

**“FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”**



## **Statement by the Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency To All Stakeholders in Jamaica’s Primary and Secondary Education System**

**KINGSTON. September 23, 2020**

The Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency (JAMCOPY) is advising teachers, school administrators and parents, that it is illegal to copy textbooks and other copyright protected material without a JAMCOPY licence or the permission of the copyright owner.

For more than 15 years the Ministry of Education has delayed negotiating an agreement that would allow legal copying of published material for students at the primary and secondary level.

This is wrong, and unacceptable. The Jamaica Copyright Act clearly indicates that a licence is required before copyright materials can be reproduced in educational institutions. It is inexplicable, because the majority of our colleges and universities comply with Jamaican copyright law by having a JAMCOPY Licence. In fact, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, all JAMCOPY-licensed institutions benefitted from expanded copying limits, to help alleviate the challenges with teaching and learning during this crisis. The absence of a Ministry of Education/JAMCOPY Licence for schools however, means that our children go through their time at school using illegally copied materials, while teachers and administrators break the law every time that they make those copies.

This illegal copying also threatens the future of our struggling educational publishing industry, which has taken decades to build, and is also under attack from pirated textbooks sold on the internet.

JAMCOPY therefore strongly advises teachers and administrators at all primary and secondary schools, that until a Ministry of Education/JAMCOPY licence has been signed, they cannot copy from textbooks and other copyright material – this includes photocopying, scanning, faxing or emailing - for teaching or administrative purposes. Please note that it is a criminal offence to knowingly distribute illegal/infringing copies of copyright material.

JAMCOPY represents copyright owners, and is authorized under our copyright legislation to license the reproduction of portions of published works such as books, journals, newspapers and magazines.

The newly-appointed Minister of Education has indicated a willingness to resolve this long-standing problem. JAMCOPY today wrote to the Minister, asking for a speedy resumption of negotiations. We are hoping for a positive response, so that our schools can soon operate within the legal framework of Jamaica’s progressive copyright laws.

JAMCOPY is the national collective licensing organization, constituted under Jamaican Law and in accordance with the Jamaica Copyright Act of 1993, that manages the reproduction rights of creators and publishers of textual content and images. We work to facilitate seamless access to copyright content in particular for large scale copying of works including digital uses. Through our intervention, creators and publishers are enabled to meet the needs of their users in a constantly changing environment, by means of a flexible, efficient and convenient mechanism, within the framework of copyright law. In so doing, JAMCOPY encourages ongoing creation of new works, promotes respect for the rights of those that bring this material to the public, and fosters a viable and efficient marketplace for copyright content.

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