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OSHA/COMP: 2/4/1

September 21, 2026

Ms. Simone Williams
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Lower St. Vincent Street,
Port of Spain

Dear Ms. Williams.

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE REPORT ON THE REFUSAL TO WORK AT THE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, NO. 5 LOWER ST. VINCENT STREET, PORT OF
SPAIN**

I, **Edson Jackson**, being an Inspector duly appointed by an instrument in writing pursuant to Section 71(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Chapter 88:08 (“OSH Act”), hereby give notice that, having considered the circumstances surrounding the refusal to work at the Ministry of Education Tower A Building, located at No. 5 Lower St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain, I am of the opinion that the conditions at the said workplace do not constitute a serious risk to the health of employees.

The reasons for my said opinion are based on the findings of my investigation into the matter, as set out below.

The Occupational Safety and Health Agency (hereinafter referred to as “OSHA”) received notification of a Refusal to Work on September 11, 2026.

The report highlighted safety and health concerns raised by staff regarding sanitation and reported sightings of rats (pest infestation) on the ground, first, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth floors of the Ministry of Education’s Administration Building. These conditions had the potential to pose health risks to employees, including possible exposure to diseases such as leptospirosis.

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

On September 17, 2026, a site visit was conducted by the undersigned.

Discussions were held with the following key individuals:

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Mr. Desmond Noel	Deputy Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Education
Mr. Osei Julien	Facilities Manager	Ministry of Education
Mr. Shazam Ali	Joint Consultation Committee Representative	Ministry of Education
Mr. Ravindra Mahadeo	Health, Safety and Environment Officer	Ministry of Education
Ms. Carlene Cabralo	General Administrator	Ministry of Education

Observations made and discussions held during the investigation indicated that the Refusal to Work was not justified, as no evidence of live rats or rat droppings was observed on the ground, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth floors at the time of the site visit.

Several control measures were implemented by the Ministry of Education to address the reported pest concerns. Bait traps were observed strategically placed within the reported affected office areas by the Public Health Department and were being monitored daily by the Facilities Management Team.

Management also committed to maintaining daily cleaning and sanitization of all affected floors. Additionally, further pest-control and preventive measures were being implemented to mitigate the risk of pest infestation and to support the maintenance of a safe and sanitary working environment for all Ministry of Education employees.

FINDINGS

REFUSAL TO WORK CONCERNS	FINDINGS
Sanitation and Pest Infestation: Reports of rodent activity, including sightings of rats and the presence of rat droppings, were identified on the ground, first, third, fifth, and seventh floors of the building. The presence of rodents and evidence of infestation constitute a potential occupational health and safety concern for employees occupying these areas and may increase the risk of exposure to	At the time of the inspection, no live rodents, evidence of rodent activity, or visible rodent droppings were observed within the areas inspected. Notwithstanding this, evidence of pest-control interventions implemented by the Ministry of Health (MOH), Public Health Department, was observed. These interventions were undertaken to address the potential rodent infestation and mitigate the associated occupational health and safety hazards. The control measures reportedly involved the application of

REFUSAL TO WORK CONCERNS	FINDINGS
biological hazards associated with rodents.	environmentally responsible rodent-control treatment methods. While the implementation of these control measures indicates that remedial action had been initiated, supporting documentation or a formal pest-control report from the Ministry of Health was not available for review at the time of the inspection. Consequently, the extent, effectiveness, and outcome of the pest-control intervention could not be independently verified.

CONCLUSION

Based on the investigation conducted on September 17, 2026, and the evidence obtained, the conditions identified above did not expose employees to an unacceptable health risk. Therefore, the Refusal to Work action taken by staff from September 14, 2026, to September 17, 2026, was not justified.

Please be advised that, pursuant to Section 18(3) of the OSH Act:

“A person who is aggrieved by the decision of the Inspector may apply to the Chief Inspector to review the decision of the Inspector.”

Yours respectfully,



Mr. Edson Jackson
Safety and Health Inspector II

Cc: Mr. Desmond Noel – Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education