



OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE

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ROLE OF THE OCA

The Office of The Children's Advocate (OCA) is a Commission of Parliament mandated to enforce and protect the rights and best interest of all children. The OCA was established in 2006 under the Child Care and Protection Act (2004). The Act is used as the guideline for the operations of the Office.

The responsibilities and functions of the OCA are stipulated by the first schedule of the Child Care and Protection Act.

FUNCTIONS OF THE OCA

Administrative

- The OCA may provide assistance to children who want to make a complaint against a relevant authority that has infringed their rights and/or adversely affected their best interests.

- The OCA should maintain proper records of complaints received without revealing personal details of the child concerned.

Consultative

- Consult with children and their caregivers about the role and functions of the OCA and about current issues that are affecting them.

Educational and Advisory

- Educate the public, especially children, about the role and functions of the OCA and how they may communicate with the OCA.

- Give advice and make recommendations to Parliament, Ministries and other Relevant Authorities on matters concerning the rights and best interests of children.

Investigative

- Receive and conduct investigations on behalf of children against government authorities.

- Conduct investigations in instances where there are complaints that a child's rights and best interest are infringed.

Legal

- Provide legal representation for children who need it. These children can be referred by the court.

- Bring non-criminal court proceedings before the court or tribunal on behalf of a child

- Intervene in any proceedings before a court or tribunal involving law and practice concerning the rights or best interests of children.

Regulatory

- Review services provided for children by relevant authorities, for example: educational institutions, state care homes, juvenile facilities, and health care facilities.

- Review laws and practices relating to the rights and best interests of children.



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