



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Christian Watkinson: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome**

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

**August 2025**

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Mr Christian Watkinson
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	9940654
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	28 December 1976
<b>TRA reference:</b>	22064
<b>Date of determination:</b>	19 August 2025
<b>Former employer:</b>	The Christian School (Takeley), Bishop's Stortford

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 19 August 2025 by way of a virtual professional conduct panel meeting, to consider the case of Mr Christian Watkinson.

The panel members were Mrs Melissa West (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Richard Young (lay panellist) and Mrs Christine McLintock (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Josie Beal 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 Watkinson that the allegations be considered without a hearing. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Ms Emma Dowd of Capsticks LLP, Mr Watkinson or any representative for Mr Watkinson.

The meeting took place in private.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 16 April 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Watkinson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that while employed as a teacher at The Christian School (“the School”) between November 2022 and May 2023:

1. He used a school laptop to access/engage in adult chat sites and/or adult content while he was at School teaching and/ or supervising pupils.
2. He accessed the content referred at allegation 1 above by bypassing the School’s internet monitoring system
3. His conduct at allegation 2, as may be found proved:
  - a) Lacked integrity, and/or
  - b) Was dishonest.
4. His conduct at allegation 1, as may be found proved:
  - a) Failed to take account of advice/feedback given on 24 November 2022, and/ or
  - b) Was reckless.

Mr Watkinson admitted the facts of allegations 1, 2, 3(a), 3(b), 4(a) and 4(b) as set out in the statement of agreed facts signed by Mr Watkinson on 11 December 2024. He further admitted that those admitted facts amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## Summary of evidence

### Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 6

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 7 to 19a

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 20 to 27

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 28 to 347

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 348 to 362

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, 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 Watkinson on 11 December 2024. The statement of agreed facts was also signed by the Presenting Officer, Ms Emma Dowd, but her signature was not dated.

## **Decision and reasons**

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 Watkinson 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 Watkinson commenced employment at The Christian School (‘the School’) on 1 September 2020 as a science teacher.

Between November 2022 and May 2023, Mr Watkinson allegedly used his school laptop to access and/or engage in adult chat sites and/or adult content whilst he was teaching at the School and/or supervising pupils.

In November 2022, pupils reported seeing an inappropriate image on the big screen whilst Mr Watkinson was sharing his screen during a lesson.

On 17 May 2023, a pupil reported seeing inappropriate content on Mr Watkinson’s laptop. On 18 May 2023, evidence of misuse was found on Mr Watkinson’s laptop and a referral was made to the LADO by the School.

A disciplinary hearing was conducted on 30 May 2023, and a referral was made to the TRA on the same day.

## **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 used a school laptop to access/ engage in adult chat sites and/ or adult content while you were at School teaching and/ or supervising pupils.**

The panel considered the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Watkinson on 11 December 2024. The panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted to allegation 1.

In particular, the panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted he used his school laptop to access and/or engage in adult chat sites and/or adult content, where the content was of a sexual nature or was sexually suggestive. Furthermore, Mr Watkinson admitted that he did this whilst he was teaching and/or supervising pupils. Mr Watkinson accepted this was inappropriate.

Notwithstanding Mr Watkinson's admissions, the panel made its own determination.

The statement of agreed facts indicated that, in November 2022, Mr Watkinson was going through tabs on his computer browser to present material on the big screen during a science lesson. Whilst doing so, he clicked on a tab which contained an image of a woman wearing underwear and a crop top which revealed the bottom part of her breasts. This was raised as a concern with Mr Watkinson at the time, who acknowledged the tab (which he said was his Instagram account) should not have been open.

Further concerns came to light on 17 May 2023 when a pupil reported seeing inappropriate content on Mr Watkinson's school laptop. The School therefore conducted an investigation as part of which it examined Mr Watkinson's school laptop.

The panel was provided with screenshots of Mr Watkinson's personal Gmail email account, taken by the School on 18 May 2023 from his school laptop. The screenshots displayed a number of email alerts which appeared to be from adult chat sites and/or which appeared to be adult content.

The panel was also provided with a spreadsheet showing websites that Mr Watkinson had attempted to access using his school laptop. The spreadsheet did not contain details of the dates on which Mr Watkinson attempted to access these sites, but it did indicate that he had been denied access to a large number of sites, some of which were flagged as being "*web chats*". This was accompanied by a report prepared by the School which indicated that he was online during lessons and had repeatedly attempted to access Google Chat during his lunch break and non-teaching time.

In addition, the bundle contained an image of a woman lying on a bed wearing underwear with a computer behind her. There was a handwritten annotation indicating that the image had been found in a bin in Mr Watkinson's classroom.

The panel was provided with handwritten notes prepared by the School of statements various pupils had made, and noted the following comments in particular:

- Pupil A stated that whilst Mr Watkinson was out of the classroom, his computer was open and there was a message on the screen which said: *"I can't wait to see you in your sexy brown underwear"*
- Pupil B stated that Mr Watkinson had accidentally clicked on messages on the laptop screen and there was a picture of a crotch area and a comment saying *"can't wait to see you in your sexy brown underwear"*
- Pupil C stated that during lessons Mr Watkinson would be chatting and messaging on his laptop, which made Pupil C feel uncomfortable. Pupil C stated that they saw an image and a chat on Mr Watkinson's laptop screen. Pupil C said that this had been happening in all lessons since Easter.
- Pupil D stated that they had seen a woman on the laptop screen on a bed in underwear. Pupil D stated that they saw this image when they went to get a tissue. Pupil D stated that Mr Watkinson then clicked off the page and took his laptop to the back of the classroom.
- Pupil E stated that they saw videos and images of women on Mr Watkinson's laptop screen, including a video of a naked woman on a bed. Pupil E also stated that they had seen messages to women and images on a messaging app and that one of the messages had said: *"I can't wait to see you in your underpants"*. Pupil E said that this had been happening in most lessons since Easter.
- Pupil F stated that they had seen something inappropriate on Mr Watkinson's laptop screen *"nearly almost every lesson"*. Pupil F said that there were *"pornographic"* photos on the laptop, including naked women. Pupil F also stated that Mr Watkinson had been on his camera taking photos and had taken his laptop into the chemical cupboard for about 30 seconds to a minute. Pupil F said that this had happened almost every lesson since December.

The panel noted that this evidence was hearsay evidence but placed weight on it on the basis that the pupils' statements were consistent with one another and with the other evidence in the bundle and Mr Watkinson's own admissions. Furthermore, the pupil statements appeared to be taken contemporaneously as part of the School's investigation in May 2023.

On examination of the evidence before it and Mr Watkinson's admissions, the panel was satisfied that Mr Watkinson had used a school laptop to access/engage in adult chat sites and/or adult content whilst he was at school teaching and/or supervising pupils.

The panel therefore found allegation 1 proven.

## **2. You accessed the content referred at allegation 1 above by bypassing the School's internet monitoring system**

The panel considered the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Watkinson on 11 December 2024. The panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted to allegation 2 and admitted that he had used a “hotspot” internet connection to bypass the School’s filtering and monitoring system. Mr Watkinson further admitted that by using a “hotspot” internet connection the School’s filtering and monitoring system did not identify the content he accessed on his school laptop.

Notwithstanding Mr Watkinson’s admissions, the panel made its own determination.

The panel had regard to the report prepared by the School as part of its investigation. The report confirmed that the School’s filtering and monitoring system was not able to track what Mr Watkinson was accessing on his school laptop when he was not logged in to the School’s “Unified Sign On” (USO).

The data collected by the School did show when Mr Watkinson was not logged in to the USO. Information provided by the School to the Presenting Officer firm indicated that pupils and teachers had to be logged in to the USO in order to access the school internet and noted that access to the internet might be possible using a “hotspot” facility from a mobile phone.

The panel was provided with copies of the School’s E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policies. The panel noted that the E-Safety Policy explained the importance of the School’s filtering and monitoring system and confirmed that, amongst other things, adult content was blocked from the School’s systems. The Acceptance Use Policy, signed by Mr Watkinson in May 2021, specifically confirmed: *“I will never use school devices and networks/internets/platforms/other technologies to access material that is illegal or in any way inappropriate for an education setting. I will not attempt to bypass security or monitoring and will look after devices loaned to me”*.

On examination of the evidence before it and Mr Watkinson’s admissions, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Watkinson had accessed the content described in allegation 1 by bypassing the School’s internet monitoring system and by using a “hotspot” connection.

The panel found allegation 2 proven on the balance of probabilities.

### **3. Your conduct at allegation 2, as may be found proved:**

**a) Lacked integrity; and/ or**

**b) Was dishonest**

The panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted to allegations 3(a) and 3(b) in the statement of agreed facts. Mr Watkinson further admitted that by using a “hotspot” internet connection he knew he would be bypassing the School’s monitoring system and that this



would allow him to access adult content without it being identified by the School's monitoring system.

Notwithstanding Mr Watkinson's admissions, the panel made its own determination.

The panel considered whether Mr Watkinson had failed to act with integrity. The panel considered the case of *Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority*.

The panel had been provided with evidence that Mr Watkinson had used a "hotspot" in order to bypass the School's monitoring system and access adult chat sites and/or adult content on his school laptop. The School's Acceptable Use Policy confirmed that this was not appropriate and also set an expectation that teachers would ensure pupils did not bypass the School's internet filter by using mobile phones.

The panel was mindful that professionals are not expected to be "*paragons of virtue*". However, the panel was satisfied that Mr Watkinson had failed to act within the higher standards expected of a teacher by deliberately bypassing the School's filtering and monitoring systems in order to access adult chat sites and/or adult content during working time.

The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Watkinson's conduct, as found proven, lacked integrity.

The panel then went on to consider whether Mr Watkinson had acted dishonestly and, in doing so, had regard to the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford*.

The panel firstly sought to ascertain the actual state of Mr Watkinson's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel took account of Mr Watkinson's admission in the statement of agreed facts that he used a "hotspot" because he knew it would bypass the School's monitoring system and he would be able to access adult content on his school laptop. The panel was mindful that this conduct persisted over a period of time.

The panel concluded that Mr Watkinson's conduct as found proven at allegation 2 was deliberately to avoid his access to adult chat sites and content being denied or being monitored by the School. The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Watkinson had acted dishonestly, and his conduct would be considered dishonest by the standards of ordinary, decent people.

The panel found allegations 3(a) and 3(b) proven.

#### **4. Your conduct at allegation 1, as may be found proved:**

##### **a) Failed to take account of advice/ feedback given on 24 November 2022, and/or**

The panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted to allegation 4(a) in the statement of agreed facts. Mr Watkinson admitted that he failed to take account of the advice/feedback he was given on 24 November 2022 and continued to access inappropriate content on his school laptop during working time.

Notwithstanding Mr Watkinson's admission, the panel made its own determination.

As set out above, a concern arose in respect of Mr Watkinson in November 2022 when pupils saw an inappropriate image whilst he was presenting material on the big screen during a lesson.

The panel was provided with a report of a low-level concern dated 24 November 2022, completed by the School, which outlined the incident. The report indicated that Mr Watkinson had been interviewed and had apologised. In particular, he had acknowledged that the tab showing the image shouldn't have been open and confirmed that he understood the need to close down social media he was accessing during break times to avoid inadvertently displaying images in lessons.

The panel was not provided with notes of the School's meeting with Mr Watkinson about this incident. Similarly, there was no evidence before the panel that the School had issued written advice or feedback to Mr Watkinson following this incident.

However, it was clear from the evidence before the panel, and Mr Watkinson's own admissions, that the School had spoken to him about this incident and that he was aware it was not appropriate to display inappropriate images during lessons. It was also clear that, notwithstanding this, Mr Watkinson failed to heed this advice/feedback or learn from the incident in November 2022 and continued to access inappropriate content on his work laptop which pupils were able to view during lessons.

The panel found allegation 4(a) proven on the balance of probabilities.

##### **b) Was reckless.**

The panel noted that Mr Watkinson admitted to allegation 4(b) in the statement of agreed facts. Mr Watkinson admitted that he was aware there was a risk pupils may view inappropriate content if he used his laptop to view it during school time. He admitted that he took this risk and that it resulted in pupils viewing inappropriate content, and that he knew it was unreasonable for him to take the risk.

Notwithstanding Mr Watkinson's admission, the panel made its own determination.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Watkinson's conduct was reckless. In fact, the panel found his conduct to be exceptionally reckless. He accessed adult chat sites and/or adult content during lessons and allowed this content to remain visible on his laptop screen, resulting in the content being viewed by pupils. He did this despite: the feedback and/or advice he was given in November 2022 about pupils inadvertently viewing inappropriate content during lessons; the School's clear policies in respect of E-Safety and Acceptable Use; and the general safeguarding principles to which he was subject as a teacher. He then repeated this conduct over a period of time, and pupils reported seeing inappropriate content in most lessons.

The panel found allegation 4(b) 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 first considered whether the conduct of Mr Watkinson, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Watkinson 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 Watkinson'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 the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant. In making this determination, the panel was mindful of the importance of e-safety within schools. The panel understood the need to access online resources for the purposes of education but recognised the potential risks that come with this. As a result of these risks, there is a need for clear boundaries and the monitoring and filtering systems schools use are sacrosanct. The panel found Mr Watkinson's conduct, in deliberately using a "hotspot" connection to bypass the School's monitoring and filtering systems, to be seriously dishonest. In addition, the panel found his conduct to be contrary to safeguarding principles which are designed to protect children.

There was no doubt in the panel's mind that the conduct found proven amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession. It was clearly inappropriate to access adult chat sites and/or adult content on a school laptop whilst responsible for teaching and/or supervising pupils. It was further inappropriate that Mr Watkinson did so by deliberately bypassing the School's internet monitoring systems.

Accordingly, the panel found that Mr Watkinson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Watkinson'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 panel found that Mr Watkinson's conduct fell far short of this standard. His conduct had resulted in pupils viewing inappropriate adult content on his laptop during lessons which was wholly unacceptable and contrary to the expectations of parents and the general public.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Watkinson's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Watkinson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant.

The findings of misconduct as described above are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on Mr Watkinson's status as a teacher.

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Watkinson's actions constituted 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 mindful 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 and, having done so, found the following to be relevant in this case: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct within the teaching profession; 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 Watkinson had used his school laptop to access or engage in adult chat sites and/or adult content whilst he was at school teaching and/or supervising pupils. The panel found that this conduct lacked integrity and was dishonest on the basis that he accessed this content by bypassing the School's internet monitoring system. Finally, the panel found that this conduct was reckless and continued over a period of time despite advice/feedback given to Mr Watkinson in respect of similar conduct in November 2022.

As a result of Mr Watkinson's conduct, pupils were exposed to adult material during lessons. As such, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Watkinson 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 Watkinson 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 Watkinson in the profession. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations outlined above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Watkinson 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 found that Mr Watkinson's behaviour fell at the more serious end of the spectrum. The panel was of the view that his conduct ran counter to the fundamental principles of being a teacher. Mr Watkinson was accessing and/or engaging in adult sites and/or adult content when he was responsible for teaching and/or supervising pupils. Not only that, his conduct resulted in pupils viewing adult content on his laptop screen on several occasions which, in the panel's view, was utterly unacceptable. The panel was mindful that this conduct took place repeatedly over a number of months and that Mr Watkinson was deliberately bypassing the School's internet monitoring system.

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 Watkinson.

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;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- 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);
- 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;

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 concluded that Mr Watkinson's actions were deliberate. He deliberately accessed adult chat sites and/or adult content on his school laptop and used an internet "hotspot" in order to do so.

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

There was no evidence before the panel regarding Mr Watkinson's ability as an educator. There was therefore no evidence that he demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

Mr Watkinson did not provide any evidence for the panel to consider nor did he engage in the School's disciplinary process. Therefore, there was no evidence of mitigation, insight or remorse before the panel. The panel noted that Mr Watkinson had informed the Presenting Officer that he has [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. The panel accepted that this could have affected Mr Watkinson's engagement with the proceedings but was not provided with any medical evidence to this effect. The panel acknowledged that Mr Watkinson had admitted to the allegations which demonstrated a level of acceptance of wrongdoing. Beyond this, there was no evidence of mitigation, insight or remorse before the panel. In particular, there was no evidence of any appreciation of the impact Mr Watkinson's conduct may have had on pupils.

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 Watkinson 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 Watkinson. As outlined above, the panel concluded that Mr Watkinson's conduct fell at the more serious end of the spectrum. It found that his conduct was fundamentally incompatible with being a teacher; it is clearly completely unacceptable to use a school laptop to access or engage in adult chat sites or content whatsoever, let alone during working hours whilst responsible for teaching or supervising pupils. Furthermore, Mr

Watkinson did this by bypassing the School's internet monitoring system which was in place to protect pupils and prevent access to inappropriate websites and he continued to do this despite previous advice/feedback given in November 2022.

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.

Paragraph 50 of the Advice indicates that, where a case involves certain behaviours, it is likely that the public interest will have a greater relevance and weight in favour of not offering a review period. The panel did not find any of these behaviours to be relevant.

Paragraph 51 of the Advice indicates that, where a case involves certain behaviours, 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. The panel found that "*serious dishonesty*" was relevant.

The panel noted that the lists at paragraphs 50 and 51 are not exhaustive. It was aware that it should consider this case on its individual merits, taking into account all the circumstances involved. Having done so, it concluded that this matter fell towards the higher end of the spectrum of seriousness.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a longer review period.

The panel carefully considered what would be an appropriate review period. The panel was mindful of the factors outlined above and the serious nature of Mr Watkinson's conduct. However, it was equally mindful of the need to weigh the public interest against the interests of Mr Watkinson and propose a proportionate review period which was not punitive in nature.

Having done so, the panel decided it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for a prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period of ten years. The panel was of the view that this was proportionate given the severity of the conduct and that it was a sufficient period of time to enable Mr Watkinson to:

- demonstrate full insight into his conduct;



- take professional steps to address the underlying reasons for his conduct in order to reduce the likelihood of recurrence;
- acknowledge the impact on those affected by his conduct; and
- be in a position to provide evidence of this to a set aside panel.

## **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 Christian Watkinson should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of ten years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Watkinson 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Watkinson involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a teacher acting in a way that was inappropriate, reckless, dishonest, and lacking in integrity.

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 Watkinson, 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 makes the following observation:

“As a result of Mr Watkinson’s conduct, pupils were exposed to adult material during lessons. As such, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public.”

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 Watkinson did not provide any evidence for the panel to consider nor did he engage in the School’s disciplinary process. Therefore, there was no evidence of mitigation, insight or remorse before the panel. The panel noted that Mr Watkinson had informed the Presenting Officer that he has [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. The panel accepted that this could have affected Mr Watkinson’s engagement with the proceedings but was not provided with any medical evidence to this effect. The panel acknowledged that Mr Watkinson had admitted to the allegations which demonstrated a level of acceptance of wrongdoing. Beyond this, there was no evidence of mitigation, insight or remorse before the panel. In particular, there was no evidence of any appreciation of the impact Mr Watkinson’s conduct may have had on pupils.”

In my judgement, this lack of evidence that Mr Watkinson has developed full insight into and remorse for his actions 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 provides this observation:

“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 panel found that Mr Watkinson’s conduct fell far short of this standard. His conduct had resulted in pupils viewing inappropriate adult content on his laptop during lessons which was wholly unacceptable and contrary to the expectations of parents and the general public.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding in this case of a teacher accessing online adult content in lesson time and the negative impact that such a finding may 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 Watkinson himself. The panel notes that:

“There was no evidence before the panel regarding Mr Watkinson’s ability as an educator. There was therefore no evidence that he demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Watkinson from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of his contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of evidence of insight or remorse and the consequent risk of repetition and harm to pupils in the future. I have also placed weight on the serious nature of the misconduct found and the potential injury to the standing of the profession done by Mr Watkinson’s behaviour.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Watkinson 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, 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 ten-year review period.

I have considered the panel's concluding comments:

"The panel carefully considered what would be an appropriate review period. The panel was mindful of the factors outlined above and the serious nature of Mr Watkinson's conduct. However, it was equally mindful of the need to weigh the public interest against the interests of Mr Watkinson and propose a proportionate review period which was not punitive in nature.

Having done so, the panel decided it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for a prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period of ten years. The panel was of the view that this was proportionate given the severity of the conduct and that it was a sufficient period of time to enable Mr Watkinson to:

- demonstrate full insight into his conduct;
- take professional steps to address the underlying reasons for his conduct in order to reduce the likelihood of recurrence;
- acknowledge the impact on those affected by his conduct; and
- be in a position to provide evidence of this to a set aside panel."

I have considered whether allowing a ten-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. In this case, factors mean that allowing a ten-year review period is a sufficient and proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are: the serious nature of the misconduct found, which included accessing adult content during lesson time and recklessly exposing pupils to that content; the dishonesty and lack of integrity demonstrated by Mr Watkinson in carrying out this behaviour; and the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse and the associated intolerable risk of repetition and future harm to pupils.

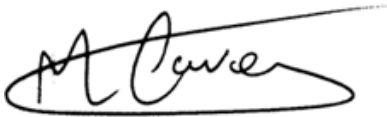
I consider therefore that a ten-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

**This means that Mr Christian Watkinson 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 30 August 2035, ten 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 Watkinson remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Watkinson 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: 21 August 2025**

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