



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Nana Opong: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

April 2025

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

Teacher:	Mr Nana Opong
Teacher ref number:	96/35308
Teacher date of birth:	22 March 1969
TRA reference:	22697
Date of determination:	10 April 2025
Former employer:	Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls, Sutton Coldfield

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 10 April 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Nana Opong.

The panel members were Ms Emma Hendry (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Alan Wells (former teacher panellist) and Ms Gill Lyon (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Delme Griffiths of Blake Morgan 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 Opong that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Opong provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of a presenting officer, Mr Opong or any representative appointed on his behalf.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 2 April 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Opong was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that, whilst employed as a teacher at Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls between September 2019 and October 2023:

1. He failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils/former pupils, by;
 - a. Sending Pupil A and/or Pupil B one or more surveys of a personal nature;
 - b. Using a personal email address to communicate with Pupil A on one or more occasions;
 - c. Requesting Pupil A send photographs of herself to him on one or more occasions;
 - d. Advising Pupil A that he *"look at photos of her from time to time"* or using words to that effect;
 - e. Making one or more inappropriate comments to Pupil A, namely by;
 - i. Stating to Pupil A *"Well you look well and rested. I am trying not to say too much... You know - I call you Princess [Pupil A] behind your back"* or using words to that effect;
 - ii. Stating to Pupil A *"I remember once seeing you wearing flowers on your head like tiara. But the great thing about you, is how intelligent and hardworking you are. You will certainly go very far whatever you set your mind to"* or using words to that effect;
 - iii. Stating to Pupil A *"When I say you are different, I mean I love the fact that you like things like cuddly toys, Disney films and go to the baby section of shops. You have these child like qualities and make no apologies for it. However at the same time you have an amazing cognitive ability to process and understand challenging topics such as psychology, chemistry and biology. Two contrasting parts in the same person. Add to that is the fact that you look amazing, and have a gentle and kind personality"* or using words to that effect;
 - iv. Stating to Pupil A *"No - I will never get bored with you so I wouldn't stop talking to you. However I know like a beautiful! butterfly, you will one day fly away. It is just the fact of life and rightly so. We are just at*

the wrong / opposite side of the spectrum” or using words to that effect;

- f. Inviting Pupil A to communicate with him once a week;
 - g. Telling Pupil A that her pictures “*make [him] happy*” or using words to that effect;
 - h. Declining to delete photographs that Pupil A sent of herself alone and/or with other pupils on one or more occasions.
2. He sought to conceal the contact he had with Pupil A by;
- a. Asking Pupil A to “*delete everything*” or used words to that effect;
 - b. Suggesting to Pupil A that he would get in trouble at work for talking to her and/or indicating that if Pupil A blackmailed him, he would retaliate by throwing eggs at her window.
3. His conduct at allegation 2 lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

Mr Opong admitted the facts of all of the allegations and that his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology – page 5

Section 2: Notice of meeting and response – pages 7 to 25

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 26 to 36

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 38 to 218

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 217 to 218

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020, (the “Procedures”).

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Opong on 14 February 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case before it and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Opong for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest.

The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

Mr Opong was previously employed as a teacher and head of computer science at Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls ("the School").

He commenced that role on 1 September 2019.

On 4 September 2023, a former pupil at the School reported concerns about Mr Opong to another teacher. The pupil is referred to as a Pupil A for the purposes of these proceedings. Pupil A had been a pupil in [REDACTED] in the previous school year.

On 5 September 2023, following a meeting with Pupil A at the School, a referral was made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Pupil A reported that they had been communicating with Mr Opong via his personal email address, that he had made inappropriate comments and requested images of Pupil A. Pupil A provided several screenshots of their conversations, advising that others had been deleted.

On 7 September 2023, the LADO confirmed that the School could conduct an internal investigation and Mr Opong was suspended from duties.

A referral was also made to the police, which resulted in no further action being taken.

On 18 September 2023, Mr Opong attended an investigatory meeting.

On 21 September 2023, Mr Opong was referred to a disciplinary hearing, which was held in his absence on 6 October 2023. Whilst the panel was notified of the outcome of that hearing, it was disregarded for the purposes of its deliberations. The panel made its own, independent decision based on the evidence presented.

On 27 October 2023, Mr Opong was referred to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils/former pupils, by;

The panel considered particulars 1(a) to (h) of allegation 1 before going on to determine the stem of the allegation, namely whether by his actions Mr Opong failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils/former pupils.

a. Sending Pupil A and/or Pupil B one or more surveys of a personal nature;

The panel was presented with two surveys sent by Mr Opong, one relating to computing and one described as a 'general' survey. Mr Opong admitted sending the latter to Pupil A and Pupil B. There was also evidence that the pupils provided a response.

The panel was satisfied that the content of this survey was personal, asking questions such as "*what do you love*" and "*what thoughts or things instantly make you more relaxed*". They were sent to just the two pupils, one of whom Mr Opong did not teach. There was no explanation as to why this survey was sent, particularly noting it was unrelated to educational matters and outside of the school year.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (a) of allegation 1 proved.

b. Using a personal email address to communicate with Pupil A on one or more occasions;

The panel was presented with various emails deriving from Mr Opong's work email address sent to Pupil A.

Whilst examples were not included in evidence, Mr Opong also admitted that he communicated with Pupil A via a personal email address. This was referenced and acknowledged at various parts of the case papers.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (b) of allegation 1 proved. However, in the

absence of these communications the panel was unable to determine the extent to which the content of the emails was appropriate or otherwise.

c. Requesting Pupil A send photographs of herself to you on one or more occasions;

Mr Opong accepted that he requested Pupil A send photographs of herself to him on at least one occasion.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel in the form of a message in which such a request was specified, it found particular (c) of allegation 1 proved.

d. Advising Pupil A that you "look at photos of her from time to time" or using words to that effect;

Mr Opong accepted that he made a comment to Pupil A that he would 'look at photos of her from time to time' or said words to that effect.

Whilst the panel was not presented with a specific message including such a comment, this had been repeatedly and consistently accepted by Mr Opong. The panel also took into account that this comment was consistent with other, similar comments made by Mr Opong.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission and on the balance of probabilities, the panel found particular (d) of allegation 1 proved.

e. Making one or more inappropriate comments to Pupil A, namely by;

- i. Stating to Pupil A "Well you look well and rested. I am trying not to say too much... You know - I call you Princess [Pupil A] behind your back" or using words to that effect;**
- ii. Stating to Pupil A "I remember once seeing you wearing flowers on your head like tiara. But the great thing about you, is how intelligent and hardworking you are. You will certainly go very far whatever you set your mind to" or using words to that effect;**
- iii. Stating to Pupil A "When I say you are different, I mean I love the fact that you like things like cuddly toys, Disney films and go to the baby section of shops. You have these child like qualities and make no apologies for it. However at the same time you have an amazing cognitive ability to process and understand challenging topics such as psychology, chemistry and biology. Two contrasting parts in the same person. Add to that is the fact that**

you look amazing, and have a gentle and kind personality” or using words to that effect;

- iv. Stating to Pupil A “No - I will never get bored with you so I wouldn't stop talking to you. However I know like a beautiful! butterfly, you will one day fly away. It is just the fact of life and rightly so. We are just at the wrong / opposite side of the spectrum” or using words to that effect;**

The panel was presented with communications from Mr Opong to Person A which contained each of the comments particularised in allegation 1(e)(i) to (iv).

This was admitted by Mr Opong, who also accepted that the comments were inappropriate.

The panel agreed that the comments were inappropriate. In terms of their content, nature and tone, the comments were over-familiar and inappropriate particularly considered in the context and in totality, even if some of the comments in isolation may not have been.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (e) of allegation 1 proved.

f. Inviting Pupil A to communicate with you once a week;

Allegation 1(f) was admitted by Mr Opong. He accepted that he invited Pupil A to communicate with him once a week, which was referenced in an email in the following terms:

“Alternatively, how about this – to keep our conversation fresh let's keep in touch via email once a week.”

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (f) of allegation 1 proved.

g. Telling Pupil A that her pictures “make me happy” or using words to that effect;

Mr Opong admitted allegation 1(g), whereby he told Pupil A that her pictures 'make (him) happy' and that phrase was used in a message included in evidence.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (g) of allegation 1 proved.

h. Declining to delete photographs that Pupil A sent of herself alone and/or with other pupils on one or more occasions.

Mr Opong admitted allegation 1(h), that he declined to delete photographs that Pupil A sent to him, which was referenced in a message that stated:

“Yes, they make me happy. Very lovely pics. No chance – I wouldn’t delete them.”

On the basis of Mr Opong’s admission, which was consistent with the evidence presented to the panel, it found particular (h) of allegation 1 proved.

The panel therefore found each of particulars 1(a) to (h) proved.

The panel was also satisfied that, by his actions, Mr Opong failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries as per the stem of allegation 1, which he admitted.

All teachers have a duty to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with their pupils. Pupil A remained on the School’s roll until the end of the 2022/2023 academic year, but in any event had only recently left the School at the end of the summer term.

In each of the respects found proved in relation to these allegations, Mr Opong failed to meet the standards expected of him and allowed professional boundaries to become blurred in relation to Pupil A, which he recognised. His conduct was unrelated to educational matters and was not appropriate. It also appeared to have resulted in Pupil A being made to feel uncomfortable.

Insofar as Pupil B was referenced in the allegations, there was very limited evidence regarding them. The panel did not, therefore, find that Mr Opong failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil B.

The panel therefore found allegation 1 proved in its entirety in relation to Pupil A.

2. You sought to conceal the contact you had with Pupil A by;

a. Asking Pupil A to “delete everything” or used words to that effect;

b. Suggesting to Pupil A that you would get in trouble at work for talking to her and/or indicating that if Pupil A blackmailed you you would retaliate by throwing eggs at her window.

Mr Opong admitted that he asked Pupil A to 'delete everything', or used words to that effect and that he suggested to Pupil A that he would get in trouble at work for talking to her and indicated that if Pupil A blackmailed him, he would retaliate by throwing eggs at her window.

Mr Opong also admitted that, by these actions, he sought to conceal the contact he had with Pupil A.

There was no specific message included in evidence referencing the comment in allegation 2(a). However, it was admitted by Mr Opong, was referenced in the papers as having been reported by Pupil A, and was consistent with other communications, not least allegation 2(b).

The comment in allegation 2(b) was included in a specific message presented to the panel.

On the basis of Mr Opong's admissions and this evidence, on the balance of probabilities the panel found allegation 2 proved in its entirety.

3. Your conduct at allegation 2 lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

Having found the facts of allegation 2 proved, the panel went on to consider whether Mr Opong's conduct lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

Mr Opong admitted both elements. The panel noted that he had done so with explicit reference to the applicable tests set down in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Limited* [2017] UKSC 67 and *Wingate and Evans v SRA; SRA v Malins* [2018] EWCA Civ 366.

The panel accepted Mr Opong's admissions.

It followed from Mr Opong's admitted actions that his behaviour was deliberate, whereby he chose to conceal contact he knew to be inappropriate. In the message at allegation 2(b), Mr Opong explicitly relayed to Pupil A that he "*could get into trouble at work for keeping in touch with [Pupil A]*". Mr Opong accordingly understood that there could be repercussions should the communications have been discovered, which was also apparent from the suggestion that Pupil A could "*blackmail*" him. The panel was satisfied this was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel was also satisfied that, by his actions, Mr Opong failed to adhere to the standards of the profession. His contact with Pupil A, including via a personal email address, was concealed despite the obvious, potential implications for his position as a teacher at the School, which ought to have been apparent to Mr Opong.

The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Opong's conduct also lacked integrity.

The panel therefore found allegation 3 proved in relation to allegation 2.

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. Whilst admitted by Mr Opong, the panel made its own, independent determination.

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 first considered whether the conduct of Mr Opong, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, he 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 ...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

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

The panel found that none of these offences was clearly engaged in this case.

The panel also took into account the wider context of Mr Opong’s actions.

Mr Opong was in a position of trust and responsibility. It was incumbent upon him to act with honesty and integrity at all times. He was also a role model and was required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

In light of the panel’s findings, Mr Opong had breached his obligations in that regard. The conduct was targeted at a single pupil, was repeated and multi-faceted, encompassing private communications outside of the parameters of the School that were highly personal and improper. The conduct only came to light through the disclosure of Pupil A, not through a disclosure by Mr Opong, in circumstances where Mr Opong clearly knew

that what he was doing was wrong. For the reasons set out in allegation 3, the panel had concluded that Mr Opong's conduct was dishonest and lacked integrity.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Opong was serious and fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Opong was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Opong's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It 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.

The panel also considered that Mr Opong's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

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

In summary, having found the facts of the allegations proved, the panel further found that Mr Opong'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. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely:

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Opong, which involved dishonestly concealing contact with a pupil and a serious breach of professional boundaries, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

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

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Opong in the profession.

It concluded there was not a strong public interest in that regard. As far as the panel was aware, Mr Opong has an otherwise unblemished record. His competence had not been called into question. However, there was no evidence before the panel to suggest Mr Opong ought to be regarded as an exceptional practitioner. He had not presented any references or testimonials.

The panel also considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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 Opong.

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;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests;
- collusion or concealment including:
 - encouraging others to break rules.

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.

The panel considered that the following mitigating factors are present in this case:

- Mr Opong appeared to have had an otherwise unblemished record.
- Mr Opong had engaged with the TRA and made full admissions.
- Mr Opong had shown some regret, remorse and insight. He accepted wrongdoing and had taken responsibility for his actions, recognising that his behaviour was serious and the impact they had. Mr Opong also recognised that he put himself and others in a vulnerable position.

Weighed against this, in addition to the matters and behaviours set out above, aggravating features in this case included that:

- Mr Opong's behaviour was deliberate. He was not acting under duress and was focussed upon a single pupil, who Mr Opong purposefully sought to communicate with, despite not having taught them.
- His actions involved the potential for harm to Pupil A, who was impacted by Mr Opong's actions, and had safeguarding implications.
- Mr Opong was an experienced teacher who had undertaken appropriate training in relation to safeguarding and professional boundaries.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Opong 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 Opong. The fact that Mr Opong had acted dishonestly and without integrity was a significant factor in forming that opinion. He had concealed his communications with Pupil A, which amounted to serious breach of professional boundaries and raised safeguarding implications.

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 certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate.

Once again, the panel did not consider these to be relevant in this case. Whilst Mr Opong had behaved dishonestly, the panel did not regard this as an instance of the most serious dishonesty in the specific context.

The panel concluded that a review period of three years was appropriate and proportionate in this case.

Mr Opong has shown some insight, albeit the panel considered this was emerging rather than complete. For instance, Mr Opong has alluded to the fact that he believed certain concerns were exaggerated or false. Further, the panel was mindful of the fact that the concerns only came to light through Pupil A's disclosure, not through Mr Opong disclosing his actions to the School, which he should have done.

In addition, there was no evidence that Mr Opong had sought specific support or otherwise undertaken rehabilitative steps. Whilst Mr Opong had evidenced a willingness

to accept responsibility, beyond his assertions to that effect, which were limited, he had not demonstrated that all requisite lessons had been learned such that he was unlikely to repeat his failings in the future.

For these reasons, the panel considered a period of three years was appropriate and proportionate. It will allow for an adequate period of reflection and will afford Mr Opong time and opportunity, should he wish to do so, to take steps to fully rehabilitate and remediate his conduct and demonstrate that he has gained further insight into the nature, effect and implications of his conduct.

In the view of the panel, a period beyond three years would be disproportionate.

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/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Nana Opong should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of three years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Opong 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 ...
- 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 Opong fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher both breaching professional boundaries with a pupil and behaving dishonestly.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Opong, 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 made the following observation: "In light of the panel's findings against Mr Opong, which involved dishonestly concealing contact with a pupil and a serious breach of professional boundaries, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils." 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 it sets out as follows:

"Mr Opong had shown some regret, remorse and insight. He accepted wrongdoing and had taken responsibility for his actions, recognising that his behaviour was serious and the impact they had. Mr Opong also recognised that he put himself and others in a vulnerable position.

However, elsewhere the panel also notes that:

"Mr Opong has shown some insight, albeit the panel considered this was emerging rather than complete. For instance, Mr Opong has alluded to the fact that he believed certain concerns were exaggerated or false. Further, the panel was mindful of the fact that the concerns only came to light through Pupil A's disclosure, not through Mr Opong disclosing his actions to the School, which he should have done.

In addition, there was no evidence that Mr Opong had sought specific support or otherwise undertaken rehabilitative steps. Whilst Mr Opong had evidenced a willingness to accept responsibility, beyond his assertions to that effect, which were limited, he had not demonstrated that all requisite lessons had been learned such that he was unlikely to repeat his failings in the future."

In my judgement, the lack of evidence that Mr Opong has developed full insight and remorse means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel records that: "The panel also considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Opong were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession." I am particularly mindful of the finding of behaviour that was dishonest and lacked integrity in this case, including behaviour that was coercive, and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to have 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 Opong himself. The panel makes this comment:

"As far as the panel was aware, Mr Opong has an otherwise unblemished record. His competence had not been called into question. However, there was no evidence before the panel to suggest Mr Opong ought to be regarded as an exceptional practitioner. He had not presented any references or testimonials."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Opong 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 serious nature of the misconduct, and particularly the dishonesty and the lack of integrity displayed by Mr Opong. I have also noted the panel's comments regarding the lack of evidence that Mr Opong has developed full insight into his actions and the consequent risk of repetition.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Opong has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in

light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full 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 a three-year review period.

I have considered the panel's concluding comments:

"For these reasons, the panel considered a period of three years was appropriate and proportionate. It will allow for an adequate period of reflection and will afford Mr Opong time and opportunity, should he wish to do so, to take steps to fully rehabilitate and remediate his conduct and demonstrate that he has gained further insight into the nature, effect and implications of his conduct."

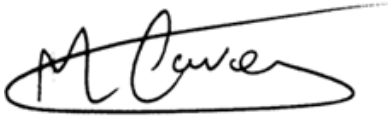
I have considered whether a three-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. While acknowledging the panel's comment that the dishonesty displayed by Mr Opong was not at the most serious end of the possible spectrum, factors mean that in my judgment allowing a three-year review period is sufficient and proportionate to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the dishonesty found, and particularly the attempt to coerce a pupil to be party to that dishonest behaviour, and the lack of evidence that Mr Opong has developed full insight into the causes and impact of his misconduct.

I consider therefore that a three-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr Nana Opong is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 23 April 2028, three years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Opong remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Opong has a right of appeal to 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 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 15 April 2025

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