

# Lagos shuts school over pupil's

Deji Lambo

**T**HE Lagos State Government has ordered the shut down of Christland International School pending the outcome of the investigation to unravel the circumstances surrounding the death of a pupil, Whitney Adeniran, who died during the school's inter-house sports at Agege stadium, in the Agege area of the state.

The state Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omosoto, confirmed the development during a telephone conversation with our correspondent on Sunday.

He said, "We are investigating the matter but as a first step, we are going to shut down the school (Christland) tomorrow (Monday) to allow for a full investigation."

The Commissioner for Education, Mrs Folasade Adefisayo, has spoken with the father of the child to sympathise with him and commiserate with the family."

**PUNCH Metro** gathered that



• Lagos Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu •



• Whitney



• Blessing

two narratives had been trailing the events that led to Whitney's death during the school's sporting activities at the stadium on Thursday, February 9, 2023.

While eyewitnesses, the school management and the doctor that attended to Whitney when she was rushed to hospital for treatment claimed that the 12-year-old pupil slumped and died of cardiac arrest, the pupil's father, Michael,

confirmed to the **BBC Pidgin** that his

daughter was electrocuted.

"She (Whitney) died from a naked wire from one cotton candy vendor machine. After she touched it, she was electrocuted immediately. I have documented evidence that my child died of electrocution and not cardiac arrest as Christland School claimed," the aggrieved father told the **BBC Pidgin**.

Our correspondent gathered that on the day of the inter-house sports, the school bus picked up Whitney

and took her alongside other pupils to the Agege stadium for the inter-house sports.

In a bid to witness the event, Whitney's mother, Blessing, also visited the venue for the inter-house sports, adding that when the event commenced, she did not see her daughter among the pupils that participated in all the matches organised by the school.

Worried by the development, Blessing, who was seen in

# death, father alleges cover-up

trending video shedding tears as she chronicled the circumstances surrounding her daughter's death during the school's sporting activities at the stadium, said she was trying to locate the whereabouts of her daughter when one of the pupils said she slumped and was rushed to hospital.

She said, "No ambulance, no doctor, no nurse, there was no emergency provision on the ground in a place where you have over 500 students and 100 parents. When the boy said the school bus took her (Whitney), I ran out and met a staff member coming towards me and he said Whitney fell. I said I learnt she fell and he said I should not worry, she would be fine and they have taken her to hospital."

"I called my husband and he said I should go to the hospital and that he would make a few calls and will meet me there. I asked the staff which hospital they took my daughter to and he said he would ask the principal who said they took her to the Agege Central Hospital."

"I brought my phone and put it

on Google map and typed Agege Central Hospital and it was not showing, what I saw was Agege Central Mosque. I said 'Ma, it is not showing' and she said 'don't worry, just ask around and they will tell you.' We drove out of the stadium to the gate and asked the gatemen and they didn't know."

The bereaved mother explained that when she finally located the hospital, she found her 12-year-old daughter dead, adding that her lips and tongue had turned black.

She said, "When we couldn't locate the place, we decided to go to the Agege Central Mosque and on our way to the mosque, we saw the school bus packed, so we knew we were at the place. I jumped down from the car when we saw the school bus and rushed in."

"I saw the staff that went with her (Whitney) and I asked where my child was. Why did she faint? She (the staff) said 'I don't know, she's in there.' I went in there and I saw my daughter's corpse, Desola (Whitney) didn't say anything to me."

"She was drenched, soaked to the

skin, water was dripping, I knelt, I called on God, I shouted, I screamed. I felt her pulse, there was no pulse. My daughter was silent. I asked the doctor what happened to my daughter and he said from the look of things, she suffered from cardiac arrest."

Lamenting over the doctor's, Blessing wondered how her 12-year-old daughter could suffer a cardiac arrest without any pre-existing heart condition or medical condition, adding that Whitney was hale and hearty when the school bus picked her up for the event.

"Let me state that by the time I got there, my daughter's lips and tongue had already turned black. My child was not taken to a hospital, she was taken to an immunisation centre but that is not even my pain."

"My pain is there was no proper first aid management, there was nothing that was done for her; she was brought to the hospital dead," Blessing said.

However, Michael had in a Facebook post, demanded a probe of the circumstances surrounding his daughter's death and urged the Lagos State Government to intervene in the matter so justice could prevail.

His post read in part, "As a father, I demand answers from Christland International High School. I am in deep pain and sorrow right now. If you are a father, you will understand my pain."

"My daughter is highly loved by us. We cherished her existence and we can never allow an institution to gloss over the death of our daughter."

He immediately notified regulatory stakeholders and agencies to allow for a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the developments.

"As we await the outcome of an independent post-mortem process, we remain unwaveringly committed to supporting the family at this critical moment and pray fervently for the fortitude to bear her painful loss," the statement said in part.

Contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Benjamin Hundeyin, said an investigation into the case was ongoing, adding that the command was yet to ascertain Whitney's cause of death.

"The investigation is ongoing but the real reason behind her death is not yet ascertained, when it is ascertained, I will let you know. I don't want to listen to hearsay," Hundeyin said.

Since we started asking this question, the school has been asking us to back down from the autopsy and I know they know their way into the system."

"I am calling on the pathology department of @lasuth to please be honest with their result. Lagos State Government, Nigeria Government, please intervene."

Reacting, the management of Christland Schools Limited, in a statement, commiserated with Whitney's family as it described the pupil's death as a painful loss.

"We are heartbroken and distressed. Whitney was one of our day students who opted not to participate in the inter-house sports match past for reasons we were not very sure of."

"However, on discretion, we respected her decision to err on the side of caution, because, on January 20, 2023, it is in our records that she had complained about not-too-buoyant health and we immediately contacted her parents. Her father, Mr Michael Adeniran, came to the school to take her home. We emphasised to her parents to take a critical look at her," the statement said.

Explaining that Whitney slumped in public view and not under any hidden circumstances, the school said in a bid to rescue her, she was rushed to the nearest medical facility.

"Our immediate response was to take advantage of proximity to first-aid by identifying the nearest medical facility to take her to, where the doctor on duty, administered oxygen and every aid possible to her."

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# Defilement: Probe begins as father dies

Deji Lambo with agency report

**T**HE Lagos State Police Command has launched a manhunt for the driver of Luyol Secondary School, Iju, Jacob Fatokin, for allegedly killing a father who accused him of sexually molesting his daughter in the state.

**PUNCH Metro** gathered that the victim's parents, after being notified of the driver's illicit act against their daughter, visited the school to tender an official complaint against the driver.

The owner of the school, after listening to the parents and the pupil who narrated her ordeal in the hands of the driver, reportedly questioned the driver, who denied the allegation.

Enraged by the development, the pupil's mother, while speaking to the **News Agency of Nigeria**, said her husband slapped the driver, adding that the situation degenerated into a scuffle between the driver and her husband.

The pupil's mother said the driver hit her husband's chest, and in the process, he collapsed and was



• The school

rushed to hospital where he was confirmed dead.

She said, "On Wednesday, February 1, my daughter told me that her school bus driver had been taking her to his house around Ajuwon, on the pretext that he needed to drop something at home and that she should follow him."

"When they entered the house, the driver would ask my

daughter to sit on his lap; to raise her school uniform and to kiss his mouth. I told my husband what our daughter said on Monday, February 6 and he immediately called the school to complain and said he was also reporting the allegation to the police."

"He was told to come to the school first so we went there on Tuesday, February 7 and we met the school owner, the driver

and some of the teachers. The school owner after listening to us confronted the driver, saying he returned late with the school bus the previous week and when asked he said he went to something at home."

The aggrieved mother of Fatokin denied sexually molesting her daughter, adding that the one who was also reported at the Iju Police Station for further investigation.

"The driver couldn't say anything other than me? Me? Me? My visibly angry husband went to the driver, shouted at him and questioned why he molested his daughter."

"My husband angrily slapped the driver and they started fighting during which he pushed my husband on his chest. He (the husband) fell and efforts to resuscitate him were abortive. We rushed him to a hospital, where he was confirmed dead," the widow told **NAN**.

It was learnt that Fatokin absconded after perpetrating the crime.

A representative of the school who gave his name only as Alade, when contacted on Sunday, said

# fighting suspect

the matter had been reported to the police, adding that an investigation into the case was ongoing.

"The matter has been reported to the Iju station; the police will be able to give you all the information, they have it with them. An investigation is ongoing," Alade said.

# Hoodlums destroy tithe box, set Ondo church property ablaze

Peter Dada, Akure

**H**OODLUMS have attacked and destroyed the tithe box and other property of the Motailatu Church of God, Oke-Idahun Parish, at Imafon Community in Akure North Local Government Area of the state.

The church, which is under the umbrella of the Cherubim and Seraphim denomination, was said to have been attacked on Friday.

After the destruction, the hoodlums were said to have set ablaze some items found in the church.

The church's Resident Minister, Rev. David Alakadewo, who spoke on the matter on Sunday, said the

Contacted on Sunday for a reaction, the state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said, "No arrest has been made; the driver is on the run. He is accused of sexually molesting the girl and he is on the run. We are on his trail."

footprints of the hoodlums were detected when he got to the church premises in the evening of the fateful day.

He said, "What first caught my attention was the damaged lectern placed on the altar and some broken bottles that littered the church auditorium."

"Many of the plastic chairs belonging to the church and offering trays were set ablaze inside the church. This is malicious damage and we don't know who could have done this to the church of God."

Alakadewo-Adekahunsu added that the church's hymn books and other items kept in a room in the uncompleted church building were also destroyed while the church's

prayer room was also touched by the attackers.

"They damaged the window nets, but they could not gain access to the prayer room due to the burglary proof. But they damaged the tithe box," the cleric stated.

He said the matter had been reported at the Oda Police Division, Akure, and he was assured that those behind the attack will be apprehended.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs Fumilayo Odunlami, confirmed the incident but said she was yet to get full details.

"I will get back as soon as the DPO sends me the full details," the PPRO said.