



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Roderick Stevenson: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome**

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

**March 2023**

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Mr Roderick Stevenson
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	9646367
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	29 October 1958
<b>TRA reference:</b>	18847
<b>Date of determination:</b>	1 March 2023
<b>Former employer:</b>	Ormiston Victory Academy, Norwich

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened by virtual means to consider the case of Mr Roderick Stevenson.

The panel members were Mr Peter Ward (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Penny Griffith (lay panellist) and Mrs Beverley Williams (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Luisa Gibbons 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 Stevenson that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Stevenson admitted the facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Louise Murphy-King, or Mr Stevenson.

The meeting took place in private.

## **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 23 February 2023.

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

1. On or around 17 August 2021, he was convicted of:
  - a) three counts of making indecent photographs of a child, contrary to Section 1(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1978;
  - b) possessing prohibited images of children, contrary to section 62(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009;
  - c) possessing extreme pornographic images, contrary to section 63(1)(7)(d) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

Mr Stevenson admitted both the facts of the allegations and that he is guilty of having been convicted of relevant offences.

## **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 3 to 5

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 6 to 11

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 12 to 16

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 17 to 71

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 72 to 78

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 which bears Mr Stevenson's typed name and the date 2 February 2023.

## 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 Stevenson 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 Stevenson worked as a science teacher at Ormiston Victory Academy ("the School") from 1 September 1999 to 31 December 2013. On 1 January 2014, Mr Stevenson started working at the School as a cover supervisor, teaching for a few hours. On 1 September 2018, Mr Stevenson began working as a science technician and continued to teach for a few hours. On 25 March 2019, Mr Stevenson was arrested and suspended from work. On 26 April 2019, Mr Stevenson resigned from his position at the School.

## 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 or around 17 August 2021, you were convicted of:**

**a) three counts of making indecent photographs of a child, contrary to Section 1(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1978;**

**b) possessing prohibited images of children, contrary to section 62(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009;**

**c) possessing extreme pornographic images, contrary to section 63(1)(7)(d) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.**

In response to the notice of referral of the allegations, Mr Stevenson admitted the allegations.

The panel has seen the certificate of conviction confirming the offences and accepts the certificate as proof of the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by that conviction.

The sentencing remarks refer to there having been 269 Category A moving and still images of children. It is also stated that Mr Stevenson knew the children depicted in some of the Category C images.

The sentencing remarks and certificate of conviction confirm that Mr Stevenson was sentenced on 9 November 2021 at Norwich Crown Court as follows:

Charge 1 – 10 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months; 240 hours unpaid work; 40 days rehabilitation activity requirement;

Charge 2 – 6 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months (concurrent); 240 hours unpaid work (concurrent); 40 days rehabilitation requirement (concurrent);

Charge 3 – 3 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months (concurrent); 240 hours unpaid work (concurrent); 40 days rehabilitation requirement (concurrent);

Charge 4 - 3 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months (concurrent); 240 hours unpaid work (concurrent); 40 days rehabilitation requirement (concurrent);

Charge 5 - 3 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months (concurrent); 240 hours unpaid work (concurrent); 40 days rehabilitation requirement (concurrent);

Sexual harm prevention order for 10 years;

subject to notification requirements for 10 years;

forfeiture and destruction of laptop, kindle, memory cards and discs used in offending; and

victim surcharge of £140.

The panel finds the allegation proven, in its entirety.

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

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to 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 panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Stevenson, in relation to the facts it found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that by reference to Part 2, Mr Stevenson 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

- 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
- not undermining ... the rule of law...
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- 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 noted that the individual's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. The conviction indicates a sexual interest in children, and he thereby poses a safeguarding risk. Mr Stevenson's sentence included a notification requirement and a sexual harm prevention order, both for a period of 10 years.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence would have been likely to have had an impact on the safety and/or security of children depicted within the images.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Stevenson's behaviour in committing the offence would affect public confidence in the teaching profession, if Mr Stevenson was allowed to continue teaching.

The panel noted that Mr Stevenson's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, (albeit that it was suspended), 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 an offence involving "any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting any such activity, including one-off incidents". The Advice indicates that a conviction for any offence that relates to or involves such an offence is likely to be considered "a relevant offence".

The panel considered that this conviction was a particularly serious one. It noted that there was an element of production and that Mr Stevenson knew the children depicted in

some of the Category C images, albeit some years ago. It is apparent that Mr Stevenson's offending took place over a considerable period of time.

The panel took into account that Mr Stevenson was of previous good character. The panel noted that he made frank admissions to the police and pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity. The panel also noted that before Mr Stevenson was charged, he took steps to undergo voluntary therapy. A pre-sentencing report assessed Mr Stevenson as being at a low risk of re-offending. The panel noted that Mr Stevenson's therapist, a cognitive behavioural therapist, has confirmed that Mr Stevenson had funded his counselling sessions from his own resources, and that he had shown total commitment to the process. The panel noted that the therapist confirmed Mr Stevenson had developed insight into his behaviour and has developed techniques to help him. The therapist's report shows that Mr Stevenson is at low risk of sexual re-offending and that this is compounded by his positive response to the programme and the remorse he had shown.

Although the panel found that the evidence of Mr Stevenson's remediation was of note, the panel also found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Stevenson's fitness to be a teacher. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

## **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 Stevenson 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 protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of making indecent images of children.



Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Stevenson 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 Stevenson was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

There is evidence that Mr Stevenson has many years of teaching experience having commenced working as a teacher at the age of 39, and having now retired and is drawing his pension. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Stevenson in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher and breached the trust placed in him as a teacher.

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 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 pupils);
- 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;
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents;
- 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)

- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;

Mr Stevenson's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Stevenson was acting under extreme duress, eg a physical threat or significant intimidation. [REDACTED].

Mr Stevenson did not have any previous convictions and this was recognised in the sentencing remarks. There is no evidence of Mr Stevenson having demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct and having contributed significantly to the education sector. It is apparent that his offending took place over a considerable period of time.

No testimonial statements were adduced for the panel to consider.

The panel noted that he made frank admissions to the police and pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity. The panel also noted that before Mr Stevenson was charged, he took steps to undergo voluntary therapy. A pre-sentencing report assessed Mr Stevenson as being at a low risk of re-offending. The panel noted that Mr Stevenson's therapist also prepared a report prior to sentencing. This confirmed that Mr Stevenson had funded his counselling sessions from his own resources, and that he had shown total commitment to the process. The panel noted that the therapist confirmed Mr Stevenson had developed insight into his behaviour and has developed techniques to help him. The therapist's report shows that Mr Stevenson is at low risk of sexual re-offending and that this is compounded by his positive response to the programme and the remorse he had shown. The panel noted that the therapists report refers to an exercise that was conducted with Mr Stevenson on three occasions to write to an imaginary victim. The panel noted that in the final letter the therapist considered that he demonstrated greater responsibility, sensitivity and empathy towards his victim. The report states he had struggled with this exercise but that he had worked hard to achieve a more empathic outcome. The report concluded that Mr Stevenson "*will need to be vigilant in his endeavours, ensuring that he is actively addressing his thinking and behaviour when conflicts arise, in order that the new way of thinking and behaving becomes firmly established and maintained.*"

The panel observed that there was no expression of remorse within Mr Stevenson's representations to this panel, nor is there any expression of empathy with the victims of his behaviour.

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 Stevenson 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 Stevenson. The seriousness of the offending 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 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 any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child. The panel found that Mr Stevenson was responsible for such activity including making indecent images of children.

Given the seriousness of the behaviour that took place over a considerable period of time, the panel was concerned that Mr Stevenson's representations for this meeting made no reference to any empathy with the children depicted in the images, nor any expression of remorse.

The panel therefore 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 Roderick Stevenson should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Stevenson 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

- 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
- not undermining ... the rule of law...
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- 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 took account of the Advice and those factors relevant in this case, included responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance, "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)"

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious, resulting in a conviction for making indecent images of children.

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 conviction, 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 Stevenson, 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/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of making indecent images of 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, which the panel sets out as follows, “The panel noted that he made frank admissions to the police and pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity. The panel also noted that before Mr Stevenson was charged, he took steps to undergo voluntary therapy. A pre-sentencing report assessed Mr Stevenson as being at a low risk of re-offending. The panel noted that Mr Stevenson’s therapist also prepared a report prior to sentencing. This confirmed that Mr Stevenson had funded his counselling sessions from his own resources, and that he had shown total commitment to the process. The panel noted that the therapist confirmed Mr Stevenson had developed insight into his behaviour and has developed techniques to help him. The therapist’s report shows that Mr Stevenson is at low risk of sexual re-offending and that this is compounded by his positive response to the programme and the remorse he had shown.”

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession and, “The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Stevenson’s behaviour in committing the offence would affect public confidence in the teaching profession, if Mr Stevenson was allowed to continue teaching.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction of a relevant offence involving indecent images of 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 conviction of a relevant offence, 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 Stevenson and the panel comment “There is evidence that Mr Stevenson has many years of teaching experience having commenced working as a teacher at the age of 39, and having now retired and is drawing his pension. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Stevenson in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher and breached the trust placed in him as a teacher.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Stevenson 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 insight or remorse. The panel has said, "The panel observed that there was no expression of remorse within Mr Stevenson's representations to this panel, nor is there any expression of empathy with the victims of his behaviour."

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that "Mr Stevenson did not have any previous convictions and this was recognised in the sentencing remarks. There is no evidence of Mr Stevenson having demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct and having contributed significantly to the education sector. It is apparent that his offending took place over a considerable period of time."

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Stevenson 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, 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 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 any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child. The panel found that Mr Stevenson was responsible for such activity including making indecent images of children."

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 and the lack of full remorse and/or empathy.

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 Roderick Stevenson 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 Stevenson 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 Roderick Stevenson 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: 6 March 2023**

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