

SECONDARY

DRUGS PROBLEMS

PRE-PRIMARY & PRIMARY SCHOOLS – CORPORAL PUNISHMENT – REPORTED CASES

(24.11.2020)

(No. B/943) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to corporal punishment inflicted by teachers in preprimary and primary schools, she will state the number of reported cases thereof since January 2019 to date, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto by the authorities in each case.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since January 2019 till date, the number of corporal punishment cases reported to the Police in pre-primary and primary schools stands at 28, of these, 3 pertain to pre-primary sector.

Police has further informed that 24 cases are under enquiry. For 2 cases, the DPP has advised that no further action is required. As for the 2 remaining cases, the advice of the DPP is still awaited. There were also complaints that were made schools and at zone level which were not, however, reported to the Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry has a zero tolerance policy in regard to corporal punishment and any other form of violence in schools. Any incident relating to corporal punishment is immediately investigated, and based on confirmed evidence of corporal punishment having been resorted to, appropriate disciplinary action is taken. The Ministry regularly draws the attention of heads of schools to the fact that corporal punishment is against international convention protecting the rights of the child and is illegal. They have been urged to regularly sensitise all teaching and non-teaching as well.

Moreover, children who unfortunately become victims of corporal punishment are provided with the support of an educational psychologist who counsels them and helps them to overcome any distress caused by such incidents.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Merci. Peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre si les enseignants sont sensibilisés aux effets néfastes de la punition corporelle et formés à la Discipline Positive et non violente?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, sir, in fact, they are constantly being given training, and also, they are given advice as to how to proceed with students and what is considered to be pedagogically sound. Obviously, Positive Discipline is a major field that is being now considered.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci, M. le président. Pourrait-on savoir qui sont les formateurs à la Discipline Positive, qui donnent les cours de formation, s'il vous plaît?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: En principe au ministère de l'Education, c'est la *MIE*, l'institut pédagogique qui a la charge de la formation des professeurs. Mais nous avons aussi eu des discussions avec certains représentants de la *SeDEC* qui ont proposé de nous venir en aide et de discuter la proposition de donner des cours aux professeurs dans la Discipline Positive.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SECONDARY

DRUGS PROBLEMS

PRIMARY SCHOOLS & COLLEGES - EARLY/TEENAGE PREGNANCIES - SUPPORT

(24.11.2020)

(No. B/931) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to early/teenage pregnancies, she will state if the primary schools and colleges have the adequate amenities to cater for such special cases and, if so, indicate the infrastructure in place and support provided.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a dedicated support is provided to pregnant students by their schools and the National Education Counselling Services of my Ministry. In this regard, the educational psychologists and educational social workers of the NEC provide backup support to students at school level and how to deal with their new situation and manage their studies at the same time. Moreover, they also act as facilitators and advise students and families on the importance of continued specialised care.

Mr Speaker, Sir, home visits are conducted by educational social workers with a view of encouraging the students to attend school during their pregnancy, depending on their health status as well as after confinement. Furthermore, when such a situation arises, educational psychologists also conduct class talks with the students' peers to ensure acceptance during pregnancy and the smooth reintegration of the students at school after confinement. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is in order to avoid any form of stigma.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Est-ce que la ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre, s'il est vrai que dans les cas de grossesses précoces dans les écoles et les collèges, ces élèves sont automatiquement référées à la CDU qui place ces élèves dans les *Shelters*?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is not the case, I have just mentioned that students are, in fact, taken care of and the educational social workers do even go at their places for home visits to ensure that everything is being done according to our legislation.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Will the Minister consider having the services of a midwife attached to this specific college whenever there is a pregnant schoolgirl as they are at higher risk compared to the normal adult pregnant woman?

Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry does not intend to go ahead with such a measure. However, all support required for the student will be provided if ever the situation arises.

Mrs Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Est-ce-que la vice-Premier ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre si son ministère a la volonté politique d'arrêter les barrières et de donner des facilités de garderie pour l'allaitement et aussi accorder une possibilité de retarder les examens en cas d'accouchement?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not think that we will be in a position to have nurseries attached to schools. However, in case a mother needs to breastfeed her child, necessary arrangements may be made for that particular person in case she wants to get the child to school instead of going home for breastfeeding.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister - and if she does not have the figure, she can table it later on - roughly, how many pregnant students go to primary school and colleges at the moment or in past years?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been advised that there are no such cases in primary schools. However, I have got the figures for 2019 and 2020. Reported cases for 2019, there were two cases of students at school; for 2020 we had eight students.