



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

ON REPORTS OF BULLYING OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENT AT WESLEY UPPER SCHOOL

City of Belmopan.

9th May 2023. 15:00 hrs.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) is deeply saddened by the recent bullying reports concerning a special needs student of Wesley Upper School in Belize City. In response to these reports, the Special Education Unit (SpEd) of the MoECST, has dispatched officers to Wesley Upper School to conduct an initial assessment of the incident and to arrange a special education sensitisation session with the teachers and administrators of the institution.

While these reports are distressing, they highlight the need to improve awareness of special education needs among all stakeholders in education and build the capacity of teachers, parents and the SpEd Unit to support students with special education needs.

The Ministry encourages teachers, parents, and students to utilise the resources offered through the Inclusion Corner on 501academy by visiting www.501academy.edu.bz/the-inclusion-corner. The Inclusion Corner is a targeted effort of SpEd Unit to assist anyone who wants to be more inclusive. Teachers are also encouraged to join the Teachers 4 Teachers (T4T) inclusive teaching community through which they will have access to support from other teachers and the SpEd Unit and engage in discussion on how to create inclusive learning environments that support all students. The link to join T4T can be accessed from the Inclusion Corner page.

The Ministry is also pleased to announce that on May 15th, the SpEd Unit will launch phase one of a comprehensive screening process in 75 schools across Belize. Through this process, special education officers will visit schools to conduct interviews with teachers in an effort to identify students who may have special education needs. The responses to these interviews will be filtered through an app, developed in partnership with Total Business Solutions Ltd. This process will identify resource needs and gaps, and also promote collaboration between teachers, schools and the SpEd Unit. If students are flagged for special education needs, the SpEd Unit will arrange for follow-up sessions with the parents/guardians.

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive education system remains unwavering. Our Ministry is conscious that this requires the partnership of all our stakeholders. We encourage parents, guardians, teachers and schools to engage with the SpEd Unit to promote greater acceptance and understanding of students with special education needs.

Ends

STATEMENT 04 OF 2023