

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION 21

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Mr GG Boinamo to ask the Minister of Education

In light of her statement in November 2006 that she is considering relaxing the ban on random drug testing in schools, (a) when does she intend lifting this ban, (b) what process will be followed in implementing this decision and (c) under what circumstances will testing be permitted?

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REPLY:

(a) There is no ban on drug testing in schools. The Department's policy framework on drug abuse states that drug screening or testing "should be used where there is reasonable suspicion that a child is using drugs". It further states that "testing must be implemented as part of a structured intervention or relapse programme in an environment that is committed to safeguarding personal rights, privacy, dignity and bodily integrity according to school policy, medical/treatment procedures and ethical guidelines." At a recent colloquium on school safety we were told about schools that had successfully introduced such a programme, in line with the policy.

(b) I am intending to draft legislation in this regard, and this will be subjected to the normal processes of public consultation, including publication for comment.

(c) The legislation will prescribe the circumstances under which random drug testing will be permitted.