# Misconduct hearing reveals systemic racism in Child Q strip-search ordeal



A misconduct hearing has laid bare the deeply troubling circumstances surrounding the strip-search of a Black schoolgirl, known as Child Q, who at the time was just 15 years old. The incident occurred in December 2020 at her school in Hackney, east London, and has since sparked widespread outrage and calls for reform within the Metropolitan Police.

Child Q was strip-searched while menstruating, following a wrongful accusation of possessing cannabis. The procedure was conducted without the presence of an appropriate adult, raising serious questions about the adherence to protocol. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which is overseeing the case, has asserted that the actions of the three officers involved, all of whom deny gross misconduct, were not only unjustified but also deeply humiliating for the young girl. Elliot Gold, a barrister representing the IOPC, described the search as “degrading” and highlighted how the officers disregarded Child Q's clear indication of her menstrual status, thereby exacerbating the violation of her dignity.

During the hearing, it was revealed that Child Q felt "physically violated" and has since suffered mental health issues as a direct result of the experience. She will not be giving evidence due to the psychological trauma she has endured. Gold emphasised that such treatment is commonplace for Black schoolchildren, who are often seen as older and less vulnerable compared to their white peers. He stated that the officers’ actions had not only inflicted harm on Child Q but had also further damaged race relations between the police and minority communities.

This incident is not merely an isolated case; it resonates with a broader pattern of police misconduct in the UK. Statistics from a report by the Children’s Commissioner revealed that between July 2022 and June 2023, 457 strip searches of children were recorded, often in violation of proper procedures, with Black children disproportionately affected. Despite improvements, many searches still occurred in public view, drawing further condemnation. The Home Office has acknowledged these disparities and highlighted the need for a more rigorous framework to prevent such invasive searches in the future.

In the wake of Child Q’s treatment, public outrage has manifested in protests outside police stations and town halls, underscoring a community demand for accountability and change. The Metropolitan Police, acknowledging their missteps, has apologised for the incident and has committed to reviewing their policies regarding the strip-searching of minors. In fact, the police have admitted overusing their powers in cases involving children, and a proposal for systemic policy reform is currently being discussed to ensure that no child is subjected to such inappropriate treatment again.

The implications of this misconduct case are far-reaching. Child Q's ordeal is emblematic of systemic issues within law enforcement that require urgent attention. If the allegations against the officers are substantiated, their potential dismissal could signal a shift in how such cases are treated going forward, reinforcing the necessity of safeguarding children from unnecessary and damaging surveillance methods. As the hearing continues, the onus will be on the Metropolitan Police to reform practices that have perpetuated a culture of discrimination and disregard for the rights of young people.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/child-q-metropolitan-police-officers-who-strip-searched-girl-15-to-face-misconduct-hearing-12961067)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61523291), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/education-62435630)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61523291), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/child-q-metropolitan-police-officers-who-strip-searched-girl-15-to-face-misconduct-hearing-12961067)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told> - A misconduct hearing has been informed that a 15-year-old Black schoolgirl, known as Child Q, suffered mental harm and felt 'physically violated' after being strip-searched at her school in Hackney, east London, in December 2020. The search was conducted while she was menstruating, following a wrongful accusation of possessing cannabis. Three Metropolitan Police officers are facing gross misconduct charges over the incident, which allegedly took place without an appropriate adult present. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is bringing the case, with potential dismissal for the officers if the allegations are proven.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/> - A report by the Children's Commissioner highlighted that between July 2022 and June 2023, police in England and Wales conducted 457 strip searches on children, often failing to adhere to correct procedures and disproportionately targeting Black children. A notable case in 2022 involved the strip search of a 15-year-old Black girl during her menstruation, leading to widespread condemnation. The report found that 4% of searches since January 2018 were non-compliant with regulations, and 11% raised concerns. Despite some improvements, over 50 searches occurred in public view against guidelines. Black children were still four times more likely to be strip searched compared to the general population, although this disparity has slightly decreased. The commissioner urged for a higher threshold before subjecting children to such invasive searches and noted signs of improving police record-keeping practices. The Home Office acknowledged progress but emphasized the need for higher standards.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61523291> - A 15-year-old girl, known as Olivia, was strip-searched by police in December 2020, leading to trauma and a suicide attempt, according to her mother. Olivia, who is mixed race and autistic, was handcuffed and had her underwear cut off in the presence of male officers. The incident occurred after she was arrested and detained for over 20 hours. The Metropolitan Police has referred itself to the police watchdog, and the case follows that of Child Q, a 15-year-old Black pupil who was strip-searched at school after being wrongly accused of possessing drugs.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search> - Scotland Yard has admitted overusing its power to strip-search children after four of its officers were told they would face disciplinary proceedings over allegations that their search of a 15-year-old Black schoolgirl known as Child Q was inappropriate and amounted to discrimination owing to her race and sex. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said three of the officers faced accusations of gross misconduct over the search, carried out at a school in Hackney, in east London, in December 2020. A fourth officer faces lesser misconduct action over the absence of an appropriate adult. It is alleged that the decision to carry out the strip-search, while the girl was having her period, was inappropriate; that Child Q was treated differently because of her race and sex; that there was no appropriate adult present; and that the officers did not get authorisation from a supervisor. Met bosses have agreed, at the suggestion of the IOPC, to write formal letters of apology to Child Q and her family.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/child-q-metropolitan-police-officers-who-strip-searched-girl-15-to-face-misconduct-hearing-12961067> - Three Metropolitan Police officers are facing allegations of gross misconduct after the strip-search of a 15-year-old schoolgirl in 2020. Child Q was wrongly accused of possessing cannabis and was searched while on her period and with no appropriate adult present at a school in Hackney, east London. No drugs were found on her clothing or in her bag before two female officers searched her as two male officers waited outside. On Thursday, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said three officers would face a misconduct hearing, with a fourth officer facing a lesser misconduct meeting.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-62435630> - The strip-search of Child Q was not an isolated case, according to police data. Between 2018 and 2020, 650 children were strip-searched by police in London. The incident involving Child Q, a 15-year-old Black girl who was strip-searched at her school in Hackney in 2020, led to widespread condemnation and protests. A safeguarding report found that the search was unjustified and that racism was 'likely' to have been a factor. The case has prompted calls for changes in police procedures and policies regarding strip-searches of children.