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Chinese teen allegedly beaten to death at camp

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BEIJING — A Chinese teenager was allegedly beaten to death at a boot camp for troubled youths that his mother had lured him to attend by promising he was going to study IT, state media said Thursday.

Chen Shi, 16, died two days after enrolling in Beiteng School in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan province, having been beaten up when he refused to run during training, the Beijing Times reported.

According to witnesses, an instructor -- helped by two others -- beat him with a plastic pipe, handcuffs and a wooden baton when he refused to run.

The incident comes amid controversy over China's hundreds of boot camps that aim to discipline unruly youths or wean them off web addictions.

His mother Tang Yulin decided to enrol Chen to toughen him up because he was "afraid of hardship, had weak willpower and not enough self-confidence" and had failed a school exam, it said.

They both travelled to Changsha from their home province of Jiangsu, in the east, after Tang told Chen he was going to study IT to persuade him to go.

The school's admissions director had advised her to lie, saying 90 percent of students who attended were given a false reason for attending and the remaining 10 percent were "kidnapped" by their parents or school instructors.

Tang paid 22,800 yuan (3,400 dollars) for half a year of attendance and went home after being told she would not be able to contact Chen directly but would have to use a teacher as an intermediary, the report said.

Two days later, she received a call from the school saying Chen was in hospital in critical condition "possibly from sunstroke," and asking her and her husband to come immediately.

They jumped on a plane but Chen died before they arrived. They managed to see his body -- which was covered in blood and bruises, while his underpants were torn.

The report quoted police as saying that three people had been detained on suspicion of killing Chen.

The school has now been closed amid disciplinary measures, the report said.

The Changsha police and education bureau were not immediately available for comment.

In August last year, the beating death of a teenage boy enrolled by his parents at an Internet addiction camp provoked outrage across the country.

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