



**Friday March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**For Immediate Release**

In recognition of World Obesity Day, the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (BCOP) shared a letter of commendation to the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training for the launch of the National School Nutrition Policy, which was launched by the Ministry on February 15<sup>th</sup>. On hand to receive the letter from Dr. Kia Lewis, Chairperson of the Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition was Deputy Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Joy Adamson. World Obesity Day is commemorated on March 4<sup>th</sup> in response to the global crisis of obesity in 2015.

The BCOP Chair on presenting the letter outlined that the new policy was a brave one to protect children in Barbados, the new policy removes sugar sweetened beverages from schools, and forge a new school food environment come the new school term. Given that school nutrition policy has been part of the ardent fight by the Coalition since 2019, the Coalition further highlighted that they are ready to support the Ministry in anyway necessary including vendor training, building awareness about childhood obesity with all stakeholders including teachers, students and parents, and monitoring and evaluation platform to ensure the policy has the power to change the health of students in schools across Barbados.

The theme for World Obesity Day 2023 is Changing Perspectives: Let's Talk About Obesity: because when we talk, debate and share we can change minds, shift norms and transform health outcomes. In Barbados it has really been talking about and advocating for policies which has brought a massive change among parents, students and government, who recognized that the trajectory of the alarming levels of childhood obesity in Barbados, were putting the health of children in jeopardy. A societal problem like childhood obesity will require a societal response. As research shows that in Barbados 1 in 3 children between 13 to 15 years old who are obese or overweight. This is alarming and is bringing the health of a generation under threat.

Mrs. Adamson, thanked the Coalition on behalf of the Minister of education, technological and Vocational Training, Hon. Kay McConney and gave assurance that the Ministry will be working with the Coalition and the Ministry of Health to remove this scourge of obesity among our children. The Coalition World Obesity is a day of advocacy and building awareness for Barbadians.