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Pensioner in Custody After Allegedly Handing Out Sedative-Laced Sweets to Children at Camp

August 4, 2025

— Categories: Crime



A 76-year-old man is in custody after being accused of giving sedative-laced sweets to children at a summer camp in Leicestershire, prompting hospital treatment for several individuals.

John Ruben has been charged with three counts of willful ill treatment of a child following an incident at Stathern Lodge in the village of Stathern last July 27. Police say that several

children became unwell after consuming sweets, triggering an emergency response.

Ruben appeared in court on Saturday, August 2, where he was formally charged with offences involving the assault, ill-treatment, neglect, or exposure of children in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to their health. He did not enter a plea and has been remanded in custody until his next hearing, set for August 29.

Eight boys aged between 8 and 11, along with one adult, were taken to the hospital after showing signs of illness. According to Leicestershire Police, all nine have since been discharged.

The charges brought against Ruben relate specifically to three children who were at the camp. He was arrested the following day, July 28, at a pub located around 15 miles from the campgrounds. Police say he was taken into custody without incident.

CBS News reported that Ruben is alleged to have distributed sweets containing a sedative substance, though police have not disclosed the specific type of drug involved. The case has raised serious concerns among families and local residents.

Prosecutor Janine McKinney addressed the community's alarm in a statement provided to the *BBC*: "This has been an extremely upsetting and shocking moment for the community, and especially for the children and parents most directly affected."

The summer camp was being held at Stathern Lodge, a rural property equipped with a sports hall and catering facilities. The Braithwaite Gospel Trust, a Christian charity, owns the venue. However, police clarified that the lodge's owners and operators are not involved in the incident and are separate from the group that hired the facility.

Leicestershire Police have urged the public to avoid speculation as the investigation continues. "This is an active criminal investigation, and we ask that people do not speculate further about the incident," the force said in an official statement.

Authorities have not released further details about how the sedatives were administered or whether any additional charges are being considered. The case remains ongoing, with a full inquiry expected to continue in the lead-up to Ruben's next court appearance.