

PRESS RELEASE

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Multi-agency Task Force Created for Student Support and Intervention

Release Date: 5 June, 2025



Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Honourable Sharie de Castro has announced the establishment of two critical mechanisms to address the troubling data student misconduct in schools across the Territory.

Honourable de Castro in a statement at the Fifth Sitting of The Second Session of the Fifth House of Assembly, said a rise in incidents in schools across the Territory revealed a deep systemic challenge that required nationwide support to overcome.

The minister said the critical mechanisms namely the formation of a Steering Group on Student Wellbeing, and the creation of a multi-agency Task Force on Student Support and Intervention were agreed upon when her ministry met with and presented troubling data to the National Security Council, followed by a joint meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of Health, the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force and the support of His Excellency the Governor Mr. Daniel Pruce.

The Steering group will convene its first meeting next week. Honourable de Castro said, "The Ministry of Education has developed a comprehensive Framework for Student Support and Wellbeing, which outlines a multipronged strategy to address the root causes of student misconduct while promoting resilience, student empowerment, academic progress, parental support and social development."

The minister added, "This framework includes the expansion of school-based counselling, the implementation of social-emotional learning across classrooms, the training of teachers in restorative justice and child safeguarding, and the strengthening of re-entry pathways and alternative education options for students at risk of exclusion."

Honourable de Castro added that as the ministry pursues national and inter-agency responses, schools themselves have been actively developing and implementing their own behaviour support initiatives.

The minister said, "At the Bregado Flax Educational Centre – Secondary Division in Virgin Gorda, a well-functioning Student Behaviour Committee has been established that works collaboratively to assess challenges and develop targeted interventions to support students exhibiting behavioural concerns."

Honourable deCastro stated that similarly at the Elmore Stoutt High School, the *Beatitudes, Empowerment, and Mentorship* (BEAM) programme has taken root and targets students facing serious behavioural and emotional challenges and offers them structured, compassionate intervention.

The minister said, “The BEAM Programme held its initiation meetings during the month of May and received overwhelming support from community members, law enforcement officials, and mental health professionals. The programme will continue with regular mentorship sessions, counselling support, and structured goal-setting, all tailored to meet the individual needs of each participant.”

The minister’s full statement can be viewed on the Government of the Virgin Islands website at www.bvi.gov.vg.

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports continues to provide high quality educational services, as well as facilitate access to and participation in sports and recreation, in order to enrich the lives of all residents of these Virgin Islands.

Photo 1: Official Photo of Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
Honourable Sharie de Castro

(Photo credit: GIS)