



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Owen Lowrie: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome**

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

**November 2023**

## Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Preliminary applications	5
Summary of evidence	5
Decision and reasons	5
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	12
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	16

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Mr Owen Lowrie
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	1568070
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	13 February 1983
<b>TRA reference:</b>	19663
<b>Date of determination:</b>	6 November 2023
<b>Former employers:</b>	Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School, Durham; Grange Park Primary School, Sunderland

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 6 November 2023 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Owen Lowrie.

The panel members were Mr Paul Hawkins (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist) and Mr Tom Snowdon (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Rebecca Hughes 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 Mr Lowrie that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Lowrie 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 Louise Ravenscroft of Capsticks LLP, Mr Lowrie or his representative, formerly Mr Richard Matkin and currently Mr Simon Quantrill.

The meeting took place in private by way of a virtual meeting.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 22 August 2023.

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

1. While employed as a teacher at Cheveley Park Primary School:
  - a. In around June 2018, he:
    - i. Hugged one or more pupils;
    - ii. Held hands with one or more pupils;
    - iii. Allowed one or more pupils to sit on his knee;
  - b. In around January 2019, he:
    - i. Allowed Pupil J to hug his leg;
    - ii. Allowed Pupil J to sit on his knee;
    - iii. Hugged and/or stroked Pupil J's hair;
  - c. On one or more occasions in/around February 2019, he held Pupil K's hand;
  - d. On around 13 March 2019, he held hands with one or more Year 6 pupils while at the school disco;
  - e. On or around 21 May 2019, he carried Pupil A:
    - a. Over his shoulder in a 'fireman's lift';
    - b. With his hand placed across Pupil A's bottom and/or upper thigh area;
  - f. On one or more occasions prior to 23 May 2019, he:
    - a. Picked up one or more pupils without their consent;
    - b. Told one or more pupils not to mention that he had picked them up.
2. In/around January 2020, he;
  - a. Engaged in one or more sexualised conversations with Person N about female children between 6-9 years via social media;
  - b. Sent a photograph of one or more unknown children to Person N;
  - c. Caused or allowed person N to send him one or more CAT C indecent images of Children;
  - d. Sent an image of Pupil D's worn underwear to Person N.
3. His conduct at 1 and/or 2 above was sexually motivated.

Mr Lowrie admitted the particulars of allegations 1(a)-(f), 2(a)-(d) and 3 in the statement of agreed facts dated 1 November 2023. He further admitted that his behaviour equated to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **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, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 7
- Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 8 to 41
- Section 3: witness statements – pages 42 to 70
- Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 71 to 486
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 487 to 493
- Section 6: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 494 to 502

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 Mr Lowrie and the presenting officer signed on 1 November 2023.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel carefully considered the case and reached the following decision and reasons:

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Lowrie 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 Lowrie was employed as a year 5 class teacher at Grange Park Primary School ('the School') between 20 April 2020 and 31 October 2020. Prior to this employment, Mr Lowrie was employed as a primary school teacher at Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School ('Cheveley School') between September 2017 and April 2020.

Prior to his employment at the School, concerns had been raised by Cheveley School in respect of Mr Lowrie's interaction with female pupils. These concerns commenced in or around December 2017.

In June 2018, Mr Lowrie was reminded of the safeguarding procedures within Cheveley School. Between June 2018 and June 2019, Cheveley School continued to observe Mr Lowrie engaging in inappropriate physical contact with female pupils.

On 4 June 2019, Cheveley School held a conduct meeting with Mr Lowrie.

In April 2020, Mr Lowrie left Cheveley School and commenced employment at the School.

On 16 September 2020, police officers from Durham Constabulary attended the School to arrest Mr Lowrie following a report that he was suspected of engaging in sexualised conversations online relating to children. Mr Lowrie was also suspected of having received indecent images of children. As part of these discussions relating to children, Mr Lowrie had sent a photograph of his [REDACTED]'s (Pupil D's) used underwear to another person.

Following the arrest, Mr Lowrie was suspended from the School whilst an internal disciplinary investigation was conducted.

Mr Lowrie was interviewed by the police and confirmed that he had been engaging in sexualised chat about young female children and sending non-nude images of children, purporting to be his [REDACTED], to other participants. Mr Lowrie informed the police that he had sent a picture of Pupil D's used underwear. At the time, Pupil D was [REDACTED].

No criminal charges were brought by the police in respect of Mr Lowrie.

On 24 October 2020, Mr Lowrie resigned from the School.

The concerns relating to Mr Lowrie were referred by the School to the TRA on 30 November 2020.

## **Findings of fact**

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation(s) against you proved for these reasons:

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

- 1. While employed as a teacher at Cheveley Park Primary School:**
  - a. In around June 2018, you:**
    - i. Hugged one or more pupils;**
    - ii. Held hands with one or more pupils;**
    - iii. Allowed one or more pupils to sit on your knee;**
  - b. In around January 2019, you;**
    - i. Allowed Pupil J to hug your leg;**
    - ii. Allowed Pupil J to sit on your knee;**
    - iii. Hugged and/or stroked Pupil J's hair;**
  - c. On one or more occasions in/around February 2019, you held Pupil K's hand;**
  - d. On around 13 March 2019, you held hands with one or more Year 6 pupils while at the school disco;**
  - e. On or around 21 May 2019, you carried Pupil A:**
    - a. Over your shoulder in a 'fireman's lift';**
    - b. With your hand placed across Pupil A's bottom and/or upper thigh area;**
  - f. On one or more occasions prior to 23 May 2019, you;**
    - a. Picked up one or more pupils without their consent;**
    - b. Told one or more pupils not to mention that you had picked them up.**
- 2. In/around January 2020, you:**
  - a. Engaged in one or more sexualised conversations with Person N about female children between 6-9 years via social media;**
  - b. Sent a photograph of one or more unknown children to Person N;**
  - c. Caused or allowed person N to send you one or more CAT C indecent images of Children;**

**d. Sent an image of Pupil D's worn underwear to Person N.**

**3. Your conduct at 1 and/or 2 above was sexually motivated.**

The panel noted that Mr Lowrie admitted allegations 1 (a)-(f), 2 (a)-(d) and 3, as set out in the statement of agreed facts dated 1 November 2023. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered the witness statement of Individual A, [REDACTED] at Cheveley School.

Individual A stated that those in senior management recognised that when Mr Lowrie was on playground duty, he would have young girls holding his hand and standing by him. She stated that she did not have any evidence or major concerns whilst working alongside Mr Lowrie but had an "*uneasy feeling*".

Individual A submitted that Mr Lowrie had received both safeguarding training and training in respect of professionalism with children.

Individual A explained that Mr Lowrie developed a relationship with Person C, who was a [REDACTED] at Cheveley School. [REDACTED].

Individual A stated that Mr Lowrie was reminded to encourage the children to play with peers at break time, and on one occasion, a leadership team member saw a girl smacking Mr Lowrie's bottom, which he did not discourage.

Individual A stated that Cheveley School does not ban hugging children, but it "*boils down to the appropriateness of the hug, with regard to where the children are hugging you on your body*". She explained that it would not be appropriate for a child to sit on a staff member's knee or to give a child a hug in a room alone, contrary to section 5 of the restrictive physical intervention policy.

Individual A submitted that she would remind Mr Lowrie about maintaining safeguarding procedures, but in each meeting, he would try to make her feel as though she had "*made a mountain out of a molehill*".

Individual A submitted that in January 2019, she went to speak to a girl in Mr Lowrie's class because she had been unkind to her brother. She stated that Mr Lowrie asked why she needed to speak to her and if he could be there, to which she informed him there was no need. Individual A explained that when the child came outside the classroom, Mr Lowrie came too. She stated that as she started to speak, the child clung onto Mr Lowrie's leg with her head close to his groin, but Mr Lowrie did not attempt to move her.



Individual A stated that the same day, the [REDACTED] came to her distressed after seeing Mr Lowrie with the same pupil on his lap, pushing her off when the [REDACTED] had walked in.

Individual A stated that she spoke to Mr Lowrie, who said he was worried about the pupil.

Individual A submitted that concerns about Mr Lowrie's physical contact with girls continued at a low level throughout the spring term. She stated that at the spring disco, Mr Lowrie was holding hands with girls.

Individual A stated that on 21 May 2019, Mr Lowrie carried a girl who had hurt her ankle in a 'fireman's lift'.

Individual A explained that on 23 May 2019 Individual B had called her stating that the [REDACTED] about whom Mr Lowrie had been spoken to previously, had told her that he carries them even when they do not want him to. Individual A submitted that she spoke with the pupil who said Mr Lowrie told them not to say anything.

The panel considered the witness statement of Individual B, a [REDACTED] at Cheveley School. Individual B submitted that on 21 May 2019, she saw Mr Lowrie carrying a child in a 'fireman's lift' position. She stated that Mr Lowrie had his hand under the pupil's skirt, on her bottom. Witness B submitted that Mr Lowrie took the long route to get to first aid that went past his classroom, but she did not see what happened once Mr Lowrie was inside the school. Individual B stated that if a child is injured but able to walk, the staff are trained to walk the child back inside, but if the child is not able to walk, they should send someone to get help.

Individual B stated that on 23 May 2019, Child B informed her that Mr Lowrie carried them all the time, even when they did not want him to.

The panel considered the witness statement of Individual C, [REDACTED] at Cheveley School.

Individual C submitted that on 21 May 2019, she informed Mr Lowrie that it was unacceptable and inappropriate for him to be carrying a child in a 'fireman's lift', for which he did not apologise nor did he take on board any comment she had made.

Individual C stated that on 23 May 2019, Individual A informed her that Individual B had reported another concern to her that a child had spoken about Mr Lowrie picking them up even when they did not want him to. She stated that she spoke to the child with Individual A and explained that the child said she had been uncomfortable.

The panel considered the witness statement of Individual D, [REDACTED] at the School, who stated that Mr Lowrie started his role in April 2020.

Individual D stated she only saw the reference from Individual E and Individual A after the police attended the School on 16 September 2020 to arrest Mr Lowrie.

The panel considered the witness statement of DC [REDACTED], who was the investigating officer.

DC [REDACTED] submitted that Mr Lowrie admitted to engaging in online sexualised chat about young female children, sending non-nude images of children, photographing and sending images of [REDACTED]'s used underwear and receiving one or more indecent images of children.

DC [REDACTED] states that although no criminal charges were brought in this case, it is her professional opinion that anyone who seeks like-minded people and engages in sexualised conversations in respect of children displays a clear and real risk to children.

The panel considered Mr Lowrie's representations.

The panel found allegations 1(a) i and ii and 1 (b)-(f), 2 (a)-(d) and 3 proven.

The panel considered Individual B's witness statement, where she stated that around September to November 2017, she saw a young girl sitting on Mr Lowrie's knee during lunchtime and stated that Mr Lowrie had his hands on her body. Individual B submitted that when she entered the room, the child jumped off his knee. This incident related to late 2017, and the panel found no evidence that Mr Lowrie had allowed a pupil to sit on his knee around June 2018 as the allegation is pleaded, and in the absence of any evidence, the panel did not find allegation 1 (a) iii proven.

The panel found allegations 1(a) i and ii and 1 (b)-(f), 2 (a)-(d) and 3 proven and the panel found allegation 1(a) iii not proven.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proven 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 document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Lowrie, in relation to the facts found, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Lowrie 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
  - a. treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - b. having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions
- 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Lowrie fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel also considered whether Mr Lowrie's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offence of 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, sexual activity, controlling or coercive behaviour was relevant.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is more likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel received legal advice as to the possibility of findings being cumulated in accordance with the guidance given in the judgment of *Schodlok v General Medical Council [2015]*.

The panel considered that if allegations 1 (a) i and ii, 1 (b) to (d) were isolated incidents, they may have been acts of misconduct but would not necessarily have amounted to serious misconduct as individual allegations. However, together, they represented a pattern of behaviour that could have amounted to serious misconduct if cumulated. However, the panel did consider that allegations 1 (e) and (f), 2 and 3 based on the particulars found proved amounted to unacceptable professional conduct, therefore, the panel did not need to determine whether it would be appropriate to cumulate any of those allegations.

The panel noted that, although allegation 2 took place outside the education setting, it was relevant to Mr Lowrie's position as a teacher, as his conduct involved young girls,

particularly [REDACTED], and as a teacher, he would be teaching girls of the same or similar age.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Lowrie 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 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 Mr Lowrie's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1(a) i and ii, 1 (b)-(f), 2(a)-(d) and 3 proved, the panel further found that Mr Lowrie's 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/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 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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public/the maintenance of public confidence in the profession/declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct; that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest if they are in conflict.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Lowrie, which involved sexually motivated inappropriate behaviour with pupils and sexualised conversations about female children between 6-9 years, there was a strong public interest consideration in the protection of pupils and other members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Lowrie 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 Mr Lowrie 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 Mr Lowrie. The panel was mindful of the need to strike the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest.

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 the teacher. 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 proven. 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 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 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);
- violating of the rights of pupils;

- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;
- collusion of concealment including:
  - failure to challenge inappropriate actions, defending inappropriate actions or concealing inappropriate actions; and
  - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing.

There was no evidence that Mr Lowrie's actions were not deliberate. In fact, the panel found Mr Lowrie's actions to be calculated and sexually motivated.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Lowrie was acting under extreme duress.

There was no evidence of mitigation or remorse on behalf of Mr Lowrie.

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 Mr Lowrie 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 Lowrie.

The panel found that Mr Lowrie had failed to show any remorse or insight. In particular, the panel considered the timeline of events and Mr Lowrie's statement made in this on 22 May 2019, where he allegedly stated that he would do the same again.

The panel considered that teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards, which Mr Lowrie had failed to do. Mr Lowrie was informed the conduct was inappropriate, yet he continued with his actions, and this failure to change his behaviours was a significant factor in forming that opinion.

The panel considered DC [REDACTED]' statement that, in her professional opinion anyone who seeks like-minded people and engages in sexualised conversations in respect of children displays a clear and real risk to children. The panel felt that Mr Lowrie presents a real risk to children. 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 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proven, would militate against the recommendation of a review period. These behaviours relevant in this case are:

- serious sexual misconduct, e.g. 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 their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child; and
- 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 Lowrie was responsible for carrying out sexually motivated inappropriate behaviour towards young female pupils and engaging in sexualised conversations about female children between 6-9 years; additionally, sending an image of Pupil D's worn underwear to another person and the receiving of CAT C indecent images of children.

The Advice also indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer review period. The panel found none of these behaviours to be relevant.

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 without provisions 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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Lowrie 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
  - a. treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - b. having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions
- 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Lowrie, 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 Lowrie fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include findings of sexually motivated and inappropriate behaviour with young female 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 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 Mr Lowrie, 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/or safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "The panel considered DC [REDACTED]' statement that, in her professional opinion anyone who seeks like-minded people and engages in sexualised conversations in respect of children displays a clear and real risk to children. The panel felt that Mr Lowrie presents a real risk to 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 found that Mr Lowrie had failed to show any remorse or insight. In particular, the panel considered the timeline of events and Mr Lowrie's statement made in this on 22 May 2019, where he allegedly stated that he would do the same again." In my judgement, the lack of insight or remorse 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, "In light of the panel's findings against Mr Lowrie, which involved sexually motivated inappropriate behaviour with pupils and sexualised conversations about female children between 6-9 years, there was a strong public interest consideration in the protection of pupils and other members of the public."

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated behaviour with 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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession in disrepute, 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 Lowrie himself and the panel comment "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 Mr Lowrie. The panel was mindful of the need to strike the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Lowrie 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 comment "There was no evidence that Mr Lowrie's actions were not deliberate. In fact, the panel found Mr Lowrie's actions to be calculated and sexually motivated."

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding "The panel found that Mr Lowrie was responsible for carrying out sexually motivated inappropriate behaviour towards young female pupils and engaging in sexualised conversations about female children between 6-9 years; additionally, sending an image of Pupil D's worn underwear to another person and the receiving of CAT C indecent images of children."

In addition I have placed considerable weight on the following "The panel considered that teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards, which Mr Lowrie had failed to do. Mr Lowrie was informed the conduct was inappropriate, yet he continued with his actions, and this failure to change his behaviours was a significant factor in forming that opinion."

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Lowrie 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 remorse or 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 that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel's comments "The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proven, would militate against the recommendation of a review period. These behaviours relevant in this case are:

- serious sexual misconduct, e.g. 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 their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child; and
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child."

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, including sexual motivated behaviour with young children, and the lack of either insight or remorse.

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 Owen Lowrie 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 Lowrie 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 Lowrie 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.



**Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey**

**Date: 10 November 2023**

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