

Police arrest attendant in Willowbrook probe

By LAWRENCE De MARIA

A 39-year-old Mariners Harbor man was arrested by detectives yesterday and accused of beating a Willowbrook Developmental Center boy, who later died of causes apparently unrelated to the alleged beating.

William Nelson, 39, of 361 Grandview Ave., was arrested at his home by Detectives Robert Dianora and William Morris.

Nelson has been an employee of Willowbrook for three years and served as an attendant. He is accused of beating 9-year old Kyle Smith on July 22 in Building 26 as he gave him a shower. The boy died shortly afterward and Dr. Ladislau Boros, a doctor working part-time at Willowbrook, listed the cause of death as "cerebral embolism and congestive heart failure."

Kyle was buried upstate after his parents refused to permit an autopsy. He was suffering from a heart defect, as well as Down's Syndrome, or mongolism. He had only three chambers to his heart, and was frequently given oxygen.

Suspicious about the death, apparently arising from rumors about the alleged beating, prompted Staten Island District Attorney John M. Braisted to have the body exhumed. Acting Chief Medical Examiner Dominick J. DiMaio performed an autopsy Tuesday and confirmed that the boy died of natural causes. However he said he found bruises on the child.

Detectives have been working on the incident since last Thursday.

Nelson was charged with endangering the welfare of an in-

competent person, endangering the welfare of a child and assault.

He was released in his own recognizance at his arraignment yesterday afternoon in Criminal Court, pending a hearing Aug. 13.

Nelson has been suspended from his job at Willowbrook.

"His suspension and the charges against him internally will go through the usual procedures," said Willowbrook spokesman Joyce Libra.