

Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release

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Health Advocates congratulate BSSAC for support of the School Nutrition Policy

As the Secondary School Sports season gets underway, health advocates have high praise for the BSSAC committee on playing its part in supporting the Barbados School Nutrition Policy and efforts to create healthier school environments.

The Barbados Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (BCOP Coalition) is congratulating BSSAC's definitive move to ensure that its Title Sponsor for 2026 (Dasani Water) is fully compliant with the new Barbados School Nutrition Policy.

The BCOP Coalition believes that the long-term success and integrity of school sports depend on ensuring that children's health, rights, and well-being are fully protected, particularly with respect to food marketing in school environments.

Nicole Foster, Chair of the BCOP Coalition, emphasised, "Title Sponsorship of Sports events is major for companies because they receive the highest promotion and visibility of their products. BSSAC is leading the way and can hopefully become an example to the region of how sports can be funded by neutral or health-promoting commercial brands. "

Mrs. Foster said, "Schools and school-based sporting events are not ordinary commercial spaces. They should be protected environments, where adults have a responsibility to ensure that what children are exposed to are brands that support their physical and developmental health".

In 2023, the Ministry of Education Transformation committed, through the launch of the School Nutrition Policy, to create healthier school environments in response to rising childhood obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases. These policies, which are based on recommendations from the WHO and UNICEF, recognize that marketing—especially of ultra-processed foods, that is, foods high in fats, salts and sugar—has a powerful influence on children, who are not equipped to critically assess commercial messaging and are now overconsuming these products.

Professor Anne St. John, Policy Champion of the BCOP Coalition and a former national athlete, was elated with this move by BSSAC, "We congratulate Dasani Water and encourage more neutral and health-promoting brands to provide alternative sponsorship for schools. It is critical that we keep exposing our children to healthy foods and brands that support good physical and mental health."

According to the BCOP Coalition, the BSSAC committee has set a new standard, and that is how a new vision begins. The BCOP Coalition also emphasized that it is not opposed to sponsorship and is not seeking to undermine the ability to deliver a successful event that supports our children's success and capabilities.

It says, "Barbados can celebrate athletic excellence, support school sports, and protect children's health at the same time. These objectives are not in conflict, but they do require careful and principled choices."