

Family's anguish: Parents, NUJ seek justice as 12-year-old JSS1 student dies after bullying in Akwa Ibom unity school

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Late Ufokobong

From **Isaac Job**, Uyo

There is a graveyard peace at Federal Government College, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom following the sudden death of 12-year-old JSS1 student, Master Ufokobong Edwin Godwin, who was admitted into the school in September, last year.



Students in session

The death of the boy generated widespread controversy among staff, students, parents and other interest groups, particularly Akwa Ibom State council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ).



Late Ufokobong Godwin in his Boys
Brigade regalia



Comrade Nsibiet John

The attitude of the school management as well as non response from federal ministry of education worsened the situation leaving the school community and entire state in suspense.

Sources in the college disclosed that two senior students in SS2 class identified as Uche and Joshua during second terminal examinations before the Easter break had approached Ufokobong and forcefully demanded provisions from him. But the young lad declined, insisting that he did not have enough to share as the term was winding down and waiting for parents to pick them for the Easter break.



According to reports, Uche and Joshua now at large were angry by the response of late Ufokobong and descended heavily on him. Hee was reportedly hit on the neck region until he fainted three times before other students who witnessed the scene raised the alarm, drawing attention of the boarding master who rushed the victim to the General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene. He was revived but later died on Easter Sunday at home during the holidays.

A medical reports released by the school authority duly signed by the health assistant in the college, Jimmy Idongesit, and published on the school's Parent Teacher WhatsApp platform sighted by our reporter stated that the deceased spent the night in the school clinic and was discharged the following morning to continue the second terminal examinations.

The medical report reads in part: "The night duty on 14th March, 2026 was not that busy except for the case of Ufokobong Edwin Godwin who was already on admission as at the time I took over from my colleague.

"Report had it that he complained of epigastric pains and was treated as per chart. He was still restless a bit thereafter he became stable.

"According to the boy, he said he was fine and wanted to go back to his hostel that night but I and my colleague stopped him and demanded that he sleep over in the sick bay so that we can observe him properly.

"He was given water to bath and he slept without any other complaint throughout the night. In the morning, he was still very okay and requested to go back to his

hostel . He was asked to come back for his remaining medications.”

However, the report did not mention whether the deceased went back to the school clinic for the remaining medications before his parents picked him up for the Easter holiday. It was not also stated whether the parents were informed that the child was hospitalized while in school.

But one of the teachers, who pleaded anonymity, confirmed that the father of the deceased picked him up in the school after exam unknown to him that the son was hospitalized at General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene after torture by his senior students and the school authority never informed the parents so that they can continue with medications during the Easter vacation

It was also gathered that two weeks into the holiday, late Ufokobong felt excruciating pains on the neck region and complained to his father who bought some pains relief and antibiotics drugs for him but the pains persisted.

A family member said the father took him to hospital where he died of blood clotting on Easter Sunday and was buried in his village in Essien Udim local government area of the state.

So, Ufokobong did not return to school to meet his friends while Uche and Joshua having heard that the boy died during the Easter break bolted away. His father, Edwin Godwin, and mothers are now traumatized, regretting sending him to unity school in the state.

Speaking with our reporter on behalf of the family, Mrs Ekpeme Usoro, alleged that the School Board Management Committee (SBMC) comprising the principal, PTA executives and other stakeholders lied, twisting facts of the case. She insisted that Ufokobong was bludgeoned to death by senior students in the school.

Usoro said when the boy died, the school management paid a condolence visit to the family and refused to tell the truth but lied that the boy had a little alterations with his seniors, which was resolved without telling the family exactly what transpired.

She said late Ufokobong came back from school seemingly looking healthy by his appearance.

She narrated: “But on that fateful Wednesday morning before Good Friday, he complained of pains around his neck region. We thought it was a normal pain caused by wrong sleeping posture.

“His father bought him some antibiotics but later in the afternoon, he couldn’t talk and could not even open his mouth.

“So, we rushed him to hospital. On March 14, 2026, his uncle had a child dedication ceremony while the deceased was still in school. In one of the discussions with his mother when he came back from school, Ufokobong told her that he would have attended the child dedication if he had wanted to do so.

“The mother asked him how would he have done that? Who would have permitted him to leave the school compound? The deceased replied that he was not in school but was admitted at General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene.”

Usoro said if the mother had probed further, the truth would have emerged and the cover up games by the school authority would have been exposed. She said the school apparently warned the boy not to disclose the incident to his parents at home.

She said all the reports on the PTA platform by school management were cooked to cover up the incident that led to the death of the boy, adding that God will judge them.

Usoro further disclosed that the mother while trying to arrange her son's box after his death stumbled on a note he wrote in his exercise about the bullying by Uche and Joshua.

She said the boy cleverly narrated how he was beaten up and he fainted, mentioning names of students that came to rescue him and called the boarding master before he was rushed to hospital .

“Ufokobong though dead is still talking now. The mother stumbled on a report the boy carefully wrote on what happened to him in the dormitory right inside his box “

Usoro alleged that the school management must have destroyed all medical records at General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene before they asked the school clinic to cook their report as their defense.

“When they came for condolence visit, they told us boldly that if the family checked any hospital in Ikot Ekpene, there would be no record to proof that the deceased was admitted outside the school clinic.

“In the hospital where the family rushed him to, the deceased had seizures but the few moments he was able to talk, he mentioned the boy that bullied him as Uche.”

Usoro said the confession of the deceased before he died was contrary to the medical report published by the school authority on the PTA platform just to douse tension generated by the sudden death.

“We are not taking up the matter with the school authority because the boy has been buried. But we know that they have destroyed the medical report at General

Hospital, Ikot Ekpene.”

Usoro said when the school management came for condolence, they denied that nothing happened and the deceased was not bullied.

“But when we brought out facts and evidence with the notes of the deceased, the school management said they have reached out to the parents of Uche.

“If nothing like bullying occurred why did they reach out to Uche’s parents? We want the public to reason with us.

“This is a clear case of bullying, murder and cover up. The evidence is through the notes that late Ufokobong scribbled and kept in his box in addition to his statement which we recorded.”

Reacting to the incident, Mr Jude Ezeogu, who was the principal of the college when the incident happened, insisted that Master Ufokobong Godwin was admitted in the school clinic as shown in the medical report.

He said: “The official position of the school is that the deceased was admitted in the school clinic. Any contrary opinion on this remains in the realm of imagination.”

Ezeogu, who retired last month after the incident, said this was the official position of the School Board Management Committee (SBMC) when he was on the saddle as the principal/ director in the school .

“You can visit the school and I can assure you that this is what the management will tell you. This remains official position of the school,” he stated.

Although the parents of Ufokobong have said that the boy has been buried, leaving everything to God, Akwa Ibom State Council of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) insist that there must be justice for late Ufokobong to stop bullying now prevalent in public schools.

In a communique issued at the end of congress of the union in May signed by Comrade Nsibiet John and Secretary, Comrade Nsikak Esenowo posted on social media platforms, NUJ called on the federal government to constitute an independent panel of inquiry to investigate and make appropriate recommendations to avoid repeat of such bloody bullying by senior students in the college.

The union also condemned the slow response from authorities, including the federal ministry of education and called for a transparent investigation and the prosecution of all those found responsible.

NUJ noted that the case exposes weak school safety measures and should trigger urgent reforms to end bullying in boarding schools.

“In view of these concerns, it is clear that our children are not safe in schools, especially in boarding facilities. As parents and concerned citizens, we believe if officers of the Peace Corps of Nigeria, located in Uyo, were deployed to schools like FGC Ikot Ekpene, there is a strong possibility the deceased would still be alive.

The Union suggested that Peace Corps should be deployed to schools to check activities of senior students

“The Peace Corps could help bridge the security gaps in our schools by

Providing constant supervision in hostels where most bullying happens away from teachers’ eyes,” the union stated.