



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Paul Arthur Stevens: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome**

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

**September 2022**

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## **Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State**

<b>Teacher:</b>	Mr Paul Arthur Stevens
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	8061355
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	23 August 1958
<b>TRA reference:</b>	17497
<b>Date of determination:</b>	7 September 2022
<b>Former employer:</b>	Abberley Hall, Worcester (the “School”)

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened by Microsoft Teams to consider the case Mr Paul Arthur Stevens.

The panel members were Ms Kelly Thomas (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Gemma Hutchinson (teacher panellist) and Mr Alan Wells (former teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel Ms Anna Marjoram of Eversheds Sutherland (International) 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 Mr Stevens that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Stevens provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted the facts of the allegations and the conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Ms Ruth Miller of Fieldfisher, Mr Stevens or his representative.

The meeting took place in private.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 2 August 2022.

It was alleged that Mr Stevens was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

1. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14 between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1);
2. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
3. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14 between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1);
4. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1983 to 31 December 1985 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
5. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
6. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1983 to 31 December 1985 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
7. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14 between 1 January 1983 to 20 October 1985 contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1);
8. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 23 March 1988 and 22 March 1991. contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
9. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1985 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
10. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1983 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;
11. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1982 and 31 December 1985 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;

12. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1985 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;

13. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 16) between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15;

14. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14 between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1);

15. On 1 May 2019, he was convicted of gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14 between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991 contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1(1);

16. On 24 August 2020, he was convicted of indecent assault on boy (under 14) between 1 September 1992 and 30 September 1994 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15.

Mr Stevens admitted the facts of the above 16 allegations and that those facts amount to a conviction of a relevant offence.

## **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 and list of key people – pages 1 to 2

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 3 to 20

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 21 to 28

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 29 to 54

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 55 to 60

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, and the Notice of Meeting which had been sent separately, in advance of the meeting.

## Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Stevens on 28 October 2021 and the presenting officer on 11 November 2021.

## Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Stevens 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.

Mr Paul Arthur Stevens was employed as a Teacher at the School from 1 September 1981. Mr Stevens resigned from his position at the end of Easter 2000.

In 2015, allegations were raised against Mr Stevens' conduct whilst employed at the School. Mr Stevens was subsequently investigated by Police.

## 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. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1), namely gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991;**
- 2. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991;**
- 3. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1), namely gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991;**

4. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1985;
5. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991;
6. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1985;
7. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1), namely gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14, between 1 January 1983 and 20 October 1985;
8. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 23 March 1988 and 22 March 1991;
9. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 16, between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1985;
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14. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1), namely gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991;

**15. On 1 May 2019, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Indecency with Children Act 1960 s.1 (1), namely gross indecency with a child (boy) under 14, between 16 May 1988 and 15 May 1991; and**

**16. On 24 August 2020, you were convicted by Warwick Crown Court of an offence contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 1956 s.15, namely indecent assault on a boy under 14, between 1 September 1992 and 30 September 1994.**

The allegations were admitted and were supported by evidence presented to the panel within the bundle, specifically the certificates of conviction. The allegations were therefore found proved.

### **Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence**

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted conviction of a relevant offence.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

The offences were committed by Mr Stevens prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards, therefore the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of teaching standards at that time and considered that the teacher pupil boundary had been an important one then, and that Mr Stevens had breached this in his conduct. The panel also considered that, at that time, Mr Stevens’ actions would not be compatible with the way in which he would be expected to act as a teacher, noting the public trust in the profession and the way in which teachers are viewed by the public. Mr Stevens’ actions showed a lack of regard for safeguarding pupils, and a lack of tolerance for the rights of others. Mr Stevens acted contrary to statutory frameworks in committing numerous criminal offences.

The panel noted that Mr Stevens’ actions were relevant to teaching, working with children, and working in an education setting. The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offences would have been likely to have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Stevens’ behaviour in committing the offences would be likely to affect public confidence in the teaching profession.

The panel noted that Mr Stevens’ behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed, and which the Advice states is likely to be considered “a relevant offence”.



This was a case concerning offences involving violence (specifically assault) / sexual activity / sexual communication with a child / child cruelty and/or neglect/ controlling or coercive behaviour. The Advice indicates that a conviction for any offence that relates to or involves such offences is likely to be considered “a relevant offence”.

The panel considered that this was a very serious case involving numerous, significant offences – all of which were to be considered relevant.

Mr Stevens offered no mitigation in respect of his actions but did state he was remorseful and pleaded guilty to the criminal offences committed.

## **Panel’s recommendation to the Secretary of State**

Given the panel’s findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, 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 is appropriate, the panel had to consider the public interest, the seriousness of the behaviour and any mitigation offered by Mr Stevens and whether a prohibition order is necessary and proportionate. 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 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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; 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 Mr Stevens, which involved numerous sexual offences against children which were his pupils, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of inappropriate relationships with children. Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Stevens were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

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

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher’s behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should

be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a threat to the public trust in the teaching profession.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a panel will likely consider a teacher's behaviour to be incompatible with being a teacher if there is evidence of one or more of the factors that begin on page 15. In the list of such factors, those that were relevant in this case were:

serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;

the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are "relevant matters" for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosure;

misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;

abuse of position or trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils)

an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;

sexual misconduct, for example, involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;

failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);

violation of the rights of pupils;

deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues; and

a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, taking account of the public interest and the seriousness of the behaviour and the likely harm to the public interest were the teacher be allowed to continue to teach, the panel went on to consider the mitigation offered by the teacher/ whether there were mitigating circumstances.

In the light of the panel's findings the panel found no evidence that Mr Stevens' actions were not deliberate. There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Stevens was acting under duress and, in fact, the panel found Mr Stevens' actions to be calculated and deliberate.

Although Mr Stevens made a statement that he was remorseful for his actions, the panel found that no mitigation was offered by Mr Stevens for his actions, nor was there evidence that Mr Stevens had a degree of insight into the impact of his actions.

### **Proportionality**

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 would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Stevens 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 Mr Stevens. The long history of offences and repeated nature of this conduct, together with the fact that Mr Stevens abused his position of trust, were significant factors 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 for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. 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 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are cases involving certain conduct where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. These cases include: serious sexual misconduct, for example where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used his professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; and any sexual misconduct involving a child. The panel found that Mr Stevens was responsible for a number of sexual assaults against children who were his pupils and underage, taking place over a number of years and on a repeated basis.

As discussed above, the panel did not find any mitigating circumstances. Mr Stevens appeared to show no insight and little remorse for his actions. The panel therefore considered that there was a risk that such behaviour may be repeated by Mr Stevens.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the

circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended without provision for a 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 a relevant conviction.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Paul Arthur Stevens should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Stevens is in breach of the standards expected by teachers and I have noted their comments “The offences were committed by Mr Stevens prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards, therefore the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of teaching standards at that time and considered that the teacher pupil boundary had been an important one then, and that Mr Stevens had breached this in his conduct. The panel also considered that, at that time, Mr Stevens’ actions would not be compatible with the way in which he would be expected to act as a teacher, noting the public trust in the profession and the way in which teachers are viewed by the public. Mr Stevens’ actions showed a lack of regard for safeguarding pupils, and a lack of tolerance for the rights of others. Mr Stevens acted contrary to statutory frameworks in committing numerous criminal offences.”

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Stevens, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Stevens fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a findings which involved numerous sexual offences against children which were his pupils.

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 a relevant offence, 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 Mr Stevens, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Stevens, which involved numerous sexual offences against children which were his pupils, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of inappropriate relationships with children." 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, set out as follows, "Mr Stevens offered no mitigation in respect of his actions but did state he was remorseful and pleaded guilty to the criminal offences committed." 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 wellbeing 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 panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Stevens' behaviour in committing the offences would be likely to affect public confidence in the teaching profession." In addition "the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Stevens were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession." I am particularly mindful of sexual offences involving children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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 a relevant conviction, 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 Mr Stevens himself and have noted that Mr Stevens was employed as a Teacher at the School from September 1981 until 2000. A prohibition order would prevent Mr Stevens from teaching. A prohibition

order would also clearly deprive the public of his 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 or remorse. The panel has said, "Although Mr Stevens made a statement that he was remorseful for his actions, the panel found that no mitigation was offered by Mr Stevens for his actions, nor was there evidence that Mr Stevens had a degree of insight into the impact of his actions."

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that "This was a case concerning offences involving violence (specifically assault) / sexual activity / sexual communication with a child / child cruelty and/or neglect/ controlling or coercive behaviour. The Advice indicates that a conviction for any offence that relates to or involves such offences is likely to be considered "a relevant offence".

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Stevens 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 full remorse or insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

The published Advice is clear when considering cases of serious sexual misconduct, particularly those involving children. Mr Stevens was responsible for sexual assaults with children in his care and over a number of years, which ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment.

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 that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel's comments "The Advice indicates that there are cases involving certain conduct where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. These cases include: serious sexual misconduct, for example where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used his professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; and any sexual misconduct involving a child. The panel found that Mr Stevens was responsible for a number of sexual assaults against children who were his pupils and underage, taking place over a number of years and on a repeated basis." The panel has also said that they "did not find any mitigating circumstances. Mr Stevens appeared to show no insight and little remorse for his actions. The panel therefore considered that there was a risk that such behaviour may be repeated by Mr Stevens."

In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession, these elements are the seriousness of the findings involving children and the lack of insight.

I consider therefore that allowing for no review period is necessary to maintain public confidence and is proportionate and in the public interest.

**This means that Mr Paul Arthur Stevens is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England.** Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Stevens shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

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

Mr Paul Arthur Stevens has a right of appeal to the King's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SABuxcey', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey**

**Date: 15 September 2022**

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