# Two Met officers guilty of gross misconduct over humiliating strip search of Child Q



Two Metropolitan Police officers have been found guilty of gross misconduct over the “disproportionate” and “humiliating” strip search of a 15-year-old Black girl, known as Child Q, at a school in Hackney, east London, in 2020. The girl was wrongly suspected of carrying cannabis when the search was conducted, an incident that has since sparked widespread condemnation and calls for reform in police procedures involving children.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) investigation revealed serious failings in the way the search was carried out. There was no proper supervision or authorisation before the search, and an appropriate adult was not present during the procedure, as required by regulations. The IOPC concluded that the officers discriminated against Child Q due to her race and sex, with the search ultimately causing her significant mental harm and distress. The officers’ actions were described as “disproportionate in all the circumstances,” suffering Child Q to feel physically violated and traumatised.

One of the officers, PC Wray, apologised during a disciplinary hearing, admitting that the search “should have never happened.” She acknowledged several failings, including neglecting to complete mandatory training on police search procedures and being unaware of the need to handle individuals who were menstruating, as in Child Q’s case, with sensitivity. The panel is evaluating whether these officers should remain part of the Metropolitan Police Service.

This case spotlighted wider systemic issues. Between July 2022 and June 2023, 457 strip searches were conducted on children in England and Wales, often breaching procedural rules. Black children were disproportionately targeted, being four times more likely to be strip searched compared to the general population, though there has been a slight decrease in this disparity. Despite some improvements in police record-keeping and authorization protocols, over 50 strip searches took place in public view, contrary to guidelines.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, admitted that the force had been “overusing this power” and stated that since the Child Q incident, there have been significant practical improvements in the authorization and conduct of strip searches, particularly involving minors and intimate searches outside custody. These reforms have led to a notable reduction in the number of strip searches conducted by the force.

Following the Child Q case, the IOPC has urged the Home Office, National Police Chiefs’ Council, and College of Policing to review and tighten national guidance and training on strip searches, especially when intimate body parts are exposed. The IOPC further recommended that the Metropolitan Police issue formal apologies to Child Q and her family, acknowledging the distress and harm caused.

The Child Q case remains a profoundly important moment in examining police conduct and racial bias. It illustrates how Black children are often treated as older and less vulnerable than their white counterparts, influencing inappropriate use of powers. The ongoing disciplinary hearings and official investigations underscore a growing recognition that safeguarding vulnerable children must take precedence in policing, calling for higher thresholds and stricter safeguards before intrusive actions like strip searches are authorised.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/child-q-strip-search-gross-misconduct-metropolitan-police-officers-b2777529.html), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-16/officer-involved-in-strip-search-of-child-apologises-for-distress)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-calls-review-police-strip-search-powers-following-child-q-investigation)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](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.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/child-q-strip-search-gross-misconduct-metropolitan-police-officers-b2777529.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/> - A report by the Children's Commissioner revealed that between July 2022 and June 2023, 457 strip searches were conducted on children in England and Wales, often failing to adhere to correct procedures and disproportionately targeting Black children. The report highlighted a notable case in 2022 involving the strip search of a 15-year-old Black girl during her menstruation, leading to widespread condemnation. The investigation 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. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/british-police-criticised-over-child-strip-search-failings-2024-08-19/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search> - Following an investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), four Metropolitan Police officers were found to have committed gross misconduct during the strip search of a 15-year-old Black girl, known as Child Q, at a school in Hackney, east London, in 2020. The IOPC's investigation revealed that the decision to carry out the search was inappropriate, there was no consultation with a supervisor to obtain authorisation before carrying out the search, there was no appropriate adult present during the search, and Child Q was discriminated against by officers because of her race and sex. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley admitted that the force had been 'overusing this power' and stated that since the Child Q case, the force had made significant practical improvements, such as requiring more senior levels of authorisation, in how they carry out strip searches in custody and more thorough searches where intimate parts are exposed outside of custody. He said the work had 'significantly reduced our numbers'. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/14/four-met-officers-face-disciplinary-hearings-over-schoolgirl-strip-search?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-16/officer-involved-in-strip-search-of-child-apologises-for-distress> - During a misconduct hearing on 16 June 2025, PC Wray, one of the officers involved in the strip search of Child Q, admitted that the search 'should have never happened' and expressed deep regret for the distress caused. She acknowledged several failings, including not obtaining authorisation from a supervisor and not ensuring an appropriate adult was present during the search. PC Wray also admitted to not completing the Search Powers and Procedures Course, which covers the legal framework for police searches, and stated she was unaware that she had missed the course. She further admitted that she had never received training on how to handle situations involving individuals who are menstruating, as was the case with Child Q. The panel is now deciding whether she and her colleagues committed gross misconduct and whether they should remain officers in the Metropolitan Police Service. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-06-16/officer-involved-in-strip-search-of-child-apologises-for-distress?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told> - During a misconduct hearing, it was revealed that the strip search of Child Q, a 15-year-old Black schoolgirl, led to mental harm. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) argued that the search was 'disproportionate in all the circumstances' and that the officers' actions resulted in Child Q suffering harm to her mental health and feeling physically violated. The IOPC also highlighted that Black schoolchildren are more likely to be treated as older and less vulnerable than their white peers, which may have influenced the officers' decision to proceed with the search. The panel is considering whether the officers' actions amounted to gross misconduct. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jun/03/black-schoolgirl-child-q-strip-searched-by-met-officers-suffered-mental-harm-hearing-told?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-calls-review-police-strip-search-powers-following-child-q-investigation> - The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has called for a substantial review of policing powers under the laws relating to the strip searches of children, following its investigation into the strip search of Child Q. The IOPC recommended that the Home Office, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and the College of Policing (COP) review and make changes to national guidance, policy, and training related to searches involving the exposure of intimate body parts. The investigation into Child Q found that four officers should face disciplinary proceedings for their actions and conduct during the incident. The IOPC also recommended that the Metropolitan Police Service consider sending formal letters of apology to Child Q and her mother. ([policeconduct.gov.uk](https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-calls-review-police-strip-search-powers-following-child-q-investigation?utm_source=openai))