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# Learner's death shocks

## Faulty ablution facility door possibly sets events in motion to end in tragedy

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The death of Gr. 1 learner Motlatsi Selele (7) at the Caleb Motshabi Primary School in Bloemfontein has sent shock waves through the community.

His grief-stricken parents are trying to come to terms with his death on Friday (16/09).

In addition, they are trying to understand the ambiguous circumstances surrounding Motlatsi's death, like alleged failure by emergency medical services after being called.

The incident unfolded at break time, about 11:10.

It is reported that when Motlatsi wanted to leave a

mobile ablution facility at the school in the Caleb Motshabi settlement, he found that the door would not open. In his haste to return to class, he tried to climb out of a window and his head got stuck between a metal window guard and the ledge.

Although he was freed where he was found hanging, he was unresponsive.

"He was brought into a classroom, where he was certified dead three hours later," said Howard Ndaba, spokesperson for the provincial Department of Education.

It is suspected the door latch was faulty. According to Ndaba, the door would appar-

ently not open after it had been closed by one of Motlatsi's peers. They had been playing by the ablution facility. Rescuers kicked the door open.

According to an eyewitness, school staff were alerted by a worker of the Expanded Public Works Programme who had noticed the child hanging from the window.

Ndaba confirmed the department had committed itself to covering the burial expenses. He said psychological support had been provided to the family, learners, teachers and other parents of the school.

"Somehow, we feel relieved with the help of the depart-

ment," said Thato Motsetse, Motlatsi's father.

"We were distressed thinking about the funeral expenses, given we are both jobless. What is painful is the inability to exercise parenthood because of unemployment."

The couple reside with their five other children in a shack dwelling in the Phomolong settlement.

Motlatsi's death has reference to that of Michael Koma-pe, who fell into a pit toilet at the Mahlodumela Primary School in Chebeng Village outside Polokwane in 2014. The toilet was found to have been in a dilapidated state. Lt. Col. Thabo Covane,



**The ablution facility at which the incident happened.**

Mangaung Metro police spokesperson, said an inquest docket had been opened at the Kopanong Police Station for investigation into the circumstances of Motlatsi's death.

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