



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Matthew Walker: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

December 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Preliminary applications	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Statement of agreed facts	4
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	5
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	8
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	13

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

Teacher:	Mr Matthew Walker
Teacher ref number:	1748553
Teacher date of birth:	29 June 1992
TRA reference:	18405
Date of determination:	20 December 2023
Former employer:	Stokesley School, Middlesbrough

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened by virtual means on 20 December 2023 to consider the case of Mr Matthew Walker.

The panel members were Ms Mona Sood (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Richard Young (lay panellist) and Mrs Nicola Anderson (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 Walker that the allegation be considered without a hearing. Mr Walker provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted that he had been convicted of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Ms Holly Quirk of Browne Jacobson LLP or Mr Walker.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 6 December 2023.

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

1. On or around 10 November 2021 he was convicted at Teesside Crown Court of three counts of the offence of making indecent photographs of children between 4 May 2018 - February 2019 contrary to s(1)(a) of the Protection of Child Act 1978.

Mr Walker admitted the allegation and admitted that he had been convicted of a relevant offence.

Preliminary applications

Amendment of allegation

The panel noted that there was a typographical error in the allegation in that it referred to the Protection of Child Act 1978 and should have referred to the Protection of Children Act 1978. The panel decided to amend the allegation to correct this. It was satisfied that no unfairness was created by the amendment, and Mr Walker's case would not have been presented differently had the amendment been made at an earlier stage.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of referral - pages 4 to 7

Section 2: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 8 to 14

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – page 15 to 98

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 100 to 117

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 was signed by Mr Walker on 7 June 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 Walker for the allegation 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 Walker acquired qualified teacher status in 2018. He was employed at Stokesley School (“the School”) as a cover supervisor and temporary art teacher from January 2019. He was also formerly employed by Vision for Education including undertaking supply teaching at the Freebrough Academy as an art teacher between September and October 2018.

On or around 5 February 2019, Mr Walker was arrested by North Yorkshire Police. He was also dismissed by the School on 27 February 2019.

On 10 November 2021, a criminal trial was held at Teesside Crown Court and on 20 December 2021, Mr Walker was sentenced.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

On or around 10 November 2021 he was convicted at Teesside Crown Court of three counts of the offence of making indecent photographs of children between 4 May 2018 - February 2019 contrary to s(1)(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1978.

In the statement of agreed facts, Mr Walker admitted that on 5 February 2019, he was arrested on suspicion of “making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children” and that his computer was seized by the police. He admitted that his computer was found to contain numerous indecent images of children, which had been accessed, opened and shared.

Mr Walker admitted that on 20 November 2021, a criminal trial was held and that he pleaded guilty to all offences and was convicted of three counts of making indecent photographs and pseudo-photographs of children. He admitted making

- 57 Category A still images;
- 81 Category A video images;

- 1 Category B still image;
- 5 Category B video images,;
- 1 Category C still image; and
- 3 Category C video images of children.

Mr Walker admitted to downloading these images and videos to his computer and that he attempted to delete them using specialist software. He further admitted to sharing these images using peer to peer software.

Mr Walker accepts that he pleaded guilty to the charges during the criminal trial at Teesside Crown Court and therefore admits the allegation in its entirety.

Mr Walker also admits that on 20 December 2021, he was sentenced to:

- 12 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months for each count;
- unpaid work for 100 hours to be completed by 19 June 2023;
- sexual harm prevention order for a period of 10 years;
- to pay £250 towards the cost of the prosecution; and
- to pay a victim surcharge of £140.

The panel saw the certificate of conviction which confirmed Mr Walker was convicted as set out in the allegation. The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction. The panel noted that the third count stated on the certificate of conviction referenced a total of five still and moving Category C indecent images of children, whereas four were referred to in the statement of agreed facts. The panel noted that the suspended sentences of imprisonment were to be served concurrently; a forfeiture and destruction order was also made in respect of the seized equipment; a 30 day rehabilitation activity requirement was also imposed; and Mr Walker was required to be registered on the sex offenders' register for 10 years.

Based on the certificate of conviction and the admissions made by Mr Walker, the panel found the allegation proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to a 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 Walker, in relation to the facts it found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that by reference to Part 2, Mr Walker was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 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 offence committed by Mr Walker was relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting given that it is indicative of a sexual interest in children.

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 in the images. Any person who acquires indecent images supports and encourages the sexual exploitation of children.

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

The panel noted that Mr Walker'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 voyeurism; 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, or permitting any such activity, including one-off incidents. 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 majority of the images downloaded were Category A images, the most serious category. Furthermore, the images included a large amount of video images.

At the time of Mr Walker's arrest he was a newly qualified teacher and had not yet had the opportunity to develop any record of note of his proficiency as a teacher. The panel took into consideration Mr Walker's account of the [REDACTED].

The panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Walker's fitness to be a teacher. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence 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 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 Walker 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 the following to be relevant: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct; and the interest of retaining the teacher in the profession.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and members of the public given his conviction for three counts of making indecent photographs of children.

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

Mr Walker was recently qualified and had insufficient time to demonstrate his abilities as an educator. It was apparent from Mr Walker's representations that he found teacher training difficult and although he enjoyed delivering lessons and supporting pupils, he could not foresee a future as a teacher, even without the criminal proceedings. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in

retaining Mr Walker in the profession, since his behaviour was fundamentally incompatible with his position as a teacher. He was ordered to be listed on the sex offenders' register for a period of ten years.

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;

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;

The panel noted that it should attach appropriate weight and seriousness to online behaviours including, but not limited to online misconduct.

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 and whether there were mitigating circumstances.

Mr Walker has sought to explain his actions in stating that these events came about because he "used to mine bitcoin, which then moved into buying computer parts on the deepweb as they were only available there for decent prices." His representations state that after he received hard drives that he had bought, he had been trying to be thorough in seeking to delete everything on them. He stated that even at the time of the criminal court hearing, this seemed illogical and was hazy in his memory. He stated that about 18 months before the court [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Mr Walker would have received recent safeguarding training give his recently acquired qualified teacher status. He ought

to have known to report the matter had he discovered images on hard drives he had bought, rather than seeking to delete them, and the panel therefore considered Mr Walker's actions to be deliberate.

[REDACTED] no independent evidence that Mr Walker was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

Mr Walker was only recently qualified at the time of his arrest, so had not demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or of having contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel was provided with six references prepared for the purpose of Mr Walker's criminal trial. Collectively, these attested to Mr Walker being kind and hardworking; that he helped others without expecting anything in return; [REDACTED], that he had shown deep regret for the way he handled the situation, and their perceptions that Mr Walker posed no threat.

The first reference was from a [REDACTED] who referred to the assistance Mr Walker had provided to help market his business, referring to Mr Walker as being kind and hardworking, offering his professional services without charge and that he is always coming up with ideas on how to help people without expecting anything in return.

A second reference was from a [REDACTED], who also referred to Mr Walker as hardworking having created solutions and strategies of his own initiative, during his own time without charge, thereby making a significant difference to his employer's business. This referee referred to Mr Walker as "nothing short of a force for good in the world", referencing that he "would go to the ends of the world to help a stranger in need" and clearly motivated to perform acts of kindness to make the world a better place [REDACTED]." The referee stated that while Mr Walker was "both feeding the homeless and carrying the weight of an entire business on his shoulders, his world and his mind was falling apart. He never once asked for help and tries to take it all on alone."

A third reference was provided by [REDACTED]. He referred to Mr Walker as being a "hardworking intelligent person [REDACTED]. His decision to take a panicked course of action rather than being upfront and transparent will stay with him for the rest of his life which I know he regrets."

A fourth reference was provided by [REDACTED] who also attested to Mr Walker's kindness and helpfulness in supporting the marketing of his business, expecting nothing in return. He stated that Mr Walker had discussed what happened with him and "has shown deep regret for the way he handled the situation. Despite knowing this information about him it doesn't change how I see him, he's still a kind and trustworthy man who I know I can go to with any issue and he'll immediately think of 10 ways to help... Those who know him, myself included, know that [Mr Walker] is not a threat or danger to anyone."

A fifth referee confirmed having known Mr Walker for a few years, and he's "still the same overly-helpful, thoughtful and considerate person... [REDACTED] I am confident that I know him well enough to say with complete certainty that he is of no threat or danger to any other person. He only acts with kindness in his heart."

A final reference was provided by [REDACTED]. She stated that the respect she had for him had only grown, [REDACTED]. She referred to Mr Walker as being reliable, honest, kind and a good person.

Mr Walker pleaded guilty on the day of trial (10 November 2021), having previously entered not guilty pleas on 17 August 2020 and at a pre-trial review on 7 April 2021. Although Mr Walker pleaded guilty to the criminal proceedings and has admitted the allegations, in representations to the TRA on 1 July 2022, during the investigation stage, he stated that "the entire situation [REDACTED], which is what led to the guilty plea so that it'd all just be over and so I'd prefer this to be as least invasive as possible... It doesn't really matter what I say or how I try and explain how it all happened though, as this is my life now and I'm still trying to accept that."

In representations on 23 November 2022, Mr Walker referred to the pressure of teacher training as being one of the factors that got him into the situation he found himself. He went on to state "overall it was [REDACTED] that led me to where I am. I don't actually have that type of interest in children, I'm not a danger to anyone, including children, but none of that matters because I pled guilty and on paper my thoughts, my situations and circumstances don't matter anymore and I've accepted that."

On 20 February 2023, Mr Walker provided representations regarding whether he would wish to attend a hearing, stating that he had [REDACTED], I still don't think it would be a good decision to put myself back into all of this." He stated that he had struggled at court with "explaining why I acted how I did after I received the hard drives I bought... I was given the option of either pleading innocent and going to jail, [REDACTED]... it wasn't an easy choice to make to plead guilty... [REDACTED]. It's my personal belief that I struggled with explaining and remembering what I did and how I did it at court, which I've always maintained was me honestly trying to remove the files from my computer, was because [REDACTED]. If I had this information at the time of court, I'd perhaps have chose differently in my plea, but that's all done now."

The panel considered that Mr Walker had demonstrated limited insight, nor was there any evidence of remorse for the impact on others. His representations stated "I'd prefer this whole process to be as simple as can be. Thanks to the actual court case I've got some pretty awful things tied to me and [REDACTED] I'd expect the TRA to be prompt in removing the ability of someone who is in a similar situation to teach children." The panel was concerned that Mr Walker attributed the consequences of his offence to the criminal proceedings rather than his own actions. Mr Walker did not demonstrate any appreciation that children depicted in the images were victims of sexual exploitation, although does appear to understand that committing such an offence is incompatible with being a

teacher. His attempts to delete images indicated an awareness at the time of the incidents that his possession of the images was not compliant with his duties as a teacher.

Mr Walker's representations that "being a teacher takes many things that I thought I had, but the willingness to sacrifice on things like my evenings, my sleep schedule, my weekends, my wages is something I do not have" indicates Mr Walker's own view of his suitability to be a teacher.

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.

Although the panel found the references provided evidencing Mr Walker's services to the community were compelling, 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 Walker 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 Walker. The seriousness and nature of the offence, being one that supports the exploitation of children 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 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 his 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, including one off incidents. The panel found that Mr Walker was responsible for offences relating to the most serious category of images.

The panel did not consider that Mr Walker had demonstrated sufficient insight to demonstrate that he understood the impact his actions had in supporting an industry that exploits children. The number and nature of Category A images found indicated that this was a case of the utmost seriousness. In light of that, 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 Walker should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Walker is in breach of the following standards:

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a conviction for the serious criminal offence of making indecent photographs of children which resulted in a suspended prison sentence.

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 Walker, 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, “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 in the images. Any person who acquires indecent images supports and encourages the sexual exploitation 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 has set out as follows, “The panel considered that Mr Walker had demonstrated limited insight, nor was there any evidence of remorse for the impact on others. ... The panel was concerned that Mr Walker attributed the consequences of his offence to the criminal proceedings rather than his own actions. Mr Walker did not demonstrate any appreciation that children depicted in the images were victims of sexual exploitation, although does appear to understand that committing such an offence is incompatible with being a teacher.” In my judgement, the lack of remorse and 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 has observed, “public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Walker were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for the offence of making indecent photographs 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 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 Walker himself. The panel has observed, "At the time of Mr Walker's arrest he was a newly qualified teacher and had not yet had the opportunity to develop any record of note of his proficiency as a teacher. The panel took into consideration Mr Walker's account of the [REDACTED]."

The panel was provided with six references prepared for Mr Walker's criminal trial and has noted, "Collectively, these attested to Mr Walker being kind and hardworking; that he helped others without expecting anything in return; [REDACTED], that he had shown deep regret for the way he handled the situation, and their perceptions that Mr Walker posed no threat."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Walker 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 remorse and full insight. The panel has said, "The panel did not consider that Mr Walker had demonstrated sufficient insight to demonstrate that he understood the impact his actions had in supporting an industry that exploits children."

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel in relation to Mr Walker's explanations of his actions. The panel has commented that Mr Walker "would have received recent safeguarding training given his recently acquired qualified teacher status. He ought to have known to report the matter had he discovered images on hard drives he had bought, rather than seeking to delete them, and the panel therefore considered Mr Walker's actions to be deliberate."

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Walker 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 and full 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 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, 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 his 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, including one off incidents. The panel found that Mr Walker was responsible for offences relating to the most serious category of images.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, 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 serious nature of the offences of which Mr Walker was convicted and the lack of remorse and full 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 Matthew Walker 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 Walker 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 Walker 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 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 22 December 2023

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