

Parent Patrol to keep schoolers out of trouble

With less than a week to go before the staging of the Boys' and Girls' Athletics Championships, the Reverend Al Miller, director of the National Transformation Programme (NTP), is urging guardians to join a 'Parent Patrol' to ensure that students keep out of trouble.

The competition, which will be held April 1-4, has over the years led to bitter fights as schools, mainly in the Corporate Area, compete for the top spot. Speaking yesterday, following a meeting at Jamaica House, Miller said parents would patrol the main areas where students converge. "Negative events tend to happen leading up to Champs, (so) we are encouraging parents over this season of Champs to get into the streets. Our presence will communicate that negative behaviour is unacceptable," Miller said. Unhealthy school rivalry The idea of a 'Parent Patrol' came out of a meeting held last week, called to propose solutions for defusing unhealthy school rivalry. Participants at the meeting included principals and students of some Corporate Area schools, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Mothers in Crisis, and others. Miller noted that the NTP was still in the process of working out the details of the Parent Patrol, adding that the team is to meet with other stakeholders to get the programme up and running. "We are hoping that, in another two years, we won't have that problem. Every year, we should see less and less rivalry," he said. Miller said the NTP would eventually broaden the scope of the Parent Patrol. He noted the NTP has met with some of the students and principals of schools, which are usually in dispute, leading up to the games. "We went into a number of schools and talked to students about the whole issue of peace in schools," Miller said, adding that students have been told that there can be healthy, friendly rivalry. The NTP is to host a press conference tomorrow to highlight the efforts by 'Students of Transformation' to strengthen their peace-building initiatives leading up to the Boys' and Girls' Championships. Students from Jamaica College, Kingston College, Calabar High School, St George's College, among other schools, are expected to make presentations. The NTP, which operates out of the Office of the Prime Minister, is being undertaken against the background of the thickening moral, social and economic morass that has held Jamaicans captive for decades. The programme operates under the view that Jamaica's future will be very bleak unless it deals quickly with atrocities of the past. The NTP will, therefore, emphasise peace, forgiveness and reconciliation among individuals and communities.