GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# PRESS RELEASE

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# Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports Reaffirms Donation Procedures for Public Schools

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The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports is reminding the public of the established procedures that govern donations, equipment and infrastructure placed on the grounds of public schools, following recent public discussion surrounding the Ivan Dawson Primary School campus.

The Philanthropy Donation Acceptance Policy (Public Education) was tabled in the House of Assembly at the ninth sitting of the first session of the fifth house of assembly on the 5th March, 2024. This policy ensures that all donations to public schools meet clear standards of safety, accountability, transparency and proper integration into the school environment.

This policy requires, among other things:

- Disclosure of the donor to the Ministry
- Submission of the required documentation
- Review and approval before procurement, delivery or installation
- Confirmation that all equipment and materials meet safety and technical standards

These procedures are not intended to discourage donations. Rather, they exist to protect students, schools, donors and the public interest, and to ensure that all contributions are properly coordinated and safely implemented.

In a statement issued today, Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Honourable Sharie B. de Castro, emphasized the importance of these safeguards, noting:

“Any equipment, materials or infrastructure placed on the grounds of a public school must follow established procedures, including the Ministry’s Donor Acceptance Policy and site approval processes, to ensure student safety, accountability and proper integration into the school environment.”

The Minister also reiterated that while generosity from donors and community partners is welcomed and appreciated, adherence to these procedures is essential to protect students and school communities.

Since the adoption of the policy, eight playgrounds, seven of which were donor-funded have been successfully completed under this framework, alongside other donor-supported initiatives, demonstrating that the process works and that community partnership remains a valued and important part of the education system.

The Ministry also continues to make direct public investments in school infrastructure and resources, including the ongoing territory-wide playground replacement and rehabilitation programme, which is being implemented in phases and scheduled during school breaks to ensure student safety.

The Ministry encourages all individuals, organisations and partners who wish to support public education to engage through the established process so that their contributions can be realised in a way that is safe, transparent and beneficial to students.

The full Philanthropy Donation Acceptance Policy (Public Education) is appended to this press release for public information and guidance, and all prospective donors and partners are encouraged to review the policy before initiating or undertaking any donation to a public school.

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**For Additional Information Contact:**

Ms. Angelique Lettsome
Information Officer I
Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
Telephone: 1-284-468-9448/3190
Email: anlettsome@gov.vg

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## Additional Documents or Media

- philanthropy_donation_acceptance_policy_public_education).pdf