



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Grant Twist: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**June 2024**

## Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Preliminary applications	4
Summary of evidence	5
Documents	5
Witnesses	6
Decision and reasons	6
Findings of fact	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	16
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	23

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

**Teacher:** Mr Grant Twist

**TRA reference:** 20283

**Date of determination:** 4 June 2024

**Current employer:** Snaresbrook Preparatory School, London

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 30 to 31 May 2024 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT, and on 4 June 2024 on Microsoft Teams, to consider the case of Mr Grant Twist.

The panel members were Melissa West (teacher panellist – in the chair), Paul Hawkins (lay panellist) and Debra Vaughan (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Abigail Reynolds of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Leah Redden of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Twist was present and was represented by Mr Nicholas Kennan of Cornwall Street Barristers.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 18 March 2024, as amended.

It was alleged that Mr Twist was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that between July 2019 and February 2020:

1. He was a member of WhatsApp chats alongside one or more of his colleagues in which he
  - a) Sent and/or received inappropriate messages which discussed his female colleagues in a way which was
    - i) Sexually objectifying;
    - ii) Homophobic;
    - iii) Misogynistic;
    - iv) Denigrating.
  - b) sent and/or received inappropriate messages, the contents of which were racist.
  - c) sent and/or received inappropriate messages about students in which he stated, “I haven’t liked this weeks English tbh. Nothing wrong with the lessons but the spaz boys in my class cannot cope with the creativity side of things”
2. His conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1(a)(i) above was of a sexual nature.

Mr Twist admitted the particulars of allegation 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) but denied allegation 2, as set out in the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022.

## Preliminary applications

On the second day of the hearing, the panel invited submissions from the parties in respect of the stem of allegation 1. Subsequently, the presenting officer made an application to amend the stem of allegation 1 from: “*You were a member of a WhatsApp group chat alongside 3 of your colleagues in which you...*” to “*You were a member of WhatsApp chats alongside one or more of your colleagues in which you...*”

Mr Twist did not object to the application.

The panel was advised that it had the power to amend allegations in accordance with paragraph 5.83 of the Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession May 2020 (the '2020 Procedures').

The panel considered that the proposed amendment would not change the nature and scope of allegation 1. The proposed amendment sought to clarify the case against Mr Twist, which was understood by the parties as relating to WhatsApp messages sent and received. As such, the panel considered that the proposed amendment did not amount to a material change to allegation 1.

The legal adviser drew the panel's attention to the case of *Dr Bashir Ahmedsowida v General Medical Council [2021] EWHC 3466 (Admin), 2021 WL 06064095* which held that the lateness of amendments did not necessarily mean they were unjust, as acknowledged in the previous case of *Professional Standards Authority v Health and Care Professions Council and Doree [2017] EWCA Civ 319 at [56]*.

The panel did not consider that granting the application for the proposed amendment would cause unfairness and/or prejudice to Mr Twist on the basis that: Mr Twist had at all material times been aware of the case he had to answer; the proposed amendment did not materially change allegation 1; and Mr Twist had been informed of the proposed amendment and did not object to the same.

Accordingly, the panel granted this application and considered the amended allegations, which are set out above.

## Summary of evidence

### Documents

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

- Section 1: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 5 to 18
- Section 2: Statement of agreed facts and disputed facts – pages 20 to 24
- Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 26 to 426
- Section 4: TRA documents – pages 428 to 467
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 469 to 623.

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

## Witnesses

The TRA did not call any witnesses to attend the hearing.

The panel heard oral evidence from Mr Twist.

The panel also heard oral mitigation evidence from the following individuals called by Mr Twist:

- Individual A [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook Preparatory School, Mr Twist's current employer, and former colleague of Mr Twist at the School
- Individual B [REDACTED] of Snaresbrook Preparatory School, Mr Twist's current employer

## Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

Between April 2017 and May 2021, Mr Twist was employed as a teacher at [REDACTED]('the School').

Between July 2019 and February 2020, Mr Twist and 3 colleagues were members of a WhatsApp group chat ('the WhatsApp Group'). The WhatsApp Group, along with further individual WhatsApp chats, was discovered during an external investigation and extraction reports from the WhatsApp chats were released to the LADO on 24 March 2021. In April 2021, the School commenced an investigation into the messages sent and received by Mr Twist.

Mr Twist resigned from his position at the School on or around 21 May 2021.

The matter was referred to the TRA in September 2021.

## Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. You were a member of WhatsApp chats alongside one or more of your colleagues in which you**
  - a) Sent and/or received inappropriate messages which discussed your female colleagues in a way which was**

**i) Sexually objectifying;**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(a)(i). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.

The panel was provided with copies of the WhatsApp messages. The panel noted that Mr Twist was a member of WhatsApp chats alongside one or more of his colleagues. The panel noted the following messages sent by Mr Twist, during conversations about one or more female colleagues:

- *“No bra”*
- *“Risky when bending over a table”*
- *“No kid wants a loose boob smacking them in the fac*
- *“Imagine tagging her in the boob”*
- *“New rule. Tag nips only”*
- In response to a discussion about *“tagging”* a female colleague on the breasts, bottom and vagina, Mr Twist sent a message saying *“With my dick”*.

Mr Twist confirmed that the word *“tag”* referenced a ‘game’ played by members of staff at the School which involved touching another person. Mr Twist’s evidence was that 2 female members of staff were aware of the ‘tag’ game, but not that there were discussions that it should extend to the touching of intimate body parts.

The panel also noted that, in response to a message about a female colleague that read *“Guzzle the cum and spits it into the air...Before swallowing it”*, Mr Twist stated:

- *“like a water display”*.

Further, the panel was provided with a copy of a conversation between Mr Twist and his colleagues about the perceived preferred sexual positions of female colleagues and noted that, during this conversation, Mr Twist stated:

- *“So none on top... boring”*

The panel noted the following messages received by Mr Twist:

- *“Someone’s gunna have to take one for the team and donkey punch her”*
- *“...[REDACTED] wasn’t wearing a bra today”*
- *“Her erect nipple nearly cut me”*

- *“She’s a kinky slut bucket”*
- *“Filthy bitch”*
- *“Dirty whore”*
- *“Loves the cock”*
- *“Was gonna say you’re going to accidentally tag her boobs or snatch”*
- *“Makes [REDACTED] cum slave or something”*
- *“Jump on my cock and balls? Done”*
- *“She’d make a decent porn hub video”.*

The panel considered the written and oral evidence of Mr Twist in which Mr Twist acknowledged that he did choose to join in with the sexual objectification of female colleagues. Mr Twist’s evidence was that the messages he sent, namely *“So none on top...boring”* were ways to *“try and criticise the idiocy of such talk about sex positions of women”*. Mr Twist submitted that he was ashamed to have been *“drawn into the toxic masculinity”* and *“to not have recognised the inappropriate nature of the conversation at the time”*. Mr Twist submitted that his behaviour was out of character.

In his oral evidence, Mr Twist accepted that his message stating *“With my dick”* was a comment in which he was alluding to touching a female colleague’s vagina with his penis.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist sent and received inappropriate messages about female colleagues. The panel did not accept Mr Twist’s submission that he was trying to criticise the conversation about sex positions. The panel found that Mr Twist engaged in the conversation and considered that the messages referred to above clearly evidenced that Mr Twist discussed female colleagues in a way which was sexually objectifying. In the panel’s view, the messages Mr Twist sent and received included comments where women (specifically female colleagues) were treated as sexual objects. The panel considered that any message which portrays an individual solely as a sexual object is by its very nature inappropriate, exacerbated by the fact that the messages were sent between male teaching staff at the School about their female colleagues.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(a)(i) proven.

## **ii) Homophobic;**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(a)(ii). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.



The panel further considered copies of messages taken from WhatsApp chats between Mr Twist and his colleagues and noted the following messages received by Mr Twist:

- *“Carpet munching slut”*
- *“Oh Yh the skin head carpet muncher”*
- *“She ain’t got any bfs because she’s lesbo”*

Mr Twist accepted in his written and oral evidence that there were messages within the WhatsApp chats that could be seen as homophobic. Mr Twist described his sorrow for not holding the other members of the WhatsApp Group accountable and described himself as *“disgusted by [my] weakness”*.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist received inappropriate messages about female colleagues. The panel noted that the messages referred to *“carpet munching”* and *“lesbo”* which the panel understood to be derogatory and offensive terms for and/or relating to lesbian individuals. The panel was therefore satisfied that the messages Mr Twist received were homophobic in nature.

The panel was provided with no evidence that Mr Twist had sent messages which were homophobic in nature, however noted that Mr Twist engaged in the conversation following the message *“carpet munching slut”*.

The panel did not accept that Mr Twist’s submissions in any way detracted from the inherently inappropriate and homophobic nature of the messages.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(a)(ii) proven.

### **iii) Misogynistic;**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(a)(iii). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.

The panel further considered copies of messages taken from WhatsApp chats between Mr Twist and his colleagues and noted the following message sent by Mr Twist:

- *“So [REDACTED] you’ll need to decunt [REDACTED]”*

The panel noted the following messages received by Mr Twist:

- *“Hope the cunts haven’t thrown my poster away.”*
- *“Don’t get me started on that cunt”*
- *“She’s a cunt”*

- *“She’s not on the cunt list”*.

The panel further considered the written and oral evidence of Mr Twist. Mr Twist stated that, for large parts of any misogynistic conversations, he ignored the comments and *“viewed them only as efforts to incite humour from the group”*, although he acknowledged that the language was *“barbaric”*. On the matter of the conversation regarding a *“cunt list”*, Mr Twist submitted that his message indicating that his colleague would need to *“decunt”* was to suggest that his colleague should avoid falling out with that member of staff. The panel did not accept that Mr Twist’s submissions in this regard detracted from the inappropriate and misogynistic nature of the conversations in question.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist sent and received inappropriate messages about female colleagues. The panel accepted Mr Twist’s admission that the messages referred to above were misogynistic in nature and it was satisfied the messages were misogynistic given that the context of the messages indicated prejudice against women. The panel noted, in particular, that the evidence indicated that the messages referred to a number of women over a prolonged period of time.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(a)(iii) proven.

#### **iv) Denigrating.**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(a)(iv). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.

The panel further considered copies of messages taken from the WhatsApp chats between Mr Twist and his colleagues and noted the following messages received by Mr Twist:

- *“Oh what a bitch”*
- *“Don’t get me started on that cunt”*
- *“She’s a cunt”*
- *“She ain’t jumping in the pool at her size”*
- *“But fatty is now above [REDACTED]”*.

The panel considered the oral evidence from Mr Twist, in which he acknowledged that some of the language used was *“barbaric”* and that, in respect of the message regarding the pool, this indicated unacceptable *“fat-shaming”*.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist received inappropriate messages about female colleagues. The panel was further satisfied that the messages referred to above were denigrating in nature in that they contained comments which were unfairly critical, derogatory, belittling and insulting towards female colleagues.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(a)(iv) proven.

**b) sent and/or received inappropriate messages, the contents of which were racist**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(b). At the hearing, it was confirmed that allegation 1(b) was admitted only to the extent that Mr Twist admitted that he received inappropriate messages containing racist content. Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.

The panel further considered copies of messages taken from the WhatsApp chats between Mr Twist and his colleagues and noted the following messages received by Mr Twist:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

In response to the message above, which was alleged to be a 'joke' about beggars in London, Mr Twist responded: "*Reckon ppl would pay you if you held that sign?*", Mr Twist's evidence was that his response was sent to try and encourage his colleague to see the 'joke' from a different point of view, thus displaying his discomfort. However, Mr Twist did acknowledge that, by replying to the 'joke' in such a way, he could be seen as having engaged in the behaviour and/or affirmed the racist connotations within the same.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist received inappropriate and racist messages. The panel considered that the messages referred to above were racist in nature because they clearly evidenced prejudice against particular racial or ethnic groups.

The panel did not accept that Mr Twist's submissions in any way detracted from the inappropriate and racist nature of the messages. Further, the panel did not accept Mr Twist's evidence that his response to the 'joke' was a way of redirecting his colleague to see the same from a different perspective. The panel did not accept that sending a message of the type sent by Mr Twist would indicate to any reasonable person that Mr Twist objected to the nature of the message sent by his colleague. This is in the panel's opinion particularly relevant given that there is no evidence that Mr Twist challenged any of the racist messages he received.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(b) proven.

**c) sent and/or received inappropriate messages about students in which you stated, “I haven’t liked this weeks English tbh. Nothing wrong with the lessons but the spaz boys in my class cannot cope with the creativity side of things”**

The panel noted that, in a statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted allegation 1(c). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered the evidence presented to it and made a determination.

The panel considered copies of messages taken from a WhatsApp chat between Mr Twist and a colleague and noted the following message sent by Mr Twist:

- *“I haven’t liked this weeks English tbh. Nothing wrong with the lessons but the spaz boys in my class cannot cope with the creativity side of things.”*

In his written and oral evidence, Mr Twist submitted that, when he referred to pupils as “spaz boys”, he meant to imply that “*there are days when children find the learning tricky*”, and “*not that there are innate inequities between some pupils and others*”. Mr Twist submitted that he was seeking to empathise with a colleague and “*illustrate it is normal to have difficult days*”. In his oral evidence, Mr Twist submitted that the word “spaz” was not in his vocabulary, and that in using this word, he was copying the language used by his colleague previously in the WhatsApp chat.

On examination of the evidence before it, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist sent the message referred to above. The panel was further satisfied that the message was inappropriate given the use of the derogatory and offensive term “spaz”. The panel considered that it was highly inappropriate for a teacher to describe pupils in such a way. The panel did not accept that Mr Twist’s submissions in any way detracted from the inappropriate nature of the message.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(c) proven.

**2. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1(a)(i) above was of a sexual nature.**

The panel noted that Mr Twist, in his written submissions, accepted that there were sexual overtones within the messages, however he denied that the comments were of a sexual nature.

The panel considered Mr Twist’s conduct as found proven at allegation 1(a)(i) which involved sending and receiving messages about female colleagues and which the panel found to be sexually objectifying. As noted above, the panel was provided with copies of

the messages Mr Twist sent and received. It noted, in particular, the messages as stated at allegation 1(a)(i) above.

The panel was referred by the presenting officer to the definition of 'sexual' as provided in Section 78 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 ('the Act'), which states as follows:

*“For the purposes of this Part (except section 71), penetration, touching or any other activity is sexual if a reasonable person would consider that (a) whatever its circumstances or any person's purpose in relation to it, it is because of its nature sexual, or (b) because of its nature it may be sexual and because of its circumstances or the purpose of any person in relation to it (or both) it is sexual.”*

The presenting officer further submitted that, notwithstanding s78 of the Act, the panel was able to make a determination as to whether Mr Twist's conduct at allegation 1(a)(i) was conduct of a sexual nature by drawing on its own knowledge and experience.

Mr Twist's representative disputed that the definition within s78 of the Act was an appropriate definition in this case and submitted that the words “...any other activity...” must be referring to the offences in Part 1 of the Act. Mr Twist's representative submitted that none of those offences correlated with the activity undertaken by Mr Twist. Mr Twist's representative further submitted that the definition of “sexual” under the Act should only be relied upon in serious cases to establish sexual motivation where the conduct is compatible with an offence in Part 1 of the Act. Mr Twist's representative confirmed that Mr Twist accepted there was a sexual overtone to the conversation but submitted that the conversation was not criminal in nature nor was it comparable to the offences in Part 1 of the Act. The panel was invited to dismiss allegation 2 on this basis.

The panel considered the submissions by the parties and had particular regard to the submissions it heard in respect of the Act. Whilst the panel did not make a specific determination in respect of the applicability of the definition of what is “sexual” under the Act, in light of the submissions it heard it did not consider this definition when making its decision. Instead, the panel drew on its own knowledge and experience and reached its decision based on the interpretation of what conduct may be of a sexual nature by any reasonable person. On the basis that the panel was able to make a decision based on its own knowledge and experience, it did not consider it was appropriate to dismiss the allegation based on the submissions it heard from Mr Twist's representative.

The panel noted that the WhatsApp messages used inherently sexual language, referred explicitly to sexual acts and described the touching of intimate body parts of female colleagues. The panel concluded that Mr Twist's conduct at allegation 1(a)(i) was conduct of a sexual nature; the messages Mr Twist sent and received were, by their very nature, explicitly sexual and contained graphic sexual comments about Mr Twist's female colleagues. In the panel's view, the messages spoke for themselves and, based on its own knowledge and experience, the panel was satisfied that they were sexual in nature.

The panel considered that the messages Mr Twist sent and received, including the comments referred to above would, in the view of any reasonable person, be deemed sexual in nature given their content.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 2 proven.

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

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Twist, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Twist 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
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that, in the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Twist on 9 November 2022, Mr Twist admitted that his conduct in respect of allegations 1(a) to (c) amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct which may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel considered whether Mr Twist’s conduct amounted to misconduct which took place outside of the education setting. The panel (a) noted that the WhatsApp Group comprised of four or more colleagues who worked at the School; (b) noted that the WhatsApp messages exchanged referred to pupils and staff members at the School; and (c) heard evidence from Mr Twist that the WhatsApp chats were discussed in school. As such, the panel concluded that the conduct was intrinsically linked to Mr Twist’s role as a teacher at the School and, as such, intrinsically linked to the education setting. On this

basis the panel was of the view that the misconduct took place within the education setting. However, and in any event, to the extent that any misconduct took place outside of the education setting, the panel found that, by virtue of this intrinsic link, it was clearly relevant to, and touched upon, Mr Twist's role as a teacher.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Twist amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession. The highly disrespectful way in which Mr Twist communicated about a significant proportion of his female colleagues at the School was a significant factor in the panel reaching its decision. The panel was also particularly concerned about the denigrating language Mr Twist used to refer to his pupils.

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

The Advice indicates that, where a teacher is found to have displayed behaviours associated with any of the offence types shown in the list that begins on page 12 of the above but was not convicted of an offence, a panel is likely to conclude that those behaviours would amount to "unacceptable professional conduct". The panel considered the list on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice and found that "*intolerance and/or hatred on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation or any of the other protected characteristics*" was relevant. This was on the basis that the panel found that Mr Twist had sent and received inappropriate messages which discussed his female colleagues in ways which were sexually objectifying, misogynistic and denigrating and, in the panel's view, this conduct and the content of the messages, indicated an intolerance towards members of the female sex. The panel noted that 'sex' is a protected characteristic under Section 4 of Equality Act 2010.

The panel considered the context that Mr Twist provided in respect of the allegations (as referred to above), however the panel was particularly concerned that, aside from the clearly inappropriate nature of the messages sent by Mr Twist, Mr Twist failed to address or report the inappropriate and offensive messages he received in the WhatsApp chats. Further, the panel noted that, in respect of the sexually objectifying messages in particular, it appeared that Mr Twist agreed with the content of the messages and shared similar views.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Twist 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 that they behave.

The findings of misconduct are 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 considered that the public would be particularly concerned at the conduct of a teacher referring to his pupils using such a derogatory term as "spaz".

The panel therefore found that Mr Twist's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii), 1(a)(iii), 1(a)(iv), 1(b), 1(c) and 2 proved, the panel further found that Mr Twist'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 and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so.

The panel was aware that 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 as follows: the ...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; and that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

The panel found that Mr Twist had sent and/or received inappropriate messages which were: sexually objectifying; homophobic; misogynistic; denigrating; and racist relating to female colleagues and pupils at the School. The panel also found that Mr Twist's conduct at allegation 1(a)(i) was conduct of a sexual nature.

Whilst the panel acknowledged that there was no evidence that these comments were made to or in the presence of any pupils, the panel considered this sufficiently concerning so as to engage a public interest consideration in respect of the wellbeing of pupils. The panel did note, however, that there was no suggestion that Mr Twist had failed in his safeguarding obligations in respect of pupils.



Given that many of the inappropriate messages Mr Twist sent and received were about his colleagues, the panel considered that there was a public interest consideration in respect of the protection of members of the public, including Mr Twist's colleagues.

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 Twist was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

The panel decided that there was also a strong public interest consideration in retaining Mr Twist in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and, in the panel's view (and in light of the evidence the panel heard in mitigation, which is set out below), he is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel considered that the conduct found proven, although serious, was at the lower end of the scale of severity.

In view of 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 Twist. 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 Mr Twist. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

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

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

There was evidence that Mr Twist's actions were deliberate, although it was submitted that his actions were out of character.

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

The panel was provided with extensive evidence to attest to Mr Twist's history and ability as a teacher.

The panel heard oral mitigation evidence from the following witnesses from Mr Twist's current employer, Snaresbrook Preparatory School ('Snaresbrook'):

- Individual B [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook.

- Individual A [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook.

In his written statement, Individual B [REDACTED] identified that he had seen Mr Twist's written response to the TRA's allegations, and stated *"Grant has told me he feels a great deal of remorse of this incident, as his actions do not represent his beliefs... He has expressed his shame in relation to his lack of action... He has demonstrated that he has reflected on how he should have reacted in each situation and has developed a practical plan for what he would do in similar situations should they arise in the future."*

In his oral evidence, Individual B [REDACTED] described Mr Twist as thoughtful, with wellbeing as his primary consideration. Individual B [REDACTED] stated that Mr Twist has worked tirelessly to look at how, in primary education, teachers can equip children to tackle issues of discrimination, particularly in a group setting or online.

Individual B's [REDACTED] evidence was that Mr Twist is a professional, well-liked, and helpful colleague, who is doing very well in his role as [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook. When asked if he felt that Mr Twist could now uphold the standards expected of a teacher, Individual B's [REDACTED] evidence was that no matter what Mr Twist had done in the past, this is not who he is now.

Individual B [REDACTED] said that Mr Twist was an asset to Snaresbrook and to the teaching profession.

In addition to being a current colleague of Mr Twist at Snaresbrook, Individual A [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] whilst he was employed at the School. In her written statement, [REDACTED] explained that [REDACTED] and that [REDACTED]. Individual A [REDACTED] stated that, when [REDACTED], she was *"impressed by the level of commitment to the profession... and his keenness to learn and improve professionally"*. Individual A [REDACTED] further described Mr Twist as *"extremely efficient at his job"* and that he *"had success with children in his class who had particular learning difficulties because he took time to get to know them and supported them effectively"*. Individual A [REDACTED] described Mr Twist as a *"great support"* to her, a good listener and reliable.

Individual A [REDACTED] explained that she and Mr Twist kept in contact when [REDACTED], and that in April 2021, she had not heard from Mr Twist and became concerned. She explained that she met with Mr Twist who informed her that he had been suspended. Individual A [REDACTED] stated that Mr Twist *"felt as though he had let everybody down, especially the pupils in his class and his colleagues"*.

Individual A's [REDACTED] evidence was that, in May 2021, she became aware of a teaching opportunity at Snaresbrook and recommended Mr Twist. Individual A [REDACTED] confirmed that, at this time, she was aware of the allegations and had read a transcript of the messages, but still decided to recommend Mr Twist; Individual A [REDACTED] stated that she would *"not have jeopardised [her] own working"*

*relationships and career if [she] had not thought [Mr Twist] was a trustworthy colleague and a dedicated teacher.”*. In her oral evidence, Individual A [REDACTED] confirmed that she did think a lot about whether to recommend Mr Twist for the position but confirmed that she had seen “*great potential*” in Mr Twist. Individual A’s [REDACTED] evidence was that before she met Mr Twist, [REDACTED], and Mr Twist was one of the few she thought had “*fantastic potential*”. When asked whether she regretted recommending Mr Twist for the position, Individual A [REDACTED] responded “*not at all*”; when she speaks to colleagues, they are “*full of praise*” for Mr Twist and what he has done at Snaresbrook in the last 3 years.

Individual A [REDACTED] stated that she was in no doubt that Mr Twist had learnt from his mistakes and was determined to be a role model for pupils and colleagues in safeguarding and wellbeing.

In her oral evidence, Individual A [REDACTED] confirmed that she had never heard Mr Twist refer to females in a derogatory way.

The panel was also provided with written character references from 23 individuals, and noted the following in particular:

- “*Grant is an exceptional teacher who demonstrates a genuine commitment to his students’ individual growth. His approach is marked by fairness and a strong desire to ensure each student receives the best possible education. Grant’s dedication to personalized attention sets him apart in fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment... during my three years of working alongside Grant, I haven’t observed any of the characteristics associated with the allegations made against him. My experience with him has been positive and aligned with the qualities of a dedicated and caring teacher.*” [REDACTED], a colleague of Mr Twist at Snaresbrook.
- “*...Grant demonstrates a real desire and passion for teaching. I cannot recall a single instance in the last 4 years where he has been sexist, misogynistic, homophobic or racist towards anyone or has made any comments in my presence, which could be interpreted in that manner... when Grant talks about teaching it is clear how passionate he is about his job and education more generally*” [REDACTED] of Mr Twist.
- “*He was a supportive colleague who always acted in a professional manner with adults and children.*” [REDACTED], former colleague of Mr Twist at [REDACTED].
- “*Before Grant was hired, I was aware about the allegations against Grant... There has been nothing I have seen or heard in Grant’s words or behaviour that has led me to doubt his integrity and commitment to teaching, both professionally and personally. He is a valued and capable member of our school teaching team... he*

*demonstrates a genuine concern and regard for the welfare of these pupils and has shown integrity throughout.*” [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook, Mr Twist’s current employer.

- *“Grant is an outstanding teacher, he models his high values to the pupils and teaches them to behave in the same way... He goes above and beyond to ensure that all pupils and staff feel safe, happy and respected”* [REDACTED], colleague of Mr Twist at Snaresbrook.
- *“He is a valued member of staff as seen in the way that staff and children approach him for advice and guidance in his capacity as both a class teacher and the pastoral lead... I feel that he is a teacher with integrity and honesty with a passion for learning, teaching pupils to become good citizens through being a positive role model to them... Grant is an asset to the school as well as to the teaching profession...”* [REDACTED] at Snaresbrook.
- *“...Grant stands enthusiastic, positive and determined to help as many lives as he can...If more people had Grant’s desire to do better and genuinely learn from past experience I honestly believe not only the profession but the world would be a better place.”* [REDACTED] of Mr Twist.
- *“Grant ...was both an inspirational and respected leader eager to help beyond expectations. ...he was a role model for the children that he was with, as he was always courteous, treated everyone equally and as he himself would have wanted to be treated... Other leaders within the ... team enjoyed working alongside Grant because of his inclusive and welcoming approach”* [REDACTED].

The panel also noted the written submissions of Mr Twist. Mr Twist expressed his remorse for *“saying things that were wrong, being a bystander and enabler of sexism, homophobia, racism and ableism...”*. Mr Twist submitted that the WhatsApp chats highlighted his *“own fallibility and shortcomings, of which [he has] looked upon to strengthen and resolve.”* In his oral evidence, Mr Twist referred more than once to the language used as *“barbaric”*.

Mr Twist also provided detailed submissions relating to the steps he has taken to further his knowledge in respect of issues surrounding sexism, racism, homophobia and ableism.

Mr Twist submitted that he has explored literature on the topics of discrimination, and that he *“started [his] journey”* by reading and exploring misogyny, in particular reading books which he stated *“illuminated just how deep sexism runs”*. Mr Twist’s evidence was that this led him to other forms of literature, texts which *“challenged preconceived notions of sex and gender, revealing my own blindness to the levels of sexism that can occur*

*through labelled stereotypes, combined with the privileged blindness a white heteronormative male can so often have.”*

In respect of the issue of racism, Mr Twist referred to his desire to better understand “*the signs of permeating racism that can easily escalate if unchallenged*”. Mr Twist provided evidence of training on diversity, inclusion, violence and harassment, however stated “*this is not enough*” and went on to refer to further literature he had read on the subject, including, *Representation Matters: Becoming an Anti-Racist Educator* and *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race*.

Mr Twist also spoke of his exploration of literature such as *How to Stop Homophobia and Biphobic Bullying*, which he stated provided him with strategies to combat discrimination, whether between pupils or colleagues.

In respect of the issue of ‘ableism’, Mr Twist referred to his endeavours to “*deepen [his] understanding of the wide range of physical and psychological disabilities...*”. Mr Twist referred to his review of books such as *Diverse Educators: A Manifesto* and *Why Students Don’t Like School*, which he submitted helped him “*greatly*” in “*understanding the cognitive difficulties that many pupils, with and without disabilities, have that can make learning difficult and why teachers need to be supportive rather than judgemental.*”

Mr Twist submitted that, notwithstanding his research, the “*most impactful*” way in which he had given back to the community was by volunteering at a local Special Educational Needs school during the school holidays. Mr Twist’s evidence was that he was able to observe and assist, which gave him a better understanding of those with the most complex needs. Mr Twist described this as a “*truly rewarding and enlightening experience; one which I will carry with me for the rest of my career*”.

The panel was impressed with the way in which Mr Twist spoke about the steps he had taken and the knowledge he had gained. The panel noted in particular that this training and research appeared to be ongoing, with the training in particular taking place over a period of three years, and not limited to ‘one-off’ training immediately after the allegations came to light in 2021. In the panel’s view, this demonstrated Mr Twist’s commitment to learning from his misconduct, developing his knowledge on issues of discrimination and how best to combat this, as well as his commitment to developing as a person. In respect of his steps to combat discrimination, the panel heard evidence from Mr Twist in which he described a situation in which he had actively challenged the sexually objectifying behaviour of another in a social setting.

Mr Twist stated that he is highly regarded by his current school and is continuing to put the welfare of the children first but is also conscious of both his welfare and the welfare of his colleagues.

The panel accepted Mr Twist's submissions in this regard. The panel was impressed by the evidence submitted by colleagues of Mr Twist as to his character, both at the School and at Snaresbrook. Of particular note was that 2 of Mr Twist's colleagues, [REDACTED], were willing to attend the hearing to give very positive evidence as to Mr Twist's character. The panel was particularly compelled by Individual A's [REDACTED] confidence in Mr Twist's abilities as a teacher, and noted that Individual A [REDACTED], having full knowledge of the content of the messages, felt such confidence in Mr Twist's ability as a teacher so as to recommend him for a position with her current employer. The panel further noted that Individual A [REDACTED] remained content with her decision, expressing that she had no regrets in respect of her recommendation.

In respect of Mr Twist's current employment, the panel heard evidence that Mr Twist had been entrusted with, and subsequently excelled in, the role of [REDACTED].

The panel noted that Mr Twist had made early admissions, both in respect of the investigation by the School and in respect of these proceedings. Further, the panel noted that Mr Twist had, throughout the proceedings, repeatedly expressed his sorrow for his actions. The panel therefore considered that Mr Twist had demonstrated considerable and genuine insight and remorse into his conduct. To that end, the panel was satisfied that there was a very limited risk of Mr Twist's misconduct reoccurring.

Whilst the panel concluded that Mr Twist's conduct in sending and receiving inappropriate messages was serious, it considered the extent of Mr Twist's involvement in and engagement with the WhatsApp chats. In particular, the panel noted that whilst Mr Twist had received racist and homophobic messages (which he did not report), there was no evidence before the panel that he had sent any racist or homophobic messages.

The panel 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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present (as set out above) and Mr Twist's abilities as an educator, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case.

On the basis that Mr Twist had shown great insight into his misconduct and demonstrated the steps he had taken as to how it would be avoided in the future, the panel was of the view that prohibiting Mr Twist would not produce any material change or serve any useful purpose.

The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

## **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 recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Grant Twist 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
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of sending and/or receiving inappropriate messages which related to female colleagues or pupils at the school at which he was employed, and which were sexually objectifying, homophobic,

misogynistic, denigrating and racist. The panel also found that Mr Twist's conduct at allegation 1(a)(i) was conduct of a sexual nature.

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 likely to 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 Twist, 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, "Whilst the panel acknowledged that there was no evidence that these comments were made to or in the presence of any pupils, the panel considered this sufficiently concerning so as to engage a public interest consideration in respect of the wellbeing of pupils. The panel did note, however, that there was no suggestion that Mr Twist had failed in his safeguarding obligations in respect of pupils."

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel has set out as follows: "The panel noted that Mr Twist had made early admissions, both in respect of the investigation by the School and in respect of these proceedings. Further, the panel noted that Mr Twist had, throughout the proceedings, repeatedly expressed his sorrow for his actions. The panel therefore considered that Mr Twist had demonstrated considerable and genuine insight and remorse into his conduct. To that end, the panel was satisfied that there was a very limited risk of Mr Twist's misconduct reoccurring." I have 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 that "the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception." I am particularly mindful of the finding of sending and receiving inappropriate and offensive messages about colleagues and pupils 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 likely to bring the profession into 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 Twist himself. The panel has noted that it “was provided with extensive evidence to attest to Mr Twist’s history and ability as a teacher.” This included oral evidence from 2 witnesses from Mr Twist’s current employer and written character references from 23 individuals. The panel has commented that it “was impressed by the evidence submitted by colleagues of Mr Twist as to his character, both at the School and at Snaresbrook. Of particular note was that 2 of Mr Twist’s colleagues, including [REDACTED], were willing to attend the hearing to give very positive evidence as to Mr Twist’s character.” It also noted that Mr Twist “had been entrusted with, and subsequently excelled in, the role of [REDACTED]” with his current employer.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Twist from continuing his teaching work. 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 finding that “Whilst the panel concluded that Mr Twist’s conduct in sending and receiving inappropriate messages was serious, it considered the extent of Mr Twist’s involvement in and engagement with the WhatsApp chats. In particular, the panel noted that whilst Mr Twist had received racist and homophobic messages (which he did not report), there was no evidence before the panel that he had sent any racist or homophobic messages.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s findings about the level of insight and remorse demonstrated by Mr Twist. The panel was impressed with the way in which Mr Twist spoke about the steps he had taken, and the knowledge he had gained, on issues about sexism, racism, homophobia and ableism.

I have agreed with the panel’s conclusion that “On the basis that Mr Twist had shown great insight into his misconduct and demonstrated the steps he had taken as to how it would be avoided in the future, the panel was of the view that prohibiting Mr Twist would not produce any material change or serve any useful purpose.”

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Decision maker: David Oatley**

**Date: 7 June 2024**

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