# Former GMP officer convicted after shattering school window amid wider misconduct concerns



A former Greater Manchester Police officer, Gavin Bell, has been convicted of criminal damage after he shattered a school window "in anger or frustration" while in the presence of the headteacher. This incident, described as "unforgivable behaviour," has raised significant concerns regarding the standards of conduct expected from police officers, especially in settings emphasising public trust and safety. Following the incident, which occurred at a school during a visitation, a misconduct hearing was held on May 15, the day after Bell formally resigned from the police force. He faced allegations of gross misconduct, specifically for discreditable conduct and breaches of authority, respect, and courtesy. According to the hearing's chair, Lee Rawlinson, these breaches were clear and warranted significant disciplinary actions.

Despite his resignation, Bell's actions have led to his name being added to the College of Policing's 'Barred List', a measure designed to prevent individuals convicted of such misconduct from serving in policing roles in the future. The courtroom ruling, which took place at Chester Magistrates' Court, resulted in Bell being fined £650 and ordered to pay £125 in compensation. The magistrate's comments reflect a broader concern within law enforcement about the repercussions of such conduct, particularly in how it impacts public perception and confidence in policing.

This incident is not isolated but part of a worrying trend within the Greater Manchester Police, where recent investigations have unveiled serious failings in professional conduct. Notably, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has investigated several cases of gross misconduct among officers, including a group involved in sharing offensive messages that demeaned various communities. Such instances highlight a systemic issue within the force regarding adherence to expected behaviour standards, raising questions about training, supervision, and accountability within the police ranks.

The critical need for maintaining public trust is further underscored by another case involving Philip Ellis, who was dismissed for using excessive force during an arrest. Ellis's actions, including striking a man with a baton, drew severe criticism from the IOPC, reinforcing the notion that police officers must act with restraint and professionalism. These examples collectively illustrate a troubling pattern of behaviour that must be addressed to restore community confidence in local law enforcement.

Moreover, concerns have also surfaced about individual officers operating under the influence, as demonstrated in the case of Detective Constable Matthew Smith, who faced dismissal after crashing his vehicle while over the legal alcohol limit. Such occurrences indicate a potential disregard for the ethical standards expected of those entrusted with public safety, necessitating further dialogue on accountability measures within the police force.

As Greater Manchester Police navigates these challenges, the imperative to foster a culture prioritising ethical conduct and respect is clear. The misconduct cases, including that of Bell, underscore a pivotal moment for the police force, requiring rigorous scrutiny and a recommitment to the core values essential for effective policing. The community’s expectation is not only for law enforcement to uphold the law but also to embody the principles of integrity and restraint, ensuring that they serve as models of the standards they are tasked with enforcing.

As developments unfold, it remains crucial for both the police leadership and the community to engage in constructive discourse aimed at reformas that will uphold the integrity of the police force and restore public trust.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 3
2. Paragraphs 2, 5
3. Paragraphs 4, 6
4. Paragraph 5

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2057769/officer-who-broke-school-window> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/gross-misconduct-proven-against-current-and-former-greater-manchester-police-officers-over> - An investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) found that six Greater Manchester Police officers engaged in gross misconduct by sharing racist, ableist, and other offensive messages in a WhatsApp group. PC Rebekah Kelly was dismissed without notice, while former PCs Ashley Feest and Graham Atkinson admitted to gross misconduct. The officers breached standards related to discreditable conduct, respect, courtesy, equality, diversity, and challenging improper conduct. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining professional behavior within the police force.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-54016347> - Philip Ellis, a Greater Manchester Police officer, was dismissed for gross misconduct after using excessive force during an arrest. In October 2016, Ellis struck a 23-year-old man on the head with his baton outside a pub in Manchester, leading to hospital treatment for the victim. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) found that Ellis's actions were reckless and put people at risk. The case underscores the necessity for police officers to use force only when necessary, proportionate, and reasonable.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-52618123> - Detective Constable Matthew Smith of Greater Manchester Police was dismissed after crashing his car while over the legal alcohol limit. On 8 September, Smith collided with another vehicle in Bury and was found by an off-duty officer. He failed a breath test, recording 78 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, exceeding the legal limit of 35 micrograms. Smith admitted to gross misconduct and was dismissed without notice, highlighting the high standards expected of police officers both on and off duty.
5. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/greater-manchester-police-officer-given-written-warning-after-misconduct-case-was-proven> - A Greater Manchester Police officer received a written warning after an Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation found he used CS Spray on a 13-year-old during an arrest. The incident occurred in August 2020 when the officer used CS Spray on the child as he turned his head while running away. The IOPC concluded that the use of force was neither reasonable nor proportionate, and the officer's conduct fell short of expected standards, leading to the written warning.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-54016347> - Philip Ellis, a Greater Manchester Police officer, was dismissed for gross misconduct after using excessive force during an arrest. In October 2016, Ellis struck a 23-year-old man on the head with his baton outside a pub in Manchester, leading to hospital treatment for the victim. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) found that Ellis's actions were reckless and put people at risk. The case underscores the necessity for police officers to use force only when necessary, proportionate, and reasonable.
7. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/greater-manchester-police-officer-given-written-warning-after-misconduct-case-was-proven> - A Greater Manchester Police officer received a written warning after an Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation found he used CS Spray on a 13-year-old during an arrest. The incident occurred in August 2020 when the officer used CS Spray on the child as he turned his head while running away. The IOPC concluded that the use of force was neither reasonable nor proportionate, and the officer's conduct fell short of expected standards, leading to the written warning.