



STATEMENT ON THE OBUASI SHTS SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Eduwatch is deeply concerned about allegations of sexual abuse involving at least 16 female students of Obuasi Senior High Technical School (SHTS) and the school's Headmaster, Mr Zakaria Abdulai. An investigation by JoyNews and investigative journalist Manasseh Azure Awuni documented allegations of repeated sexual abuse spanning over a year, despite complaints reaching responsible education authorities.

We commend Manasseh Azure Awuni and JoyNews for exposing allegations that existing security, institutional safeguarding and accountability mechanisms had apparently failed to address.

We welcome the interdiction of the Headmaster and the directive for a criminal investigation. However, interdicting the Headmaster alone is not enough. The investigation must extend to all officials whose actions or omissions may have enabled the alleged abuse to continue.

The JoyNews investigation indicates that complaints reached officials at the school and municipal education levels well before the interdiction. In February 2026, the school's Girl Child Coordinator and safeguarding officer petitioned school management, while five students subsequently reported allegations to the Municipal Education Directorate in March. Yet further incidents were allegedly reported in June and July. These revelations raise serious questions about compliance with safeguarding, reporting and referral procedures, as well as the effectiveness of supervisory accountability within the Ghana Education Service (GES).

The circumstances point to serious failures in the safeguarding chain, from the school to the regional education level, raising legitimate concerns about the capacity and independence of the same education authorities to investigate the Obuasi SHTS allegations. This underscores the need for an independent, external investigation to establish institutional responsibility and ensure accountability.

These concerns extend beyond Obuasi SHTS. A JoyNews review documented 44 reported cases involving teachers and school heads accused of sexually abusing students between January 2015 and October 2026, with more than half having no publicly reported final verdict or sanction. Although these figures do not establish the national prevalence of sexual abuse in schools, they point to persistent weaknesses in prevention, reporting, investigation and accountability. The true scale may be greater, particularly where fear of retaliation, stigma and limited confidence in school level reporting mechanisms discourage disclosure.



Eduwatch therefore calls for:

1. An independent, nationwide audit of teacher-student sexual relationships and school safeguarding systems in all secondary schools. The Ministry of Education must commission an independent audit, led by competent investigative and child protection institutions external to the GES and the TVET Service, to establish the extent and patterns of reported and unreported sexual misconduct, identify institutional and behavioural risk factors, and assess the effectiveness of safeguarding, complaint-handling and referral mechanisms. The findings should inform system-wide reforms, including stronger prevention, reporting, monitoring and accountability arrangements. The assurance of confidentiality and non-retaliation is key in ensuring victims volunteer relevant information in all schools.

2. An expanded investigation and accountability for all implicated officials in the Obuasi SHTS case. The ongoing investigation into the Obuasi SHTS case must examine the actions and omissions of school, municipal, regional and other relevant officials who received or became aware of the allegations. Any official credibly implicated in suppressing complaints, discouraging disclosure, failing to report or otherwise compromising safeguarding processes should, where warranted, be temporarily removed from relevant duties pending investigation, without prejudice to due process. Appropriate disciplinary sanctions must follow wherever culpability is established, with sanctions published.

3. Immediate protection and comprehensive support for affected students. The Ministry of Education and GES must ensure confidential medical, psychosocial, legal and educational support for all affected students, while protecting them and their families from intimidation, retaliation, victim-blaming and further disruption to their education.

The growing evidence of teacher-student sexual misconduct demands a shift from reactive interdictions to proactive, system-wide safeguarding accountability. An independent audit capable of identifying reported and hidden cases in schools, diagnosing institutional failures and informing enforceable reforms is essential to restoring public confidence and assuring parents and students that schools are safe environments for learning and development.

Accra, 16/10/2026.

