

Police, school deny cover-up in toddler death probe

April 11, 2026 12:00 am



SP Grace Iringe-Koko, Former Spokesperson for the Rivers State Police Command

By Dennis Naku

Getting your **Trinity Audio** player ready...

The Rivers State Police Command has confirmed receipt of the autopsy report conducted on the remains of a two-year-old girl, Miss Winnie Akekue, who allegedly died from injuries after a bookshelf fell on her in a classroom at her school in Elingbo, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of the state.

The police, however, denied allegations that it was withholding the autopsy from the parents of the toddler, describing it as a public document that would be released to them as soon as they apply for it.

Recall that the parents of the girl, while speaking to newsmen in Port Harcourt on Wednesday, accused the management of Wisdom Gate International School of initially hiding the truth, alleging that the police were reluctant in releasing the autopsy report submitted to it by the pathologist.

Responding, the spokesperson for the state Police Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, who confirmed the death of the child, said following preliminary investigations, the matter had been transferred to the State Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Department in the state for a thorough probe.

She stated, “Yes, the incident happened at the Special Area Division. After police took a statement from a suspect, we transferred the case to the State CID. At that stage, they now went for an autopsy and investigation is ongoing.

“The police cannot withhold an autopsy report because that is a public document. It is not a police document. Ours is to investigate and the report of the autopsy is with us, but once they formally apply for it, it will be given to them.”

On other allegations that the police were conniving with interested parties in the case to mount pressure on the parents to resolve the matter, she said the police would not be a party to that.

“The police cannot dabble in such a thing. If other third parties come in, maybe speaking to the family to go and resolve and all that, it cannot be from the police. Our duty as police is to ensure there is peace and that is why the matter is still under investigation to assist the family to unravel the truth,” the state police image maker said.

Family demands justice

Father of the late toddler, Dr Lasuaka Akekue, at the news briefing, said the incident occurred on March 17 at Wisdom Gate International School where his daughter, Winnie, had gone for the day.

Dr Akekue further said he was told his daughter was asleep in the classroom when a bookshelf in the school suddenly fell on her, but that a verbal report from the pathologist who conducted an autopsy showed that Winnie suffered a fractured skull.

The distraught man expressed dismay that the family was only informed about the incident after the school had taken his child to two different hospitals.

Related News

Rivers man nabbed over job seeker's alleged rape

VIDEO: Police probe fatal shooting of man in Lagos

Police arrest man for kidnapping, molesting female job seeker

He alleged that the school quickly cleaned up the scene of the incident and moved the bookshelf, alleging that some individuals are trying to pressure him and his wife into burying their child quickly and settling the matter.

According to Akekue, "The verbal report from the pathologist said there was a significant fracture to the skull that led to haemorrhage, and that could be the cause of death. We were also told that in a week's time, the formal report will be made available to the police.

"So, we left there that day believing that next Wednesday, we would be called to discuss the findings from the autopsy where we can proceed whatever way we want to proceed." He also accused the police of trying to cover up the matter.

"On Thursday, I was told the person detained had been released while we grieve, and in our pain we found the attitude of the school very disturbing because they have been using proxies, very highly placed persons to try to pressure me.

"At this point, I don't know how safe I am, but all I want to ask is justice for my daughter. I need to at least be able to lay her to rest knowing actually what killed her and no thorough investigation has been made in the matter.

"Everything had been about suppressing the matter hoping that we will be able to reach a resolution," he stated while fighting back tears.

On her part, Winnie's mother, Chinyere Akekue, said she was given a different account of what happened, saying when a teacher first called her, she was made to believe that her child was still alive.

The grieving mother said the entire family, including their three children, have been left devastated by the loss, noting that her family has been under intense pressure to settle the matter quietly.

Meanwhile, the management of Wisdom Gate International School, located along Eligbolo Road in Obio/Akpor LGA, has expressed sadness over the tragic loss of the toddler in its care.

In a statement issued in Port Harcourt, the school said the child was attended to immediately and taken to the hospital where Winnie passed on, adding that it had been cooperating fully with relevant authorities to ensure a thorough and transparent investigation.

The school acknowledged the concerns raised by parents of the toddler and the public and pledged that the safety and wellbeing of all schoolchildren in its care remain a top priority, but denied withholding any information from authorities.