

# PRIMARY

## SCHOOLS/TEACHERS

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS & EXTENDED PROGRAMME STUDENTS – HEALTH ISSUES

(16.05.2023)

(No. B/516) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the primary school pupils and students of the Extended Programme having health issues, she will state the number thereof, since January 2019 to date, being taken care of by the health authorities in each case, indicating the names of the schools and colleges concerned therewith.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, right at the outset, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has as its core business, the provision of an inclusive and quality education.

It is also aware of the significance of looking after the health, social and emotional wellbeing of all learners. The emphasis is on all learners and not exclusively on students of the EP in the Secondary Education sector.

We are aware that health and education are two corner-stones of our education policy to achieve the holistic and integral development of learners and this mutuality already ensures that steps are taken for health and wellbeing of our students to be embedded in our schooling system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that school health services are offered by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in all primary schools, secondary schools under the School Health Programme. The Primary School Health Programme includes immunisation and screening of pupils for any anomalies or deficiencies in weight, vision and health. The Secondary School Health Programme consists of a screening programme for students of secondary of grades 7, 9 and 12.

Moreover, other screening exercises are carried out by my Ministry in collaboration with other philanthropic bodies such the Lion's Club, the Optical Association of Mauritius, and the Dental Association amongst others.

In addition, the Special Education Needs Authority for special education needs pupils has a multi-disciplinary team consisting of educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and they screen learners for the most appropriate support based on their needs.

Based on data received from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, I wish to inform the House that out of 39,172 students of grade 7 screened from 2019 to 2023 for underweight, overweight, obesity, pre-diabetes, diabetes and high blood pressure conditions, 21,877 students were referred for medical follow-up. Similarly, out of 30,251 students of grade 9 screened from 2019 to 2023, 17,358 students were referred for medical follow-up. These figures exclude the years 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to primary school pupils, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness that there are six school teams who regularly visit our primary schools and out of all the pupils screened from 2019 to 2023 in the primary schools, 14,150 have been referred for dental services, 2,717 pupils for vision problems and 2,816 pupils were referred to nutritionists and other specialists.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a list of students of the Extended Programme who have been referred for medical treatment. There were around 80 of them from the EP section that have been referred for treatment at the Ministry of Health.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Merci. Est-ce que la ministre pourrait nous donner cette information *school-wise* ? Par groupe d'école?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** This is what we are tabling. I will not be in a position to give for the whole 27,000 students or what, but what I am going to do, because you mentioned Extended Programme, I am going to give you the list of schools with the number of students that have been screened and referred to the Ministry of Health.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** La ministre pourrait-elle nous dire à quelle fréquence ces enfants sont suivis ? Par exemple, il y a des enfants qui souffrent de malnutrition, de myopie, surdit , ob siti , etc. comme vous dites. Est-ce que ce serez possible pour vous de nous dire   quelle fr quence ces enfants sont suivis ?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that once we identify these students, we refer the cases to the Ministry of Health and it is the Ministry of Health that carries out the follow-up. The students are asked to go to the hospitals and they are followed by the Ministry of Health.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!