GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Partners with Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee to Launch "Our Festival. Our Responsibility." Campaign

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The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports is appealing to the entire community—including booth operators, bartenders, food vendors, event promoters, parents, guardians, and members of the public—to help protect our students by ensuring they are not sold, served, or provided with alcoholic beverages during the Emancipation Festival season.

Chief Education Officer Mrs. Orlandette R. Crabbe underscored the importance of community partnership in safeguarding the Territory's children.

"Festival is one of the most anticipated times of the year, and we want every member of our community to enjoy it safely and responsibly," Mrs. Crabbe said.

"'Our Festival. Our Responsibility.' is a community commitment to protecting our students and preserving the true spirit of our Festival," the Chief Education Officer stated, adding, "Protecting our students is a responsibility that belongs to all of us.

We ask every vendor, bartender, parent, guardian, and patron to do their part by ensuring that alcohol does not find its way into the hands of our students. The choices we make as adults today can have a lasting impact on the health, safety, and future of our young people."

Mrs. Crabbe noted that safeguarding the Territory's youth extends beyond enforcement—it involves inspiring students directly. Under the umbrella campaign, the Ministry is rolling out "Future Above Fete," a dedicated youth initiative that encourages young people to celebrate their culture with clarity and make choices that protect their long-term ambitions.

The Ministry will be partnering closely with the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee through the "Our Festival. Our Responsibility." campaign to promote responsible alcohol consumption and reinforce measures to prevent underage access to alcohol within the Festival Village and surrounding areas. All vendors and alcohol servers are asked to:

· Verify the age of any individual purchasing or requesting alcoholic beverages where there is uncertainty.

· Refuse the sale or service of alcohol to anyone under the legal drinking age.

· Refrain from serving adults who are purchasing alcohol on behalf of students or other school-age children.

· Support efforts to maintain a safe, responsible, and family-friendly festival environment where students are protected.

Parents, guardians, and the wider public are encouraged to support these efforts by supervising young people in their care, discouraging underage drinking, and setting a positive example through responsible behavior. "A simple act of intervention, guidance, or assistance may make all the difference in keeping a young person safe," Mrs. Crabbe added.

The Ministry extends its sincere appreciation to the Virgin Islands Festival and Fairs Committee, festival vendors, law enforcement agencies, parents, and the wider community for their partnership. The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and

Sports wishes everyone a happy, safe, and enjoyable Emancipation Festival as the community works together to ensure celebrations remain memorable for all the right reasons.