

PRESS NOTICE FROM ACTION ON RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN
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Families condemn 'virtual strip-searches' of children

Families across the UK have expressed horror at Metropolitan Police plans to make highly intrusive scanning machines available for schools to carry out weapons searches on pupils. The Rapiscan Secure 1000 machine reveals a naked image of the person being scanned, which can be stored on a computer system.

"We have seen examples of scans so intrusive that they clearly reveal genitalia," says Ian Dowty, lawyer for Action on Rights for Children. "When children, and their parents and teachers, realise just how little these scans leave to the imagination, we are sure that there will be enormous opposition to this scheme. Who will carry out the scans or access the images?"

"Taking indecent images of children is a most serious offence. At a time when the public is rightly concerned about child pornography, we are appalled that the Metropolitan Police has even suggested such an irresponsible course of action.

"We share the widespread concern that weapons should be kept out of school, but this is not the answer. The use of such invasive technology is not only completely disproportionate: it will create its own problems.

"Children have a right to their dignity, particularly at an age when many are extremely sensitive about their bodies. To degrade a child in this way is tantamount to abuse. A simple metal detector would do the job at a fraction of the cost, and without humiliating children.

"It is an offence to make or possess indecent images of anyone under the age of 18. If this scheme goes ahead, we will consider mounting a legal challenge."

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ARCH - Action on Rights for Children - is an Internet-based UK-wide network of families committed to the rights of children. Through its network, ARCH disseminates information to families, and gathers opinions on issues affecting children in order to represent them to policy-makers at both local and national level. For more information see: www.arch-ed.org

Some images from Rapiscan Secure 1000 body scans can be seen here:
http://www.theforbiddenknowledge.com/hardtruth/rapi_scan_lg.jpg
<http://archive.aclu.org/issues/privacy/BodyScanner.jpg>
<http://www.retrogrouch.net/MT/archives/contentimages/rapiscan4.jpg>

A selection of reports about the Rapiscan Secure 1000 can be seen here:
<http://www.rapiscan.cz/Sec1000.htm>
http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_545010.html
<http://www.washtimes.com/business/20030521-094809-8963r.htm>
<http://www.millennium-debate.org/suntel11aug024.htm>
<http://www.rense.com/ufo6/rcmppeekers.htm>