Management Policy – Ministry of Education, T&T

Appendix



Appendix A - Definitions of Key Terms

- **Arson/Incendiary Device:** Intentionally setting fires or using fireworks/explosives that endanger safety.
- **Assault without Weapon:** Physically attacking or attempting to injure someone without an object.
- **Assault with Weapon:** Using an object or weapon to cause or attempt to cause harm.
- **Behavioural Contact – BC:** a written and signed agreement between the student, the parent, and the school administration that outlines specific expected behaviours and consequences for failing to meet expectations.
- **Bomb Threats/False Alarms:** Falsely reporting threats that trigger emergency response.
- **Bullying/Intimidation:** Repeated verbal, physical, or emotional attacks to exert power or control.
- **Class Truancy:** Deliberately missing class or being on school compound but not in class.
- **Criminal Harassment/Stalking:** Repeated, unwelcome attention or behaviour that causes fear or intimidation.
- **Cyber Bullying:** Harassment, threats, or humiliation via electronic means.
- **Detention:** Student(s) are expected to remain in a designated area under the supervision of school staff. Detention will be concurrent with school breaks and lunch periods. The student is expected to complete schoolwork and reflect on their behaviour(s).
- **Digital citizenship:** The ability to use digital technologies safely, responsibly, ethically, and effectively while participating in online and digital communities.
- **Disorderly/Disruptive Conduct:** Loud, rowdy, or inappropriate behaviour disrupting learning.
- **Disrespect/Defiance to Authority:** Refusing to follow lawful directions from staff.
- **Expulsion:** the permanent removal of a student from a particular school.
- **Extortion and Taxing:** Using threats to demand money or property from another person.
- **Fight with Weapon:** Physical altercation involving the use of a weapon.
- **Fight without Weapon:** Physical fight not involving weapons.
- **Forgery:** Creating or using fake documents or signatures.
- **Gambling:** Participating in games of chance for monetary gain.
- **Gang:** A combination of two or more persons, whether formally or informally organised, who engage in gang-related activity.
- **Gang Leader:** A person who initiates, organises, plans, finances, directs, manages, or supervises a gang.
- **Gang Member:** A person who belongs to a gang or associates himself with gang-related activity.

- **Gang-Related Activity:** Any of the offences listed in the First Schedule of the Anti-Gang Act which a gang leader or gang member plans, directs, orders, authorises, or requests, including: (a) an attempt to commit the offence; (b) the aiding, abetting, counselling, or procuring of the offence; or (c) conspiracy to commit the offence.

Note: The First Schedule includes offences such as possession of imitation firearms, arson, larceny of motor vehicle, robbery, assault, drug trafficking, sexual offences, and others connected to gang operations.

- **Hate Speech/Threats:** Speech targeting others based on race, religion, sex, or orientation.
- **Improper Use of School ID/Pass:** Misusing, lending, or forging hall passes or IDs.
- **Inappropriate Display of Affection:** Physical contact such as kissing or prolonged hugging.
- **Inappropriate Attire:** Wearing non-uniform items or dress not aligned with school standards.
- **Infraction:** An action that contravenes the behaviour standards established in the NSCC and may range from minor to severe.
- **In-School Suspension-** a disciplinary action where a student is temporarily removed from their regular classroom but remains at school under the direct supervision of school staff for the duration of the school day. The student is expected to complete schoolwork and reflect on their behaviour(s).
- **Insubordination in Online Settings:** Refusing instructions or misbehaving during virtual classes.
- **Medical Exemption for Use of Technology:** Official permission granted to a student to use digital devices during the school day due to a documented medical, psychological, or developmental condition. Exemptions must be supported by medical reports, psychoeducational assessments, or recommendations from healthcare professionals. E.g., Visual impairment, medical conditions requiring monitoring.
- **Misuse of Technology:** Inappropriate use of school devices or networks.
- **Possession of Inappropriate Materials:** Pornographic, violent, or discriminatory content.
- **Possession of Weapons:** Carrying knives, guns, or imitation weapons.
- **Possession/Use of Alcohol:** Possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages.
- **Possession/Use of Drugs:** Possessing or using illegal substances (e.g., marijuana, cocaine).
- **Possession/Use of Tobacco/Vaping Products:** Possessing or using tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vape pens.
- **Propagate Misinformation-Mischief:** Spreading lies or making false reports to disrupt.
- **Revenge Porn/Sextortion:** Sharing or threatening to share explicit images without consent.

- **Robbery:** Taking property directly from a person by force, violence, or intimidation.
- **Severe Breach of Data Security:** Unauthorised access to or manipulation of digital school records.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted sexual advances, jokes, or contact.
- **Sexual Misconduct:** Engaging in sexual acts, sexting, or public indecency.
- **Suspension:** the temporary removal of a student from a particular school.
- **Tampering with School Equipment/Systems:** Disabling or modifying digital or physical equipment.
- **Theft:** Taking property from a person without permission and with the intention to permanently deprive him/her of it.

- **Threat with Weapon:** Using a weapon to threaten harm.
- **Threat without Weapon:** Verbal or written threats of harm.
- **Unauthorised Filming or Photography:** Capturing images without consent and posting online.
- **Use of Obscene Language:** Profanity, vulgar, or offensive speech.
- **Vandalism:** Damaging, defacing, or destroying school property.

Appendix B - Understanding Student Suspensions and Expulsions

Timelines, Procedures, and Related Measures

This document outlines the key principles, legal basis, and responsibilities involved in managing student misconduct, with a specific focus on the timelines and procedures for extended suspensions, expulsion, and other related measures.

Legal Foundation

The procedures are rooted in the **Education Act, Chapter 39:01**, specifically:

- **Sections 27 (a) and (d)**
- **Sections 43-46**

These legal provisions are further supported by various **Circular Memoranda**, which provide specific guidance:

- No. 54 - May 27, 1999
- No. 86 - April 20, 1997
- No. 76 - September 2, 2008
- Procedures for Child Sexual Abuse Allegations (Circular Memorandum No. 76, September 02, 2004)
- Circular Memorandum No. 3 - February 2, 2012, Subject: Violence is not Discipline: Discipline must never be Violence
- Circular No. 16 of 2014 - March 25, 2014, Subject: Violence and Indiscipline in Schools
- Circular No. 32 of 2015 - October 7, 2015, Subject: Violence and Indiscipline in Schools (replaces Circular No. 16 of 2014)
- Circular Memorandum No. 22 of 2016 - April 22, 2016, Subject: Student Discipline In and Out of School (replaces Circular Memoranda No. 4 of 1997 and No. 29 of 1999)
- Circular from the Chief Education Officer (CEO) E: 19/13/6 dated June 07, 2022 – Measures to Deal with School Violence – Expulsion
- Circular Memorandum No. 11 of 2023 - April 25, 2023, Subject: Removal of Students from the School Compound by Police Officers

Core Principles

When addressing student misconduct, the following guiding principles are paramount:

- **Best Interest of the Child:** The well-being and future of the student are always a primary consideration.
- **Safety and Security:** Protecting other students, staff members, and everyone on the school compound is essential.
- **Preventive/Protective, Not Punitive:** The focus is on preventing future incidents and ensuring a safe environment, rather than solely on punishment.
- **Violence is not Discipline:** Children must not be victims of any form of violence, especially physical violence in the name of discipline.
- **Children are legally and morally entitled** to care, security, and a good upbringing.
- **Children must be treated with respect** and not subjected to physical punishment or other harmful or humiliating treatment.

National School Code of Conduct

The NSCC outlines infractions, their consequences, and the processes for administering them.

- The revised strategies aim to address the root causes of indiscipline, teach positive behaviour, encourage community involvement, and provide positive role models.
- Principals and teachers must ensure that students committing infractions receive the applicable reprimands, consequences, and interventions.
- Students with more than three (3) suspensions in one (1) academic year must be identified to the relevant Schools Supervisors and Officers of the Student Support Services Division for further action.

Principal's Responsibilities

When a serious incident occurs, the principal is responsible for a thorough and swift response. This approach aligns with the Zero-Tolerance policy for major infractions as outlined in the NSCC:

- **Investigate Thoroughly:** All reported incidents must be investigated.
- **Gather Statements:** Obtain written statements from all involved parties.
- **Verify Allegations:** Ensure there is good reason to believe the allegations are true and an offence has been committed.

- **Complete Suspension Form:** Fill out the "Notice of Suspension and Attendance at School" forms in triplicate.
- **Immediate Notification:**
 - Notify the parent or guardian immediately.
 - **Notice of Suspension** must be given **only** to the parent or guardian, signed, and dated before issuance.
 - If a parent or guardian refuses to accept the notice, it must be witnessed and an appropriate entry made in the school log.
- **Notify the Minister:** Immediately inform the Minister of Education through the district office. This must include a copy of the completed suspension form and a preliminary report.
- **Submit Full Report:** A comprehensive report, including a written narrative of the incident, investigation findings, and statements from all parties (aggrieved, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses), must reach the district office within three (3) days.
- **Student Removal:** The student should be removed from the school compound at the end of the school day, or during school hours with the parent's consent or knowledge.
- **Duty of Care:** A Principal is liable for a reasonable duty of care for every student and must utilise resources to ensure a safe learning environment.
- **Immediate Reporting of School Violence:** Any incident of school violence must be immediately reported to the Schools Supervisor, Director of School Supervision and CEO. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Violence and Indiscipline in Schools: Proactive Strategies and Reporting

To address school violence and indiscipline, principals are urged to take proactive measures and ensure timely reporting:

- **Risk Assessment and Strategy Implementation:** Conduct a risk assessment and devise and implement strategies that are monitored and evaluated regularly to eliminate or limit violent episodes both in and out of school.
- **Meaningful Morning Assembly:** Make morning assembly meaningful by speaking to students on topics such as the negative consequences of bullying and school violence.
- **Parent and Community Engagement:** Greater engagement of parents and the school community in school activities.

- **Structured Supervision:** Ensure all classes are always supervised by implementing a system of structured supervision and monitoring compliance.
- **Utilising Student Leadership:** Establish creative ways of utilising the School Prefect and Student Councils.
- **Diverse Activities:** Provide a diverse range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to engage students in productive recreation.
- **School Website:** Create a school website to showcase and celebrate student achievements.
- **Aesthetically Pleasing Environment:** Utilise the creative skills of teachers and students to ensure the school environment is aesthetically pleasing.
- **School Development Plan:** Include student indiscipline as an area of focus in your School Development Plan, considering the unique culture and incidents of indiscipline at your school.

Measures to Deal with School Violence – Expulsion

Measures to address incidents of violent behaviour, as outlined in the Education Act Chapter 39:01 and the National School Code of Conduct, must be strictly enforced.

- Students who commit serious offences, such as engaging in fights resulting in serious injury or wielding dangerous weapons, whether in school uniform, on or off school grounds, face the maximum penalty of expulsion.
- Expelled students who are of compulsory school age must continue their schooling at alternative institutions.
- Principals are required to report all such incidents immediately to the nearest Police Station. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has indicated they will lay appropriate charges in such circumstances.
- An incident report must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary, through established channels, within two (2) hours of discovery or notification.

Specific Offences Requiring Maximum Suspension and Police Notification:

Principals are directed to impose the maximum suspension for the following offences and report the suspension to the Minister forthwith for possible further disciplinary action:

- Possession of illicit drugs, regardless of quantity.
- Possession of arms and/or ammunition.

- Extreme violence to anyone.
- Any form of assault of any member of staff of any school.
- Possession or consumption of alcohol on school premises.
- Informing the police about students found in possession of illicit drugs and/or weapons or who have allegedly committed a sexual offence is not a substitute for suspending such students.

The Case Conference (Extended Suspension)

A **Case Conference** is held after an act of serious misconduct, especially when an extended suspension is being considered or granted.

- **Initiation:** An extended suspension can be requested by the principal and/or advocated by the Schools Supervisor III and formally granted by the Minister of Education. The student and their parents/guardians are then informed.
- **Team Composition:** At the district level, a small team conducts further investigation using a case conference format. This team includes:
 - Schools Supervisor III
 - Guidance Officer II
 - Senior School Social Worker
 - School Representative
- **Meeting with the Student:** The suspended student, along with their parents or guardians, must meet with this team.
- **Required Information:** Before the conference, the following documents should be provided to the team:
 - Student Cumulative Record Card
 - Progress Report
 - Principal's/School Report on the incident
 - Student's written version of the incident (if available)
 - Any diagnostic assessments conducted by the guidance officer or teacher
 - Student Behaviour Record

- **Conference Objectives:** The main goals of the case conference are to:
 - Allow the student/parent/guardian an opportunity to review and discuss the allegations.
 - Ensure the student experiences a fair process.
 - Provide the panel with a complete picture of the student to act in the student's best interests.
 - Make recommendations to the Minister regarding the student's continued educational development.
- **Roles of Personnel:**
 - **Schools Supervisor III:** Acts as Chairperson/investigator, presents general student information, clarifies incident details, and makes final recommendations to the Minister.
 - **Guidance Officer II:** Advocates for the student, clinically reviews the student's behaviour and performance, and provides consultation and recommendations to the Chairperson.
- **Recommendations:** At the end of the conference, appropriate recommendations are made to the Minister.

Expulsion Warning Letter and Reinstatement Procedure

This section outlines the process for serving an expulsion warning letter before a student is reinstated.

Before the Meeting with Parents:

- **Principal's Actions:**
 - The principal receives the original reinstatement letter from the Minister and files a copy in the student's suspension file.
 - The principal prepares a reinstatement letter for the parents, using the sample from **Circular Memorandum No. 13 of 2019, dated July 1, 2019.**
 - This letter must be ready and brought by the principal to the meeting.

At the Meeting:

- **Attendees:** The following individuals **must** be present:
 - Schools Supervisor
 - SSSD representative(s)
 - Principal
 - Parent
 - Student
 - Any other relevant personnel deemed necessary by the Schools Supervisor in consultation with the Principal and SSSD.

Steps:

- The **conditions of reinstatement**, as detailed in the expulsion warning letter, must be clearly explained to both the parent and the student.
- Any concerns or questions from the parent will be discussed.
- The parent will read the letter with the attached measures and sign a copy, which will be kept (folioed) in the student's suspension file. The date and time of the signature must also be noted on the copy.
- **If the parent refuses to sign:** The letter is still considered served. The supervisor will sign the copy, indicating that the letter was served but the parent refused to sign. The SSSD personnel/Principal present will sign as a witness below the Supervisor's signature, including the date and time.
- The principal serves the reinstatement letter to the parent, with a copy signed by the parent and retained at the school.

Removal of Students from the School Compound by Police Officers

Principals must adhere to specific guidelines when Police Officers are involved in the removal of students from school compounds.

- Police officers may request a child to voluntarily attend a police station, at which point the child is not arrested and is free to leave unless reasonable grounds for arrest arise.
- Children should not be arrested at school unless they are about to commit, are committing, or have committed an offence and it is necessary to secure evidence.

- When arresting a child at school, the police officer must show their Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) identification card to the principal or the most senior teaching staff member present.

Principal's actions when police enter the compound to interact with a student:

1. Ensure officers report to security before proceeding to the principal's office.
2. Request officers to show their TTPS identification to security and the principal.
3. Enquire about the police station to which the officers are attached.
4. Record names and identification card numbers of officers in the Logbook. If necessary and circumstances allow, contact the Police Station to confirm identity.
5. Assist the officers for swift resolution with minimal disruption to school operations.
6. Note that identified officers are entitled to detain or arrest within their power.
7. Do not obstruct officers in their duties; they are not obligated to disclose information to school administration.
8. Contact the student's parents/guardians to inform them of police interaction and subsequent removal.
9. Record all incident details in the Logbook and complete a report on the incident which should be forwarded to the office of School Supervision.
10. Instruct the Form Teacher and Dean of student/s to keep a record of the incident and monitor student/s behaviour/absence because of the incident.

The principal may offer counselling as appropriate to the circumstances.

Support for School Violence Reduction by the TTPS Community Police

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with other ministries and agencies, has initiated efforts to reduce school violence and indiscipline through a multi-disciplinary team approach.

- Officers from the TTPS Community Police provide support to selected schools through visits aimed at empowering students and promoting peace.
- Activities include interactive skits, lectures, and educational booths involving students, teachers, and community stakeholders.

Monitoring of Security on School Compounds

Principals/Administrators, Schools Supervisors, and Administrative Staff are reminded to complete the Monthly Statement of Performance Form to ensure adequate security personnel are on duty and performing contracted services.

- Completed forms must be submitted to the Health Safety and Security Unit via email at SHSSUnit@moe.gov.tt on or before the 7th day of the subsequent month for processing.
- The form includes details on services performed satisfactorily (e.g., gate duty, entrance control, sentry duty, key & access control, reporting/investigating security breaches, control of ingress/egress, prevention of unauthorised material/visitors, patrols).
- It also requires indicating the security strength assigned and days the strength was not at capacity.

Procedures for Child Sexual Abuse Allegations (Circular Memorandum No. 76, September 02, 2004)

There are three (3) main stages for all school personnel regarding matters of Child Sexual Abuse:

Reporting

- School personnel are responsible for reporting, not for investigating or determining guilt.
- When a report is made, school personnel must listen, gather facts, and record the information as provided by the person making the report.
- Information should be recorded consistent with the Sexual Offences Act Chap 11:28, Amended by Act 31 of 2000, Section 31B.
- The principal or teacher who receives the information from the student/parent/ other adult must make a formal report in person at the police station or Crime Protection Unit. The principal shall retain a copy of the police receipt to keep on record.
- The principal must inform parents after the report is made to the police station.
- The principal must then report to the Ministry through normal channels.
- The principal must also refer the matter to the Student Support Services Division at the district level for student and family support.
- Principals must inform the Children's Authority via their hotline number 800-2014.
- Copies of all reports and supporting documents must be sent to the Director of School Supervision through the Schools Supervisor (DSS).

- If the allegation is against the principal/teacher/public service staff, the DSS will forward all documents to the Industrial Relations Division for assigning of an investigator in keeping with the Public Service/Teaching Service Regulations. If necessary, the file can also be sent to the Legal Division for further guidance.

Investigating

The police are responsible for investigating and deciding whether charges should be laid. They are also to inform parent.

If the allegation is against the principal, teacher or public service staff, the Schools Supervisor will conduct investigations in conjunction with Public Service/Teaching Service Regulations

Determining

The Court determines guilt or innocence. The Public Service/Teaching Service may also conduct a tribunal hearing depending on the findings of the Regulation 90 investigation to also decide of any action is to be taken by the relevant Commission.

Appendix C - In-School Suspension Programme

The In-School Suspension (ISS) Programme is intended as an alternative to traditional suspension. This programme is developed at the level of the school and coordinated by the School-Based Management (SBM) team, with primary responsibility resting on the Administration, Deans, and the Student Support Services Division (SSSD). Teachers who are willing to assist may also be engaged to support its implementation.

Since the ISS generally rely on the Deans and SSSD to deliver the core aspects, the programme is supplemented by the voluntary involvement of other teachers.

Under this programme, students are required to report to school but do not attend their regular timetabled classes. Instead, they follow an alternative schedule within a designated detention room.

This schedule may include:

- **Counselling sessions** conducted by the Dean, SSSD personnel, or approved NGOs.
- **Targeted intervention programmes** tailored to the specific issue. These may involve collaboration with external stakeholders such as NGOs, community police, mediation centres, and mentorship organisations.
- **School community service** activities, e.g., assisting with lunch distribution, supporting library operations, or other meaningful tasks.
- **Research and reflection assignments** directly related to the infraction, supervised by assigned teachers.
- **Mentorship sessions** with teachers who volunteer to guide and support the student.
- **Parent-student sessions**, where deemed necessary, facilitated by the school social worker.

The primary aim of the ISS period is to provide **intervention and support**, rather than simple punishment. The process relies heavily on the input of Deans, form teachers, SSSD personnel, and external partners.

Before re-entry into regular classes, both the student and parent are required to sign a behavioural contract outlining agreed expectations and commitments.

Appendix D - Rights of the Child

Children in Trinidad and Tobago are afforded a wide range of protections and entitlements under the law, including but not limited to:

- **Survival and Identity:** The right to live, survive, grow, and be registered at birth or adoption as a citizen.
- **Non-Discrimination:** The right not to be discriminated against based on age, race, origin, colour, religion, sex, or the beliefs/actions of their family members.
- **Family and Privacy:** The right to know and be cared for by their parents, not to be separated from them against their will (unless by court order), and to privacy in their home and correspondence.
- **Freedom of Expression and Association:** The right to hold their own ideas, including religious beliefs, express their views freely, and associate peacefully with others.
- **Protection from Violence:** The crucial right not to be subjected to violence by any person, including family members, teachers, or public officers.
- **Education and Work:** The right to free education up to age 16 and protection from dangerous work or work that interferes with their education.
- **Legal Protections (for child offenders):**
 - Protection from inhumane or degrading punishment if in custody.
 - A child under 11 giving evidence in court is not subject to perjury laws and can give evidence electronically.
 - The right not to be subject to capital punishment or life imprisonment.
 - The right not to be placed in custody with adult prisoners.

Responsibilities of the Child

While enjoying special protections, children in Trinidad and Tobago also have responsibilities that they must observe, proportionate to their age and understanding. These include:

- **Law and Property:** To respect and obey the law, and not to take or harm another person's property without permission.
- **Human Rights:** To learn about and respect the rights of others.
- **Family and Education:** To respect parental guidance (unless legally contradicted) and attend school until age 16.

- **Culture and Environment:** To learn about and respect their culture, language, country, and the environment.
- **Expression and Belief:** To express their views on matters affecting them and to respect their own and others' religious beliefs.

Appendix E - Inclusive Education

The Ministry of Education is committed to delivering inclusive education in all schools, ensuring that teaching and learning are accessible, equitable, and of high quality for every student. Education must be available, acceptable, adaptable, and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Inclusive education policies and practices extend to all aspects of the school environment, including disciplinary measures, which must be flexible, individualised, and supportive rather than punitive.

Such measures take into consideration categories of students such as:

- Students with diverse learning difficulties and/or challenges, including disabilities.
- Students identified as gifted or talented.
- Students living with chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS.
- Students from remote, impoverished, or otherwise disadvantaged communities.
- Students from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minority backgrounds.
- Students with language barriers or limited proficiency in the language of instruction.
- Students who are victims of crime or have experienced trauma.

Inclusive education recognises that a modern and equitable society must have the educational rights of all children as a foundational pillar. The revised school discipline policy with a renewed focus on zero-tolerance models, also ensures equity and fairness in addressing acts of indiscipline and will facilitate supportive, individualised interventions, which ensures every student is treated with dignity and respect.

Appendix F - Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL is a framework designed to help youth understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, improve their relationships, manage their feelings and behaviours, and engage in responsible decision-making. SEL should be infused and integrated throughout the school community and routines through explicit instruction and modelling by staff, as well as integrated with the curriculum. Key competencies include:

- **Self-Awareness:** Recognising emotions and assessing one's strengths and challenges.
- **Self-Management:** Controlling emotions and impulses, managing stress, self-motivation, and setting and achieving goals.
- **Social Awareness:** Identifying others' emotions, showing empathy, and understanding other perspectives.
- **Relationship Skills:** Building healthy relationships, communication skills, conflict resolution, and collaborating with others.
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** Making wise choices and evaluating potential consequences.

Emotional Intelligence is also foundational to a successful SEL climate.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others (Psychology Today, n.d.).

How to Teach and Develop Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Curriculum Integration

Embed EI in existing subjects:

- Language Arts: Use literature to explore character emotions, conflict, and resolution.
- Social Studies: Discuss moral dilemmas, social justice, and empathy.
- Health and Family Life Education (HFLE): Teach self-awareness, coping skills, and respectful communication.
- Drama & Art: Role-play emotions, express inner states through creative outlets.

Social-Emotional Learning Programmes

Implement a structured Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programme, such as:

- PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)
- RULER (Recognising, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing, Regulating emotions)
- CASEL Framework (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

Customise for local culture by integrating Caribbean proverbs, folklore, and real-life situations.

Classroom Practices

- Daily Emotional Check-Ins: Use mood meters or “feelings circles.”
- Mindfulness Activities: Deep breathing, guided meditation, or silent reflection.
- Journaling: Encourage emotional reflection through writing prompts.
- Conflict Resolution Exercises: Teach negotiation, active listening, and perspective-taking.

Teacher Training

Train educators to model emotional intelligence in:

- Classroom management
- Discipline with empathy
- Supportive teacher-student relationships
- Encourage emotional self-care and stress management for teachers as well.

Peer Support Programmes

- Peer Mediation Teams
- Buddy Systems: Pair students for mentoring.
- Student Councils with EI training: Promote empathy-driven leadership

Parent & Community Involvement

- Host parenting workshops on emotional coaching in collaboration with relevant stakeholders (e.g. NPTA).
- Use school-family partnerships to reinforce EI at home.
- Include religious leaders, counsellors, and community workers in student development.

Safe School Climate

- Promote zero-tolerance for bullying and discrimination.
- Display emotion vocabulary charts and “calm corners” in classrooms.
- Celebrate acts of kindness and positive behaviour through awards and assemblies.

Assessment and Feedback

- Use reflective journals.

Appendix G - Positive Behaviour Intervention Strategies (PBIS)

1. Establish Clear Expectations

- Define 3–5 positively stated behavioural expectations (e.g., *Respect Yourself, Respect Others, Respect Property*).
- Teach, model, and reinforce them consistently across all settings.

2. Teach and Practise Desired Behaviours

- Provide explicit lessons on expected behaviours (e.g., how to line up, how to use respectful language).
- Role-play and practise in real contexts (classroom, playground, corridors).

3. Positive Reinforcement and Acknowledgement

- Use verbal praise, recognition boards, tokens, or reward systems to acknowledge appropriate behaviour.
- Provide immediate and specific feedback (e.g., *“Thank you for raising your hand before speaking.”*).

4. Consistent Routines and Structure

- Implement predictable schedules and classroom procedures.
- Use visual cues, reminders, and signals to support transitions and routines.

5. Proactive Classroom Management

- Arrange seating and materials to minimise disruptions.
- Use proximity, non-verbal cues, and active supervision.
- Redirect calmly before behaviours escalate.

6. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Incorporate lessons on empathy, self-regulation, and problem-solving.
- Use check-ins, mindfulness practices, and restorative conversations.

7. Restorative Practices

- Encourage students to reflect on their actions and repair harm done.
- Use restorative circles and peer mediation instead of punitive measures.

8. Data-Driven Decision-Making

- Track behaviour incidents and positive reinforcements.
- Identify patterns and provide targeted support for individuals or groups.

9. Tiered Support System

- **Tier 1 (Universal):** School-wide expectations, reinforcement, SEL, routines.
- **Tier 2 (Targeted):** Small group interventions (social skills groups, mentoring).
- **Tier 3 (Intensive):** Individualised behaviour support plans, functional behaviour assessments.

10. Family and Community Involvement

- Communicate behaviour expectations and successes with parents.
- Involve families in reinforcing positive behaviour at home.

Appendix H - 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.

Duties of teacher

Under Section 63 (2) of the 'Regulations', in the discharge of his/her duties, a teacher shall be courteous and polite to colleagues, students and members of the public.

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 the 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.



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