

Police probe death of 14-year-old boy in Luxian County



A dormitory building in Taifu Town Middle School [Photo/Shanghai Daily]

Police in Luxian County in southwest China's Sichuan Province are investigating the death of a 14-year-old boy and will conduct autopsy as soon as possible, said a statement by local authorities Wednesday evening following a spate of speculation that he was beaten to death by bullies.

The student surnamed Zhao was found dead outside his dormitory building in Taifu Town Middle School at 6 a.m. on April 1, local police said on that day. One day later it said preliminary investigation has ruled out homicide and the injuries he sustained suggested he fell from high places.

However, Xinhua news agency reported that a video showed the mother of the boy stormed into the funeral parlor, cut the boy's shirt off and found large area of bruises on his back. Meanwhile claims that the boy was beaten up by a gang of bullies were widely circulated online, Xinhua said.

In an interview with Xinhua, school headmaster Chen Liang and local education bureau director Zhu Daqing didn't answer if there was bully in the school, only saying the incident was being probed by police.

"All I can say is we will tighten up management," Chen was quoted by Xinhua.

Although local police said on April 3 the online allegations were not true and several people were caught fabricating rumors such as the boy was beaten up by five others and his arms and legs were broken in the assault, it failed to appease local residents.

The Xinhua report said checkpoints were set up several kilometers away from the county to stop any cars from entering. After the reporter detoured and walked into the town, large crowds of people were found standing in front of the school and hundreds of police officers wearing helmets were separating them apart.

While conducting the interview, the Xinhua reporter claimed he was constantly harassed by phone calls and the family of the student was badgered by local government officials and were afraid from telling the truth.