



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Kathryn Matthews: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

September 2025

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

Teacher: Ms Kathryn Matthews

Teacher ref number: 1964720

Teacher date of birth: 24 April 1982

TRA reference: 23301

Date of determination: 19 September 2025

Former employer: The Westleigh School, Wigan

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 18 to 19 September 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Kathryn Matthews.

The panel members were Mrs Joanne Arscott (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Andrew Hearn (lay panellist) and Mrs Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr James Corrish of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr James Lloyd of counsel instructed by Brabners LLP solicitors.

Ms Matthews was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of hearing dated 8 May 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Matthews was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a Teacher at The Westleigh School:

1. On 28 November 2023, she was teaching a class when she engaged in conversations with her pupils that were inappropriate and/ or of a sexual nature.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section A: Anonymised pupil list – pages 3 to 4

Section B: Notice of hearing and proof of service – pages 5 to 32

Section C: TRA witness statements – pages 33 to 94

Section D: TRA documents – pages 95 to 131

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”).

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by the presenting officer:

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Ms Matthews had been employed at The Westleigh School (“the School”) since 1 September 2023 as a teacher of English.

On 28 November 2023, during an English lesson it is alleged that Ms Matthews engaged in conversations with her students, which were inappropriate and/or of a sexual nature.

On 29 November 2023, details were reported by two students to a pastoral member of staff of inappropriate conversations with Ms Matthews and their statements were taken. Person A, [REDACTED], spoke with Ms Matthews about the lesson in question and Ms Matthews later provided him with an account of the lesson via email.

On 30 November 2023, Ms Matthews was suspended.

The School commenced an investigation, appointing Witness B, [REDACTED], as the investigating officer. Interviews were conducted with the two students who had given the information, as well as further interviews with the remaining students who were present during the lesson on 28 November 2023. The investigation concluded on 22 December 2023.

Ms Matthews was dismissed with effect from 16 February 2024.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 1 March 2024.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. On 28 November 2023, you were teaching a class when you engaged in conversations with your pupils that were inappropriate and/ or of a sexual nature.**

Although Ms Matthews had not engaged with the TRA process, the panel noted that she had not admitted the allegation and the panel proceeded on the basis that she denied the allegation.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A, who is employed [REDACTED] at the School.

Witness A set out details of a discussion which she had whilst walking with Pupils A and G during lesson time. Witness A could not recall where they had been going on the precise date of this discussion but noted that she had been informed by the School that

she reported it to them on 29 November 2023. Witness A indicated that these pupils had volunteered information regarding what had occurred during their English lesson with Ms Matthews the previous day.

Witness A informed the panel that one pupil said that Ms Matthews had told the class about someone who stuck a dildo with a suction cup on the end of it on to the back of his bedroom door. Witness A then said she was told Ms Matthews said that this “*lad*” had backed up on to the dildo, and his grandmother had then entered the bedroom causing the door to fly open which resulted in him “*bleeding everywhere*” and “*being a big mess*”.

Witness A informed the panel that one pupil had said to her that Ms Matthews had told the class that one of the boys in the year group was the [REDACTED].

Witness A also informed the panel that the pupils had told her that they had conversations like that with Ms Matthews regularly and that she was “*more like a friend than a teacher*”. Witness A informed the panel that she was clear that the pupils were not, by their actions, intending to report Ms Matthews but, rather, were discussing events which they had found amusing. Witness A indicated that, when it became clear that she was taking the matters which they were outlining seriously and was asking them questions about the facts, their demeanour changed and they indicated that they did not want to get Ms Matthews into trouble.

Witness A informed the panel that she immediately went to her line manager, who was the [REDACTED], Person B, to raise her concerns as she believed that the conversations were inappropriate. Person B informed her that he would escalate the matters further to the right people as needed and that an investigation would be started. Witness A informed the panel that she had provided to Person B a two-page written note of what had occurred but that she had not seen it since she provided it to Person B, and she understood that that piece of evidence had since been misplaced.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B who conducted the School’s investigation into the allegations surrounding Ms Matthews’ conduct.

Witness B described being instructed on 29 November 2023 by the [REDACTED], Person A, to undertake an investigation into the incidents reported by Witness A in relation to Ms Matthews having had inappropriate conversations during her English class.

Witness B described how she had initially spoken to the two students whom Witness A had originally spoken to earlier that day. She informed the panel that she then spoke to four further students the following day, 30 November 2023, in order to seek to validate the information which she had been given. Witness B informed the panel that she sought to speak to students, in particular, who were in different parts of the classroom and to students who were not in the same friendship group as the individuals who recently

disclosed the information which forms the allegation. The panel were referred to a classroom room plan which they considered.

Witness B ultimately spoke to all 20 students who had been in that class on 28 November 2023 as part of her investigations.

Witness B also described that she put the evidence she gathered to Ms Matthews and asked her questions.

The panel considered the written note of Witness B which she informed the panel she wrote on 29 November 2023 in an interview with Pupil G. The note was signed by Pupil G. The panel understood that the contents of this statement were [REDACTED] but that it had already decided to admit a copy of this note further to the [REDACTED] of the presenting officer. The panel also noted that it would have the opportunity to ask Witness B questions about this document.

The panel noted that Witness B had recorded that Pupil G had said that *“Miss was completing the register at the front of the classroom. I was sitting in my seat. A student, I don’t know who, asked miss something about orgasms and how many girls can have. Miss answered the question to the whole class “girls can have 8 orgasms but boys only have 1 which is up their bum.” Student D asked “why do people use vibrators.” Miss replied “when girls use vibrators it feels nice.” The boys then started to guess where. Student J asked “is it the clitoris” and miss agreed. (Student G stated during the statement dictation that one of her friend’s mums had bought them a vibrator and she was only 14). Miss then put the silent starter on – A Christmas Carol. The boys were still carrying on the conversation with Miss so she told them a story (miss always tells us stories about what she has done etc, she has told us that she has stabbed someone in the hand before etc). Story: She doesn’t personally know this person but they had a suction cup dildo he stuck it on his bathroom door put his music on blasting and was easing the dildo into his bum. He didn’t hear grandma come home and she opened the door and he panicked and the dildo went up his bum making him bleed and pass out. She was stood at the front of the class telling the whole class. 2 students (the quiet ones) trying to get on with work. We were all laughing at the story. Miss then explained that gay men were gay because they only have orgasms up their bum. Student D was questioning miss about does it feel good to be a lesbian. Student J made a gesture about how lesbian sex can feel good. Miss then said that isn’t how they have sex she showed by putting two fingers together. Student J and Miss carried on talking about lesbians. Miss then said we had to do our work. The conversation was about 25 minutes long”.*

Witness B informed the panel that when she then spoke to Pupil A they agreed with Pupil G’s statement.

The panel carefully considered the signed written evidence of Pupils A, B, C, D, F, G, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U and V which it had agreed to [REDACTED].

The panel noted that it had before it copies of the various handwritten statements from these pupils, mostly as signed (although the signatures were redacted in the versions it had to preserve anonymity) as well as typed up versions of the same.

The panel carefully considered the weight to be applied to the evidence in these statements. The panel was conscious that, even though it had been informed by the investigating officer that the statements had been taken individually from the pupils, in their own hand, whilst present in her office (and that the pupils had been cautioned not to discuss the information with other pupils), there was a clear risk that the facts had been discussed between the pupils. The panel also noted that Ms Matthews had asserted that the pupils had colluded against her.

The panel noted that the evidence of both the live witnesses was that Ms Matthews was well liked by her class and that those witnesses thought it unlikely that any pupils would have colluded to seek to concoct the matters which form the heart of the allegation and these witnesses had no basis to suspect that this was the case.

The panel considered the reasons asserted for the pupils' non-attendance at the hearing [REDACTED].

Having carefully considered all relevant matters and the legal advice which it had been given, the panel determined that it was appropriate to give significant weight to Witness B's note of 29 November 2023 as well as the witness statements of pupils A, B, C, D, F and G which had been taken on 30 November 2023, two days after the events which form the basis of the allegation and one day after those matters had been reported to the School. They proceeded to treat this evidence with caution and sought to test it at all opportunities.

The panel also decided that the evidence of other pupils would be treated with very little weight, given what the panel considered to be the substantially increased risks of discussion between the pupils and contamination of the evidence in respect of those statements given that they had been taken two to three weeks later. In addition, this lapse of time would inevitably have affected the pupils' recollection of events.

The panel did note though that the witness statements to which it had accorded little weight were consistent with the earlier statements and did not appear to raise any obvious or new basis to call into question the validity or evidential value of those earlier statements.

The panel noted that the evidence of pupils A and G was consistent with the original disclosures made to Witness A and that, whilst there was some disparity in relation to the exact words used, the pupils' assertions in relation to the matters with which the panel was concerned were consistent as between those six pupils.

In relation to the witness statements of the pupils the panel noted, in particular, that:

1. Pupil A's evidence was that *"Miss Matthews said the girls have eight different spots where girls get orgasm and then she told us about some guy stuck a dildo on his door had his music full blasting and was easing it in n out of his bum and his grandma opened door it went straight up his arse was bleeding everywhere then his grandma passed"*. Pupil A also wrote on 30 November 2023 *"I was late to the lesson when I went in she was talking to the whole class about 8 different orgasms. The miss said only get two orgasms up the bum and whilst making babies and she said I've got a story to tell you she said some guy stuck a suction cup dildo on his door was easing it in his arse his grandma opened the it went right up his arse his grandma fainted cuz of the blood then someone asked he if she'd ever had it up the poop shoot or done it to anyone she bright red and said that's for me to know. [REDACTED]"*.
2. Pupil B's evidence dated 30 November 2023 was that on Tuesday period 2 with Ms Matthews *"At the begin of the lesson, the teacher tell us an incident happened in this school is about [REDACTED]. He is jerk out, at the same time a girl go through the road and see what the boys doing and my classmate ask what the name of this boy but the teacher doesn't tell them and this is all of the incident."*
3. Pupil C's evidence dated 30 November 2023 was that *"We was in English and [...] something started a convo about sex and all that I don't know who started the convo but it started and we was talking for about half an hour and I remember some part of the convos about girls n boys g spots of how girls is in their private part and boys is up their bum and we were taking the mick saying can't imagine going home and touching your bum n that n Student D asked what boys are gonna do that aren't gay n miss said gay people or people who like n Student D said she would never do it to a boy if they asked her n miss said what if it was a really fit boy n Student D said I'd leave him n I said what if it was [[REDACTED]] n she was like I'd do it straight away"*
4. Pupil D's evidence dated 30 November 2023 was that on Tuesday with *"everyone in the class"* involved *"[Pupil J] said [Pupil Q] has a suction cup at the back of his wall and bums it then the girls like [Pupil A] and [Pupil G] asked miss has she had it up the bum and stuff then we was all on about lesbians like someone asked if they use a strap on and miss was saying about it depends where you like pleasure and then was on about this boy was using a strap on and his grandma walked in and that boys orgasm is best up the bum that's why boys are gay that's all I can remember oh and the boys like [Pupil C] and [Pupil J] were taking mick out of [Pupil Q]."*
5. Pupil F's evidence of 30 November 2023 was that on Tuesday J1 P1 *"most of the class including the teacher started talking about sexual things for about 10 minutes and the teacher was explaining things about it and telling stories (sexual) of what she had heard and she was telling the whole class about it. Miss Matthews"*

was talking about masturbation the whole class and just explaining pornography.” and that “I can’t remember who but somebody started talking about masturbation and then miss started to tell a story where a man injured himself when masturbating but most of the class was engaging in the conversation. Miss was also talking about g spots in males and females”

5. Pupil G’s further evidence was that *“Basically started by someone asking about orgasms and how many you can have n where, someone else have you had it up the bum she sed can’t tell you that n then someone sed somet about a vibrator and she sed it’s meant to feel good n explained it n then told us all that someone once stuck a dildo on his bathroom door with music blasting, his grandma came home swung the door open n she sed his arse was bleeding and whole dildo was up his arse and his grandma was past out on the floor”*

The panel considered Ms Matthews’ email to Person A dated 29 November 2023, in which she outlined that, throughout the lesson on 28 November, there were comments in relation to [REDACTED], which had been made in the past and had been reported by her, including on CPOMS on, she believed, 17 November 2023. Ms Matthews described in that e-mail that she had shut the comment down and asked the class to focus. Ms Matthews also described receiving a *“have you ever”* question which she refused to answer. Ms Matthews stated that she did not know whether there was any other inappropriate conversation as the class were *“very chatting and disruptive on this particular day”*.

The panel noted that no witness statement or response of any nature had been provided by Ms Matthews to the allegation put to her by the TRA. Especially noting her absence from the hearing, and therefore her lack of opportunity to put forward evidence and the panel’s lack of opportunity to ask her questions, the panel carefully considered the documents available to it in the context of the limited information it had about Ms Matthews’ position.

Although it was [REDACTED], the panel considered that it was in the interests of justice and Ms Matthews for the parties to admit and consider the minutes of the investigation meeting of 12 December 2023 in which Ms Matthews had been interviewed by Witness B.

The panel noted in particular that it appeared that the content of this document had been approved by Ms Matthews by her e-mail to Person C of 19 December 2024 and therefore the panel placed considerable weight on it when considering Ms Matthew’s response to the matters alleged.

In this meeting, Ms Matthews explained that the class had been studying “A Christmas Carol” in the lesson of 28 November 2023. Ms Matthews’ evidence in the investigation was that Pupil A, Pupil P, Pupil S, and Pupil N were speaking to one another and asked

her a *“have you ever”* question of a sexual nature which she refused to answer but she said they had asked no other personal questions. Ms Matthews said she could not remember what had been said but that she did not report it and did not know what to safeguard as if she were to safeguard everything then she would be safeguarding them every lesson.

Ms Matthews denied that students had asked her about orgasms but recalled Pupil J had made a comment in another lesson a few weeks prior about a science teacher having told them about the male g spot in the bottom. She explained she had not engaged with that comment.

Ms Matthews denied that she had told a story involving a young person and a sex toy stating that maybe the pupils had seen it on TikTok and that the lesson was on “A Christmas Carol” and nothing else.

Ms Matthews explained that students are on their phones constantly but this story had not *“come out of her mouth”*.

Ms Matthews denied that references were made to how boys achieve orgasm during the lesson and denied that she had discussed the topic of gay sex during the lesson.

Ms Matthews explained that comments made to [REDACTED] were *“an ongoing attack”* and that he was bullied every lesson. Ms Matthews confirmed that she had reported that previously including via CPOMS.

Ms Matthews said she did not report the comment raised in the lesson of 28 November 2023 and that she had raised an *“on call”* on three separate occasions and nobody had turned up.

Ms Matthews stated that the students in the class would collude to get someone in trouble and that ‘[REDACTED]’ had also struggled with the group the previous year. She explained that the students always stick together and were *“horrific”* when she first started but were now slightly nicer and she thought that she was making headway.

Ms Matthews explained that she did not know how to manage the behaviour of some students and disclosed that she was a [REDACTED] who would not even feel comfortable having such conversations with her own children.

Ms Matthews expressed confusion over the alleged incident and referenced a group of students that she said often targeted others and colluded to ensure their stories held up. Pupil A, Pupil G, Pupil N, Pupil S, Pupil Q, Pupil J, Pupil C, Pupil D and Pupil U were mentioned specifically. Ms Matthews stated that the only thing she could think of as to why students would make this up was her defence of Pupil F.

The panel carefully balanced up all the evidence before it and considered the facts as they had been set out. The panel carefully considered Ms Matthews' position that the matters contained within the allegation were manufactured and that the class had acted in collusion against her, including potentially because she came to the defence of Pupil F, and that, necessarily therefore, the accounts of all the students were concocted.

The panel noted that extensive evidence had been gathered by the School which the panel had considered.

The panel noted that the evidence was that Ms Matthews was liked by the students and that they enjoyed her classes and that the students had not sought to raise these matters as a complaint but had rather raised them as akin to a joke whilst walking down a corridor with a junior member of staff.

The panel noted that the evidence of the six students (pupils A, B, C, D, F and G) was basically consistent with the evidence of each other as well as being consistent with the later evidence of the balance of the students.

The panel noted that the evidence of those six students had been taken close to contemporaneously to the events with evidence from Pupils A & G gathered on the day the matter was raised to the School and evidence from the other the students the day after.

The panel noted that the evidence of the live witnesses as to the initial reports they had received was consistent with the evidence given by those six students.

Though the panel carefully considered the risk of contamination of the evidence from discussions between the pupils and acknowledged that there was always a risk of schoolchildren discussing matters between themselves, the panel noted that these statements had been written by the pupils in the deputy headteacher's office, by themselves, and that the importance and confidentiality of their submissions had been emphasised to them. The panel found no evidence of collusion.

The panel found that Ms Matthews had engaged in conversations with pupils discussing subjects including anal sex, gay sex, a story about a boy who was injured when using a sex toy, the use of dildos and female and male orgasms and g spots and masturbation in an English lesson with her [REDACTED] class on 28 November 2023.

The panel considered the facts which it had found proven and was satisfied that these statements were, individually and collectively, inappropriate and of a sexual nature.

The panel then found that the TRA had proved the allegation to the standard of the balance of probabilities which it was required to reach.

The panel found allegation 1 proven.

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

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of that proved allegation 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 Ms Matthews, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Matthews was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Matthews, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”). The panel considered that Ms Matthews was in breach of the following provisions: 4, 7 and 53.

The panel also considered whether Ms Matthews’ 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 the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

The panel noted that it had found that Ms Matthews had been in serious breach of statutory guidance including the Teachers' Standards.

The panel noted also that they had found that Ms Matthews had openly discussed with the pupils in front of the whole class, in an English lesson, sexually explicit information including regarding matters of anal sex, male and female g spots and masturbation and had told a story of a boy who had been injured whilst engaging in anal masturbation.

The panel considered these actions to be extremely serious and, on any analysis, entirely inappropriate for a teacher teaching [REDACTED] children in a professional environment. The panel found that the manner and tone of these conversations between a teacher and pupils would have been seriously inappropriate in any lesson, including one focused on sex education.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Matthews amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Ms Matthews was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Ms Matthews' 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.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Ms Matthews' 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 Ms Matthews was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

The panel considered that parents and the public would be appalled that such matters were being openly discussed by a teacher in this manner and that it could have a serious influence on children's views and actions. The panel noted that it had found Ms Matthews had had seriously inappropriate conversations with pupils in an English lesson which she should not have been having in any lesson under any circumstances.

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Ms Matthews' 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/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, 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 Ms Matthews which involved engaging in inappropriate conversations with pupils, including conversations that were of a sexual nature, which the panel had found to constitute sexual communication with a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Matthews 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 Ms Matthews 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 Ms Matthews in the profession.

The panel had no evidence of Ms Matthews' ability as an educator.

The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Ms Matthews in the profession, since her 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.

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 Ms Matthews.

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;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- 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);
- violation of the rights of pupils;

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 Ms Matthews' actions were clearly deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Ms Matthews was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

The panel had no evidence that Ms Matthews demonstrated exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel had no evidence as to whether or not the incident was out of character.

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 Ms Matthews 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 Ms Matthews. The panel's finding that Ms Matthews had engaged in inappropriate conversations with pupils including those of a sexual nature, as well as her various breaches of the Teachers' Standards and KCSIE, and her failure to engage in this TRA process or demonstrate any level of insight, remorse or intention to work to remedy her behaviour 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.

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.

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

The panel noted that these lists were not intended to be exhaustive and panels should consider each case on its individual merits taking into account all the circumstances involved.

The panel noted that none of the characteristics in the advice had been engaged. The panel consider that its findings, whilst very serious, fell at the less serious end of the scale of unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel noted that this was the first complaint raised against Ms Matthews at the School and that she had no previous disciplinary record with the TRA. Though not, to any degree, finding an excuse for her actions, the panel noted that Ms Matthews had been a relatively recently qualified teacher when these events occurred and had been dealing with a class which, it appeared from the evidence was, on any basis, challenging.

The panel noted that Ms Matthews' behaviour was limited to a certain category of misconduct and that they did not find evidence that her behaviour had malign intent; rather she had engaged in activities which were, very clearly, extremely misjudged and inappropriate.

Though troubled by Ms Matthews' failure to engage with the process, and failure to demonstrate insight or remorse, the panel was of the view that the behaviour of which it had found her culpable was, whilst very serious, in principle capable of being addressed by someone who took the decision to learn and to take steps to rectify their behaviours and their approach to teaching.

The panel decided therefore 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 provision for a 2 year 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 the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Kathryn Matthews should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Matthews is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Matthews, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel finds that the conduct of Ms Matthews fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding which involved engaging in inappropriate conversations with pupils, including conversations that were of a sexual nature.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Ms Matthews 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, "In light of the panel's findings against Ms Matthews which involved engaging in inappropriate conversations with pupils, including conversations that were of a sexual nature, which the panel had found to constitute sexual communication with a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of 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 the panel sets out as follows, "The panel's finding that Ms Matthews had engaged in inappropriate conversations with pupils including those of a sexual nature, as well as her various breaches of the Teachers' Standards and KCSIE, and her failure to engage in this TRA process or demonstrate any level of insight, remorse or intention to work to remedy her behaviour were significant factors in forming that opinion." In my judgement, the lack of 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 Ms Matthews were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct 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 Ms Matthews herself and the panel comment “The panel had no evidence of Ms Matthews’ ability as an educator.”

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Matthews from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her 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:

“The panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant.”

“Ms Matthews had openly discussed with the pupils in front of the whole class, in an English lesson, sexually explicit information including regarding matters of anal sex, male and female g spots and masturbation and had told a story of a boy who had been injured whilst engaging in anal masturbation.”

“The panel considered these actions to be extremely serious and, on any analysis, entirely inappropriate for a teacher teaching [REDACTED] children in a professional environment.”

I have also given considerable weight to the following “The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Ms Matthews.”

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

decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by remorse 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 a 2 year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments "The panel noted that this was the first complaint raised against Ms Matthews at the School and that she had no previous disciplinary record with the TRA. Though not, to any degree, finding an excuse for her actions, the panel noted that Ms Matthews had been a relatively recently qualified teacher when these events occurred and had been dealing with a class which, it appeared from the evidence was, on any basis, challenging."

The panel also said, "Though troubled by Ms Matthews' failure to engage with the process, and failure to demonstrate insight or remorse, the panel was of the view that the behaviour of which it had found her culpable was, whilst very serious, in principle capable of being addressed by someone who took the decision to learn and to take steps to rectify their behaviours and their approach to teaching."

In this case I agree with the panel and I have decided that a 2 year review period is proportionate and in the public interest.

This means that Ms Kathryn Matthews is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 01 October 2027, 2 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Matthews remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Ms Matthews has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date she 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: 25 September 2025

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