



The Ministry Education, Human
Resource Planning, Vocational
Training and National Excellence

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Effective September 2020



Psychosocial Support:

Schools are encouraged to think very carefully about how they lay the foundation for a supportive and caring climate as students are reintegrated into face to face schooling. The following are suggested;

The first few classroom sessions should be devoted to debriefing and discussion of experiences during quarantine. This will enable students to identify and relate to each other's experiences. This will also enable school personnel to identify emotionally vulnerable students.

Teachers and other school personnel should receive training on how to talk to and support children before, during, and after a pandemic and in principles of psychological first aid in order to identify and provide support to students in need.

Principals should consult with teachers as students return, to identify classroom interventions for individual students as appropriate.

Recognize the significance of socializing and play for children in a safe environment. This may mean that close play is only permitted in pairs or small groups or within social bubbles that allow repeated mixing with a small number of contacts.

School counsellors should consult with teachers and school administration on school-wide behavioral needs of students and work with them to provide support.

School leaders should collaborate with guidance counsellors to provide lessons for students regarding managing change and managing anxiety.

School counsellors should co-lead classroom lessons on social and emotional learning strategies.

Consult with guidance counsellors on plans to address the possibility of another outbreak and how to emotionally prepare students and staff.

Provide supportive counselling and consultation for teachers who are struggling with issues related to the virus and confinement.

Provide threat assessments as needed to students who appear as a danger to themselves or others. Meet with parents to discuss student needs and provide information to parents on how to talk to their children.

Follow up with emotionally vulnerable students as they return to school to assess their level of functioning.

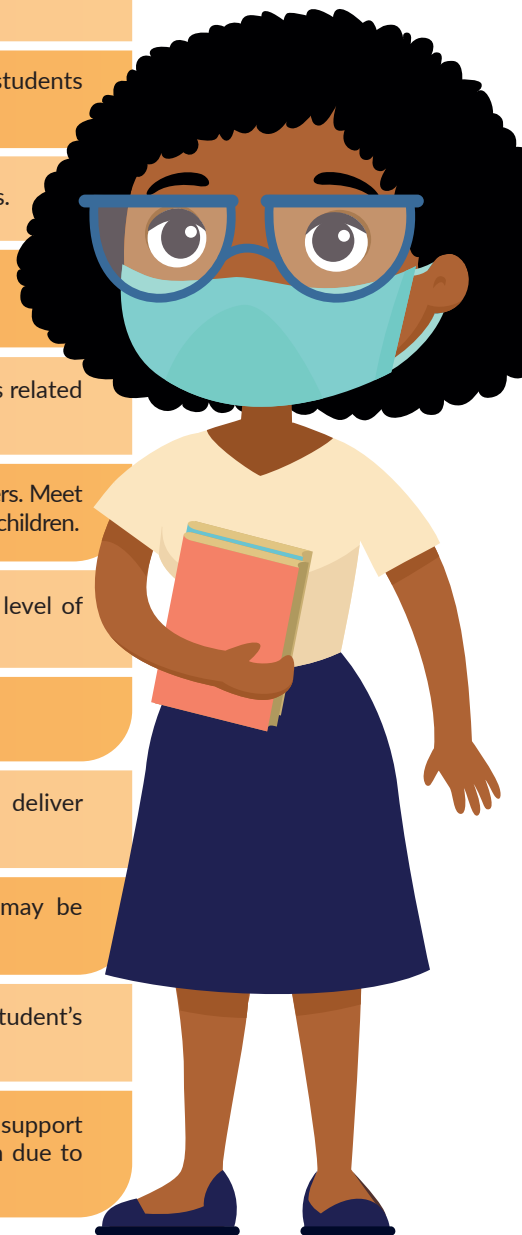
Meet with parents to discuss student needs and obtain permission for assessments.

Guidance counsellors should consult with teachers, school counselors and parents to deliver services to students who display outward signs of trauma.

Schools are encouraged to contact students who do not return to school, as they may be experiencing school avoidance due to anxiety related to the pandemic.

Schools should be attuned to the broader social and family stressors that may affect a student's ability to attend school or be ready to learn.

Schools need to incorporate into planning considerations, academic accommodation and support for students who may still be having difficulty concentrating or learning new information due to stress associated with the pandemic.

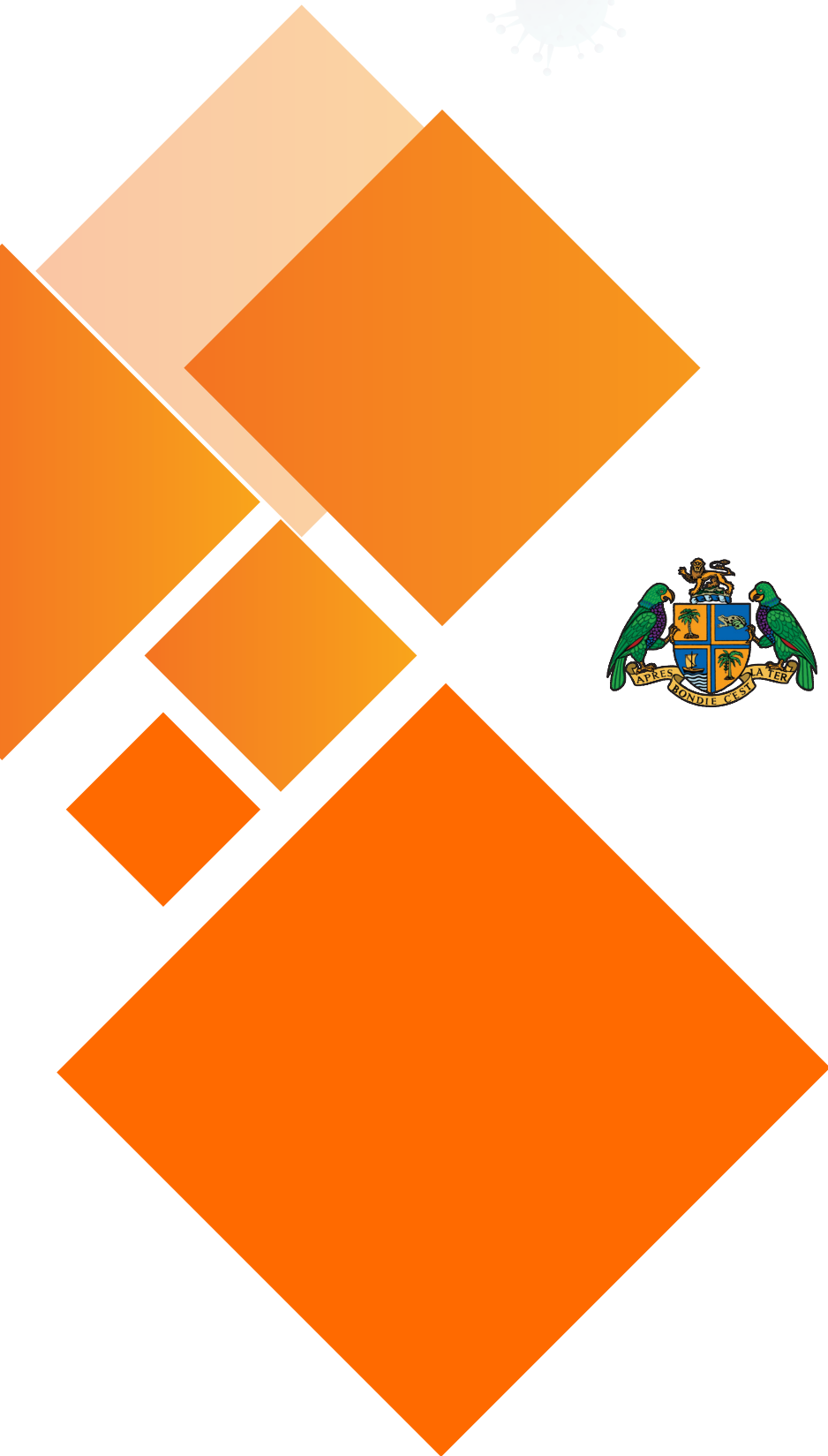


MENTAL HEALTH:

Mental and emotional health professionals are critical in shaping messages to principals, teachers, students and families about school re-entry including addressing anxiety, social acclimation and depression.



- Students requiring more mental health support, including those who are exhibiting suicidal ideation, should be referred for additional psychiatric services.
- Provide support services for loss of any staff, students or family.
- Mobilize crisis recovery team (headed by the Chief Psychiatrist) to provide emotional and psychological support when necessary.
- If school community has experienced a loss of life, establish 'safe rooms' as needed within each facility for counselling services.



**PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT**

Effective September 2020