



**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**  
**GENDER AND CHILD AFFAIRS DIVISION**  
Levels 20-21, Tower D, International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago TEL: 627-1163

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For Immediate Release

**PRESS RELEASE BY:**

**The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)**  
**and**  
**The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago**

**Closure of St Michael's School for Boys**

*Port of Spain:* The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) and the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago (the Anglican Church) are advising of the mutual decision to close the St Michael's School for Boys (the School) located on the Diego Martin Main Road, Diego Martin. The reason for the closure of the School is the drastic reduction in the number of residents at the School. This decision to close the School arose out of discussions with the Office of the Prime Minister, the Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago and the Board of Management of the School.

In 1889, the School was established by the Church of England in Trinidad and Tobago as a residential industrial school for homeless boys. Over the years, the School operated successfully under the management of the Anglican Church and was a place of hope for homeless boys in Trinidad and Tobago. Over these years, the Government, cognisant of the fact that the Anglican Church and by extension the School are institutions supporting the Government in the performance of its duty to provide the critical function of care for children, the Government partnered with the Anglican Church through the provision of an annual subvention to fully satisfy the management, operational, tactical and other requirements associated with the care of the children at the School. As a result of this partnership with the Government, the School, at the request of the Government, opened its doors to boys who were in need of care and supervision and boys who were in conflict with the law retaining the right of the Bishop to appoint the Board of Management.

This partnership was extended by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Authorities (Declaration) Order, Legal Notice No.21 of 1980 which effectively placed the School and its employees under the Statutory Authority Service Commission (SASC). In this partnership, most of the needed staff was provided through the SASC. The Government also provided financial support for the development of the School's facility.

Prior to 2015, the School accommodated boys who were homeless, needed care and supervision and boys who were in conflict with the law. With the proclamation of the suite of Children's Legislation in 2015, new arrangements came into force requiring boys in conflict with the law to be housed at Rehabilitation Centres and boys in need of care and supervision to be housed at Children's Homes.

Accordingly, the Government established an Interim Rehabilitation Centre on the compound of the School to meet the requirements of the law, pending the establishment of permanent alternative accommodation for these boys. This facility was managed by the Board and the Manager. Approximately 95% of the boys at School were in conflict with the law and were remanded to this secure interim facility. However, subsequent legislation, shifted the responsibility for Rehabilitation centres to the Ministry of National Security. As a result, the Youth Training Centre (YTC) at Golden Grove Road was established as an official Rehabilitation Centre for boys in conflict with the law. The boys at the School's Interim Rehabilitation Centre were therefore relocated to YTC in October of 2017 and thus the Interim Rehabilitation Centre was closed. Thereafter, the Government and the Anglican Church agreed that the School, under the new law, should continue to operate as a Children's Home.

However, the Government and the Anglican Church have noted that the number of boys at the School has reduced significantly since October 2017. The School, with a capacity to accommodate eighty (80) boys, has been accommodating an average of four (4) boys per month since November 2017. The low population has led both the Government and the Anglican Church to review the services and the institutional arrangements in place at the School.

The Anglican Church accepts the new standards associated with caring for children at Children's Homes. The Church has indicated the need to assess its future role in caring for children at its facility and will communicate its decision to the Government in due course. Towards this end, the Church has assured the Government that any decision to continue the partnership will be done in accordance with the fiat of the Synod of the Anglican Church and in consultation with the Government.

The Government and the Anglican Church are committed to safeguarding all children living in Children's Homes and ensuring that they receive the best care and protection and that their rights are upheld and maintained. To this end, the Children's Authority has been asked to place as a priority, the relocation of the four boys at the School who are in need of care and supervision. The Office of the Prime Minister and the Board will address the transitional arrangements at the School in collaboration and in consultation with the Chief Personnel Officer, the Public Services Association, the Statutory Authorities Service Commission, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development and the Anglican Church.

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For further information contact:  
The Corporate Communications Unit  
Tel: 627-1163