

# PRIMARY & SECONDARY

## GENERAL ISSUES

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – CHILDREN IN SHELTERS – ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

(14/11/2023)

(No. B/1467) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the end of year school holidays, she will state the actions being taken by her Ministry in terms of activities and entertainment for children admitted in Shelters.

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to activities and entertainment for children admitted in Residential Carer Institutions, I am informed that there exists a mandatory requirement on all managers to submit a monthly calendar for both indoor and outdoor activities to my Ministry. The Enforcement Officers of my Ministry regularly monitor the implementation of these activities. They also ensure that all outdoor activities proposed by the managers of the RCIs are according to different criteria like age group and number of caregivers required to supervise the activities and taking care of all security and sanitary measures.

The outdoor activities include but are not limited to outings to the seaside, visits to leisure parks, museums, only to name a few.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore in the context of the Universal Children's Day that is celebrated on 20 November every year, my Ministry in collaboration with the National Children's Council is organising a recreational fun day at Gros Cailloux Leisure Park whereby 200 children, aged between 8 years and above, from different RCIs, would be participating in a number of recreational activities such as Tyrolienne, Pedalo, etc.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that children admitted in the RCIs especially those aged between 7 and 15, will be participating in the much laudable programme '*Nager, C'est Vital*' organised by the Mauritius Sports Council that is going to be held throughout November and December. My Ministry will be providing the necessary equipment for that purpose. The children will also be participating in the '*special vacances*' organised by my good colleague, the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation.

**Mr Doolub:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Minister mentioned activities organised for the Universal Children's Day, good enough but I would like to know for the other days during the school holidays. Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister tell us whether the list of activities is being prepared by the RCI's or it's your Ministry that provides the list of activities? Thank you.

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir, the list is not prepared by my Ministry. The list is submitted by the management of every RCI that houses our children. We have a list, my Ministry is in possession of a list, in fact we call it the *calendrier d'activités* for each and every month and I do have the one for November and December but there is some information herein which is quite confidential and I would rather not table this.

**Mr Doolub:** Thankyou. I heard from the Minister that special arrangements are being made for these children for the end of year holidays. Can we know what these special arrangements are?

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned and the House will appreciate, the children who are housed in our RCI's are housed there and they are protected within a legal framework. So, when I speak about special arrangements, I am mentioning specific security arrangements, specific sanitary measures that have to be addressed, the health check that has to be carried out and authorisation obtained from relevant authorities before we can allow our children to participate in different specifications activities.