



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr George Watkins: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

May 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Statement of agreed facts	5
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	10
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	13

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

Teacher:	Mr George Watkins
Teacher ref number:	1685395
Teacher date of birth:	13 October 1992
TRA reference:	19619
Date of determination:	23 May 2025
Former employer:	North Bridge House Senior School, London

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 23 May 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr George Watkins.

The panel members were Mrs Michelle Chappell (teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Jan Stoddard (lay panellist) and Mr Carl Lygo (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lara Small of Birketts LLP.

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 Watkins that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Watkins provided a signed statement of agreed facts and conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Louise Murphy-King of Kingsley Napley LLP, Mr Watkins or any representative for Mr Watkins.

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

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 3 March 2025.

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

1. On 27 May 2021, he was convicted of three counts of making indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of a child.
2. On 10 November 2022, he was convicted of:
 - a) Two counts of taking an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child; and/or
 - b) Five counts of making an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child; and/or
 - c) One count of distributing an indecent photograph or pseudo-photographs of a child.
3. On 25 January 2023, he was convicted of:
 - a) Four counts of engaging in penetrative activity with a male aged 13 to 15; and/or
 - b) Three counts of non-penetrative sexual activity with a male aged 13 to 15; and/or
 - c) Three counts of causing or inciting a male aged 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity with no penetration; and/or
 - d) One count of engaging in sexual communication with a child.

Mr Watkins admitted allegations 1, 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d) and admitted he had been convicted of a relevant offence, as set out in the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Watkins on 11 January 2025.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 3 to 4

Section 2: Notice of referral and response – pages 5 to 19

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts – pages 20 to 23

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 24 to 141

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 142 to 144

Section 6: Notice of meeting – pages 145 to 146

The panel also received a copy of an email from Mr Watkins' [REDACTED] to the TRA dated 10 March 2025 and a proof of delivery photograph dated 4 March 2025.

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

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 Watkins on 11 January 2025.

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Watkins 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.

Decision and reasons

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

Mr Watkins was employed as a Modern Foreign Languages teacher at Northbridge House Senior School ('the School') from 1 September 2017 to 16 January 2020.

On 4 July 2019, Mr Watkins was arrested at the School by the police, in relation to allegations of making and distributing indecent images of children.

Mr Watkins was subsequently suspended by the School, the School carried out an internal investigation and Mr Watkins' employment with the School ended on 16 January 2020.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 9 November 2020.

On 27 May 2021, Mr Watkins was convicted of three offences at North London Magistrates Court and subsequently sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court.

On 10 November 2022, Mr Watkins was further convicted of eight separate offences at Wood Green Crown Court.

On 25 January 2023, Mr Watkins was further convicted of eleven separate offences at Wood Green Crown Court.

On 26 October 2023, Mr Watkins was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel considered the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Watkins on 11 January 2025. In that statement of agreed facts, Mr Watkins admitted allegations 1, 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d) and further admitted that the facts of the allegations amounted to conviction of a relevant offence. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it, as set out below.

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

1. On 27 May 2021, you were convicted of three counts of making indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of a child.

The panel noted page 8 of the Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers ('the Advice') which states that where there has been a conviction at any time, of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel had been provided with a copy of the certificate of conviction from Wood Green Crown Court, dated 16 October 2024, which detailed that on 27 May 2021, Mr Watkins was convicted in the North London Magistrates' Court of three counts of making indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of a child. Mr Watkins was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court, and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, suspended for 24 months, to carry out unpaid work for 80 hours before 29 July 2023, to undertake rehabilitation activity for a maximum of 30 days, to pay a victim surcharge of £115, [REDACTED].

On examination of the documents before the panel and the admissions in the signed statement of agreed facts, the panel was satisfied that the facts of allegation 1 were proven.

2. On 10 November 2022, you were convicted of:

- a) Two counts of taking an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child; and/or**
- b) Five counts of making an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child; and/or**
- c) One count of distributing an indecent photograph or pseudo-photographs of a child.**

3. On 25 January 2023, you were convicted of:

- a) Four counts of engaging in penetrative activity with a male aged 13 to 15; and/or**
- b) Three counts of non-penetrative sexual activity with a male aged 13 to 15; and/or**
- c) Three counts of causing or inciting a male aged 13 to 15 to engage in sexual activity with no penetration; and/or**
- d) One count of engaging in sexual communication with a child**

The panel noted page 8 of the Advice which states that where there has been a conviction at any time, of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel considered the certificate of conviction from Wood Green Crown Court, dated 2 May 2024, which set out that Mr Watkins pleaded guilty and that he was convicted of the following:

- On 10 November 2022 of:
 - Two counts of taking an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child;
 - Five counts of making an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child;

- One count of distributing an indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of a child.
- On 25 January 2023 of:
 - Four counts of engaging in penetrative sexual activity with a boy aged 13 – 15
 - Three counts of engaging in non-penetrative sexual activity with a boy aged 13-15
 - Three counts of causing or inciting a boy aged 13-15 to engage in sexual activity with no penetration
 - One count of engaging in sexual communication with a child.

In respect of the convictions, Mr Wakins was sentenced on 26 October 2023 to a total sentence of 11 years imprisonment, comprising of a custodial term of 7 years with an extended licence of 4 years.

On examination of the documents before the panel and the admissions in the signed statement of agreed facts, the panel was satisfied that the facts of allegations 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d) were proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to conviction of a relevant offence.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Watkins 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

- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils.

The panel noted that the allegations took place outside the education setting, but was satisfied that they were relevant to Mr Watkins' position as a teacher, because his convictions related to serious criminal offences involving children.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Watkins' behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Watkins' behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment of 11 years, (albeit that it was suspended in respect of allegation 1), which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

This was a case concerning an offence involving: sexual activity; sexual communication with a child; any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting any such activity, including one-off incidents, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel noted that the offences were serious which was reflected in the length of the sentencing judgment, in which the Judge described Mr Watkins as a "[REDACTED]" and considered him to be dangerous.

The panel considered that there were no mitigating circumstances. The panel noted that Mr Watkins submitted in an email to the TRA on 23 January 2025 [REDACTED] *"I long ago accepted that I can offer no mitigation, and must permanently leave the profession because of my conviction."*

The panel also found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Watkins' ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that Mr Watkins' convictions were for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

The panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Watkins' ongoing suitability to teach.

The panel further noted that in the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Watkins, he admitted the facts amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence. Notwithstanding this admission, the panel, having considered all the evidence before it, was satisfied that Mr Watkins had been convicted of a relevant offence.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order 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; the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Watkins, which involved serious criminal sexual offences involving children, there was a strong public interest consideration in the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of inappropriate relationships with children.

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

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Watkins 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 Watkins in the profession. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Watkins in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel 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 Watkins.

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;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing, or publishing any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);

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

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 no evidence that Mr Watkins actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence that Mr Watkins was acting under extreme duress.

There was no evidence that Mr Watkins demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel considered that the severity of the behaviour outweighed any high standard of teaching that Mr Watkins could have presented as mitigation. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character.

The panel noted that there was a lack of insight and remorse on the part of Mr Watkins.

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 Watkins 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 Watkins. The serious nature of his convictions and the Judge's sentencing remarks were significant factors in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 2 years.

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

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents.

The 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. However, none of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

As above, the panel considered there were no mitigating circumstances and that Mr Watkins had not demonstrated any insight or remorse.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of both sanction and review period.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Watkins 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
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
 - Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include findings of serious criminal sexual offences involving children.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of a relevant conviction, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Watkins, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of inappropriate relationships with children." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, "The panel noted that there was a lack of insight and remorse

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

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Watkins were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of serious sexual offences involving children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of a relevant conviction, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Watkins himself and the panel comment “There was no evidence that Mr Watkins demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Watkins 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 following comments “The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel 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.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding that “The panel considered that the severity of the behaviour outweighed any high standard of teaching that Mr Watkins could have presented as mitigation. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Watkins 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 remorse or insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel's comments "the panel considered there were no mitigating circumstances and that Mr Watkins had not demonstrated any insight or remorse". The panel also said it "decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate."

In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the findings involving serious sexual offences with children and the lack of full insight or remorse.

I consider therefore that allowing for no review period is necessary to maintain public confidence and is proportionate and in the public interest.

This means that Mr George Watkins is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Watkins shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

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

Mr Watkins 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 'SABuxcey', with a horizontal line underneath.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 27 May 2025

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