

The 14-year-old Primary Five pupil was found hanging by a rope in the school dormitory on Tuesday night.

BY NOELINE NABUKENYA

A third school-going child has been found dead in separate suspected suicide incidents across the country, just weeks after the new education term kicked off.

The 14-year-old Primary Five pupil, who had only recently joined Kololo Junior School, was discovered lifeless, hanging by a rope in the school dormitory in Gombe A Cell, Gombe Ward, Wakiso Town Council, Wakiso District on Tuesday night.

The shocking incident forced the temporary closure of the institution.

The pupil's name has been withheld because he is a minor.

Kampala Metropolitan Police spokesperson Rachael Kawala said investigations into the cause of the pupil's death are still underway.

"At the moment, we are investigating a suicide case. The body has been taken for a post-mortem that will help investigators establish the cause of the death," Ms Kawala said.

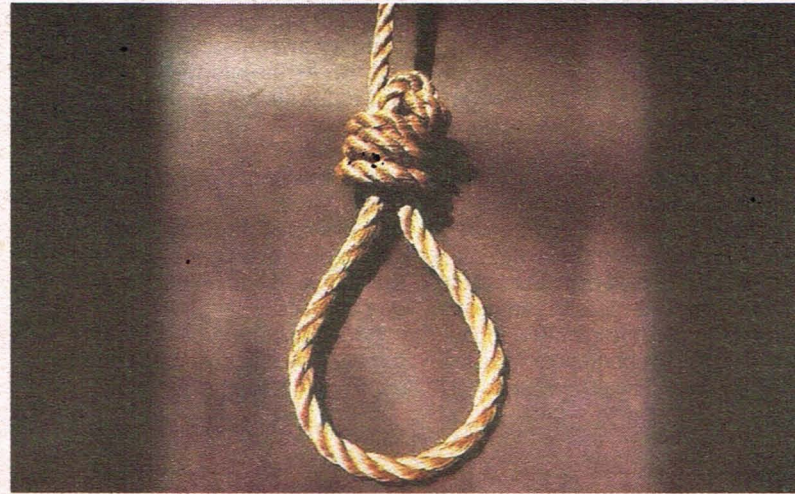
Cases of suspected suicide among students appear to be on the rise.

On Sunday, a 21-year-old male student was found hanging from a tree in Kayanda Kato Village, Buwunga Sub-county, Bugiri District. Another 13-year-old Primary Three pupil at Naiku Primary School is also suspected to have taken his own life in Mbale District at the weekend.

In the Wakiso case, Ms Kawala revealed that police are holding the school director and matron to assist with investigations.

Ms Sylvia Nabaggala, the mother of the deceased, was still at the city mortuary yesterday evening, waiting for the post-mortem examination before taking her son's body home to

3rd student found dead in four days



A 14-year-old Primary Five pupil was discovered lifeless, hanging by a rope in the school dormitory. PHOTO/COURTESY

Wakiso District.

She declined to comment.

According to police, on Tuesday evening, the deceased went with his colleagues to the mosque, but later headed straight to the dormitory.

His peers went for evening preps, and upon returning, found him hanging from a pole with a red scarf.

"As pupils returned to the dormitory from evening preps, they found him hanging inside. They immediately informed the matron, who notified the school director," Ms Kawala said.

The school administrators quickly reported the matter to police, who swung into action.

Ms Jane Nakatudde, a parent and former student of the school, described the deceased as a cheerful boy who was "the life of the party", friendly, and well-known among pupils despite being new.

"He has been buying his fellow learners snacks and they have loved him so much. Maybe if he came with his own issues because the school has existed for years," Ms Nakatudde said.

Mr Patrick Ssekatawa, the village defence secretary, said he received the news via phone call, and by the time he arrived at the scene, police were already on the ground.

"One of the teachers I interacted with said the pupil had gone to the mosque with his fellow learners, but came back earlier than the rest, [and went to the dormitory]," Mr Ssekatawa said.

He suspected the cause of death might be linked to family or academic pressures.

"Maybe he never liked the school because he was a new pupil. I have been told he joined this term," he added.

Ms Grace Nakibirango, the Gombe chairperson, urged parents to keep a close eye on their children and ensure their well-being.

"If he was an old person, we would say maybe it was stress for money or any other issue."

Meanwhile, parents with children at the school are left between a rock and a hard place following its temporary closure.

Ms Teddy Nakasagga, who has four children enrolled, expressed concern about their education.

"I have four children there and one of them is a candidate. We are worried because we are not aware of when it will be reopened," Ms Nakasagga said.

Ms Jane Nakatudde, another parent, said she received the information via phone call from another parent, who told her the school had been closed and boarding pupils sent home.

PAST INCIDENTS

Past incidents of suicide in schools have already set alarm bells ringing among parents, students, and the wider community. Last year, a Senior Three student at Mpoma Girls' School reportedly set herself ablaze in protest at being forced to return to school.

In February, a 16-year-old Senior Three student of Seeta High School's main campus allegedly died by suicide in the dormitory. Several other cases were also registered last year at Solberg College, Kampala International University (Western branch), and St Leo's College.