



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Charlotte Weeks: Professional conduct panel outcome

**Panel decision and reasons on behalf of the
Secretary of State for Education**

January 2021

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	3
Preliminary applications	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	5
Statement of Agreed Facts	5
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	11
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	14

Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education

Teacher:	Ms Charlotte Weeks
Teacher ref number:	1650940
Teacher date of birth:	11 June 1993
TRA reference:	18953
Date of determination:	29 January 2021
Former employer:	Holy Innocents' Catholic Primary School, Orpington, Kent

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 29 January 2021 by video conference to consider the case of Ms Charlotte Weeks.

The panel members were Professor Roger Woods (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Laura Flynn (teacher panellist) and Mrs Shabana Robertson (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Robert Kellaway of Birketts LLP solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Ms Weeks that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Ms Weeks provided a signed Statement of Agreed Facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Sherelle Appleby; Ms Weeks; or her representative, Mr Christopher Ford.

The meeting took place in private but the panel’s decision was announced in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Meeting dated 4 December 2020.

It was alleged that Ms Weeks was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that:

1. She failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with one or more pupils, including by;
 - a. engaging in favouritism towards and/or displaying preferential treatment towards Pupil A on one or more occasions during a school trip [redacted], including by;
 - i. revoking and/or overruling punishments given to Pupil A by other members of staff;
 - ii. failing to sanction Pupil A for his poor behaviour;
 - b. engaging in conversation with Pupil A alone whilst in a room with the door closed on at least one occasion during a school trip [redacted];
 - c. engaging in online conversations with Pupil A and/or Pupil B whilst playing the game 'Fortnite' via PlayStation;
 - i. without seeking consent from their parents;
 - ii. without the knowledge and/or or consent of the school's leadership team;
 - iii. in which she discussed inappropriate personal matters, such as her sexuality and/or the sexuality of one or more of her colleagues.
2. Her behaviour as may be found proven;
 - a. at allegation 1(a)(i) above undermined her colleague(s) decisions and or instructions to Pupil A;
 - b. at 1(c)(iii) above caused Pupil B to be upset and/or distressed.

Ms Weeks admits the facts of allegations against her and that her behaviour amounts to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute falling short of the standards of behaviour expected of a teacher, as set out in the Statement of Agreed Facts signed by Ms Weeks on 1 July 2020.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications.

Summary of evidence

Documents

In advance of the meeting, the panel received a bundle of documents which included:

- Section 1: Chronology – page 2;
- Section 2: Notice of Referral, response and Notice of Meeting – pages 4 to 10;
- Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts and presenting officer representations – pages 12 to 17;
- Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 19 to 84;
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 86 to 100.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle in advance of the meeting.

Statement of Agreed Facts

The panel considered a Statement of Agreed Facts signed by Ms Weeks on 1 July 2020.

Ms Weeks admitted in the Statement of Agreed Facts that she had failed to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils [redacted].

Ms Weeks accepted she engaged in favouritism towards and/or preferential treatment of Pupil A whilst on a school trip [redacted]. Ms Weeks accepted that she had undermined the decision and instructions of her colleague(s) when revoking and/or overruling punishments given to Pupil A.

Ms Weeks accepted that on at least one occasion during the school trip [redacted] she sat alone in a room with Pupil A whilst the door was closed.

Ms Weeks accepted that on more than one occasion she had engaged in an online conversation with Pupils A and/or B whilst playing the game 'Fortnite' via a PlayStation. Ms Weeks admitted that she had done so without the consent of either the pupils' parents or the knowledge or consent of the school's senior leadership team.

Ms Weeks accepted that during the online conversations she had discussed inappropriate personal matters with Pupil A and/or B including her sexuality and/or the sexuality of one of her colleagues. Additionally, Ms Weeks admitted her conduct in this respect fell far below the standards expected of members of the teaching profession. Ms Weeks accepted the inappropriate conversations caused Pupil B to be upset.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as set out below.

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Ms Weeks for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

In summary, Ms Weeks was employed at Holy Innocents' Catholic Primary School ("the School") as a teacher from 1 September 2016 until her resignation on 28 October 2019.

[redacted], Ms Weeks accompanied pupils on a residential school trip. It is alleged Ms Weeks gave preferential treatment to Pupil A during this trip and undermined the decisions and instructions given to Pupil A by her colleagues.

It is alleged that during the school trip Ms Weeks was found alone with Pupil A in the teachers' bedroom with the door being closed before a colleague entered.

It is alleged that in or around July to August 2019, Ms Weeks played an online game, Fortnite, via a PlayStation games console with Pupil A and on one occasion with Pupil B. Ms Weeks did not seek consent from the parents and did not inform the school's leadership team. It is alleged that, at least on one occasion whilst playing Fortnite, Ms Weeks talked online to both Pupil A and B about her sexuality and the sexuality of another staff member at the School.

Pupil B informed her mother about the conversation. Pupil B's mother contacted another teacher at the School. The School reported the incidents to the Local Authority Designated Officer on 22 August 2019.

The School began an investigation into Ms Weeks' conduct in August 2019. The School held two investigation meetings, on 5 September 2019 and on 8 October 2019. Ms Weeks did not attend the second meeting. Ms Weeks resigned from her role at the School on 28 October 2019.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you proved, for these reasons:

1. You failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with one or more pupils, including by;

a. engaging in favouritism towards and/or displaying preferential treatment towards Pupil A on one or more occasions during a school trip [redacted], including by;

i. revoking and/or overruling punishments given to Pupil A by other members of staff;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven. The panel noted within the bundle there was corroborating evidence from members of staff that Ms Weeks had revoked and/or overruled punishments given to Pupil A on numerous occasions. As an example, on one occasion, witnessed by a staff member, Pupil A pushed another child into some stinging nettles and the punishment to miss the evening group activity was not followed through by Ms Weeks.

ii. failing to sanction Pupil A for his poor behaviour;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven. By way of an example, Pupil A made inappropriate comments during a trip to a farm and Ms Weeks endorsed his comments in her reply and did not subsequently discipline Pupil A for his comments.

b. engaging in conversation with Pupil A alone whilst in a room with the door closed on at least one occasion during a school trip [redacted];

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven. The panel noted that the corroborating evidence provided by her colleagues in relation to this incident and found on the balance of probabilities that the incident had taken place.

c. engaging in online conversations with Pupil A and/or Pupil B whilst playing the game 'Fortnite' via PlayStation;

i. without seeking consent from their parents;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven. Ms Weeks' flatmate and colleague had played Fortnite with pupils with the express permission of the pupils parents. Ms Weeks, at some point in the absence of her flatmate began to play Fortnite, with pupils, using her colleague's identity. Her flatmate

expressed her concern. The panel noted in the evidence that her flatmate felt uncomfortable with this situation and left. However, Ms Weeks then purchased her own PlayStation and continued to play Fortnite with the pupils under the name 'Daisy'.

The panel was presented with no evidence that these events had not taken place. Although, the evidence the panel was relying on was hearsay evidence the panel found it compelling and took into account Ms Weeks' admission that the online conversations had taken place without the seeking of consent from the parents.

ii. without the knowledge and/or or consent of the School's Leadership Team;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven.

The panel was presented with the School's policies on safeguarding, social networking policy and data protection policy.

iii. in which you discussed inappropriate personal matters, such as your sexuality and/or the sexuality of one or more of your colleagues;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven.

2. Your behaviour as may be found proven;

a. at allegation 1(a)(i) above undermined your colleague(s) decisions and or instructions to Pupil A;

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven.

By way of example, the panel considered the incident in which Pupil A had made an inappropriate comment about another pupil's sister's breasts. A colleague told Pupil A that he would miss free time because of this. The colleague explained the situation to Ms Weeks and Ms Weeks overruled the decision and gave Pupil A his free time back. On the balance of probability, the panel considered that this incident had taken place given the evidence provided to the panel.

b. at 1(c)(iii) above caused Pupil B to be upset and/or distressed.

On examination of the documents before the panel, and the admission of this allegation in the signed Statement of Agreed Facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegation was proven.

The panel noted that Pupil B was not present to give evidence. However, the panel was satisfied that it was more likely than not that Ms Weeks' actions in terms of allegation 1(c)(iii) caused Pupil B to be upset. The panel also noted the hearsay evidence within the bundle that Pupil B had felt strongly enough to inform her mother of the inappropriate conversation and had not wanted to play Fortnite with Pupil A or Ms Weeks after the incident.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute

Having found the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In doing so, the panel had regard to the Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Weeks in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Weeks was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel considered the actions of Ms Weeks raised serious safeguarding concerns. The panel considered she had failed to follow basic safeguarding requirements that she would, and should, have been aware of given her experience as a teacher. Ms Weeks had failed to follow the school's policy in terms of safeguarding and had failed to follow

the basic requirements of the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education ('KCSIE').

The panel considered that given Pupil A's personal circumstances at the time of the incident Ms Weeks should have been extra vigilant and mindful of her safeguarding responsibilities but instead failed to follow appropriate procedures and actions at a crucial and vulnerable time for Pupil A. The panel considered that Ms Weeks' actions were likely to prevent Pupil A getting the appropriate support he needed in a safe context.

The panel considered that Ms Weeks had been placed in a particular position of trust during the school trip as she had been the designated lead on the trip. The panel considered that she had seriously abused that position of elevated trust in the way she had acted during the trip. Moreover, the panel considered Ms Weeks again abused her position of trust in playing Fortnite with pupils online without the consent of parents and school whilst discussing and disclosing inappropriate information.

The panel was particularly concerned that at the time of the incidents Ms Weeks had not been open and honest with all of her colleagues about Pupil A's situation, particularly during the school trip. Furthermore, the panel noted that Ms Weeks had not been transparent in the steps she had taken to play Fortnite with the pupils online.

The panel considered that it was completely inappropriate for a teacher to arrange to play games online with pupils outside of school without supervision or consent. Moreover, having inappropriate conversations and far overreaching boundaries with pupils whilst doing so heightened the seriousness of this conduct and potential harmful impact on the pupils.

The panel also noted that Ms Weeks had failed to follow the school's policy on engaging in social networking and data protection.

The panel considered that the incidents in respect of the school trip had taken place in the education setting. The panel noted that the incident concerning the inappropriate conversations online had taken place outside of the educational setting. However, the panel concluded that Ms Weeks' conduct affected the way she fulfilled her teaching role in that she overstepped the professional boundary between a pupil and teacher relationship.

The panel also considered whether Ms Weeks' conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 10 and 11 of the Advice. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Weeks fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Ms Weeks was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others and considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way they behave.

The panel considered the public expectation is that teachers will maintain appropriate boundaries with pupils, keep them safe. Further, the public expect that teachers will not undermine the appropriate decisions and instructions to pupils and will not unnecessarily cause pupils to become upset.

The panel considered that Ms Weeks' behaviour, in committing the misconduct whilst holding a position of authority, as a teacher could affect public confidence in the teaching profession.

The findings of misconduct were serious and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception.

The panel therefore found that Ms Weeks' actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of the allegations proved, the panel further found that Ms Weeks' conduct amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and a proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have a punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the

maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and, declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Ms Weeks, which involved a failure to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils and a failure to adhere to basic safeguarding requirements, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Weeks were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel decided that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Ms Weeks was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

Notwithstanding the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Ms Weeks.

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Ms Weeks. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is continuing risk
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils) or violation of the rights of pupils.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

The panel considered that Ms Weeks' actions were deliberate and there was no evidence to suggest that she was acting under duress.

The panel considered the evidence within the bundle as to Ms Weeks' personal circumstances at the time of the incidents. The panel noted that Ms Weeks' representative had submitted evidence that Ms Weeks had been [redacted]. The panel

appreciated that Ms Weeks' health had deteriorated after the incidents had been reported and the School undertook an investigation into her actions. However, the panel noted that Ms Weeks was [redacted] after the incidents had taken place and her [redacted] had been triggered due to the investigation into the incidents. For these reasons, the panel was not convinced that Ms Weeks' personal circumstances at the time of the incident provided mitigation.

The panel also considered evidence in the bundle, put forward on behalf of Ms Weeks', that she had been asked by Pupil A's mother to keep an eye on him around the time of the incidents due to [redacted]. However, the panel did not consider these circumstances to be a mitigating factor. The panel considered that given Ms Weeks' insight into the Pupil A's circumstances she should have been even more vigilant of the need to act appropriately and in accordance with safeguarding guidance.

The panel considered that from the evidence provided Ms Weeks did have a previous good history as a teacher, had not been subject to any previous regulatory proceedings and the panel accepted that the incidents appeared to be out of character.

The panel noted that some evidence was presented within the bundle that Ms Weeks was a good teacher. However, the panel noted that no personal references were provided by Ms Weeks that could attest to her abilities as a teacher or her character.

The panel noted that Ms Weeks had eventually accepted the allegations of the claim. The panel considered that Ms Weeks had only shown limited insight into her actions and the harmful impact they could have had on pupils, the school and the profession.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings was sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Ms Weeks of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Ms Weeks. The public interest factor of protecting pupils in that Ms Weeks had disregarded and breached the basic safeguarding requirements expected of a teacher was a significant factor in forming that opinion.

Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than two years.

The panel considered that Ms Weeks' conduct was capable of being remediated and that there was potentially a public interest in allowing a Ms Weeks to return to the profession once she has demonstrated insight and a greater understanding of her misconduct and the necessity for clear and appropriate boundaries between teachers and students.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a three-year review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of both sanction and review period.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Weeks should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of three years.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Weeks is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include findings relating to a failure to follow basic safeguarding requirements.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Ms Weeks, and the impact that will have on her, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children. The panel has observed that Ms Weeks, “failed to follow appropriate procedures and actions at a crucial and vulnerable time for Pupil A. The panel considered that Ms Weeks’ actions were likely to prevent Pupil A getting the appropriate support he needed in a safe context.” A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, “The panel noted that Ms Weeks had eventually accepted the allegations of the claim. The panel considered that Ms Weeks had only shown limited insight into her actions and the harmful impact they could have had on pupils, the School and the profession.”

In my judgement, the lack of full insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future well being of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “The findings of misconduct were serious and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception.”

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a

failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Weeks herself. The panel observe, “that from the evidence provided Ms Weeks did have a previous good history as a teacher, had not been subject to any previous regulatory proceedings and the panel accepted that the incidents appeared to be out of character.”

The panel also “noted that some evidence was presented within the bundle that Ms Weeks was a good teacher. However, the panel noted that no personal references were provided by Ms Weeks that could attest to her abilities as a teacher or her character.”

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Weeks from teaching and would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight. The panel has also said that the behaviour of Ms Weeks, “involved a failure to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils and a failure to adhere to basic safeguarding requirements.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Weeks has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a three-year review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments “The public interest factor of protecting pupils in that Ms Weeks had disregarded and breached the basic safeguarding requirements expected of a teacher was a significant factor in forming that opinion.”

The panel has said that “Ms Weeks’ conduct was capable of being remediated and that there was potentially a public interest in allowing Ms Weeks to return to the profession

once she has demonstrated insight and a greater understanding of her misconduct and the necessity for clear and appropriate boundaries between teachers and students.”

I have considered whether a three-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, there are factors which mean that a two-year review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the safeguarding concerns, the lack of insight and the abuse of trust especially as set out by the panel, “Ms Weeks had been placed in a particular position of trust during the school trip as she had been the designated lead on the trip. The panel considered that she had seriously abused that position of elevated trust in the way she had acted during the trip. Moreover, the panel considered Ms Weeks again abused her position of trust in playing Fortnite with pupils online without the consent of parents and school whilst discussing and disclosing inappropriate information.”

I consider therefore that a three-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Ms Charlotte Weeks is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 03 February 2024, 3 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Charlotte Weeks remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Ms Charlotte Weeks has a right of appeal to the Queen’s Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.



Decision maker: Alan Meyrick

Date: 3 February 2021

This decision is taken by the decision maker named above on behalf of the Secretary of State.