

Teenager drowns in police college swimming pool

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Ifeanyi Onyekwere

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A teenager, Ifeanyi Onyekwere, has reportedly drowned in a swimming pool in the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the 17-year-old was assisting his mother at her shop before he left for the college where he died.

Ifeanyi's mother, Ada, said lifeguards at the pool did not watch over the swimmers to keep them safe.

The 48-year-old said, "I was at my shop on Tuesday when a lady came to inform me that they rushed my son to a hospital at the police college. She said my son might have gone to swim because his clothes were wet. So, I went to the police college, but they refused to show me his body. After crying and pleading, they said they had taken him out of the place. I never knew he went to swim; we were together at the market before he left me. I did not see him going with anybody.

“I am sure lifeguards were there, but they were not monitoring the swimmers very well. I have not been able to do anything since the incident; my son’s life is more important to me than anything and I am just trying to recover from the shock. I don’t want anything other than him coming back to life.”

Ifeanyi’s elder brother, Benjamin, said he became suspicious over his brother’s death when he saw that his corpse was fully clothed in the mortuary.

He said, “When I got to the mortuary, what got me curious was that he was fully clothed, which means people witnessed what happened. There was no way he would have swum in the pool with his clothes on. He was supposed to be in his underwear; nobody goes to swim with their full clothes on. If he drowned, who wore his clothes for him?

“More so, if you go to swim, there should be lifeguards watching over swimmers. You cannot have lifeguards and all we keep hearing is that he drowned or they don’t know what happened. Nobody is coming up to say they witnessed what happened. So right now, we only know what people told us because none of us was there. He was fully clothed, so he might probably be dead before getting into the water.”

The Police College Public Relations Officer, DSP Sholaye Oluwaseyi, told *PUNCH Metro* that the college was not in control of the swimming pool, adding that it was run by a separate entity.

He said, “The swimming pool is not part of the college; it is being run by a separate entity. The college where we train our recruits is on its own, so I cannot say anything. The swimming pool may be situated on the college premises, but it has nothing to do with the college. Nobody is aware somebody died. I am surprised because I am just learning about it.”

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the swimming pool, it was noted that the entrance was locked.

The manager of the swimming pool, who identified himself only as Fatai, refused to comment.

Fatai said, “You and I don’t have any business here; you are disturbing me.”

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Chike Oti, confirmed the incident, adding that the command had commenced investigation into the death.

Oti said, “The young boy went into the pool on his own. He had been swimming there before, but this time around, he could not make it out of the pool. Nobody pushed him into the water. Nevertheless, there are lifeguards employed to save any swimmer in distress.

“Investigation is focusing on whether there was negligence on the part of the lifeguards who were supposed to watch over the swimmers. As I speak to you, the lifeguards are being interrogated and our focus is to know whether we can establish a case of negligence on their part. We want to know what happened while he was in the pool and what did the lifeguards do when they noticed he could not make it out of the water.”

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