



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Joshua Pope: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

October 2025

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

Teacher: Mr Joshua Pope

Teacher ref number: 2048643

Teacher date of birth: 8 December 1997

TRA reference: 21623

Date of determination: 24 October 2025

Former employer: Saltash Community School, Cornwall

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened virtually on 24 October 2025, to consider the case of Mr Joshua Pope.

The panel members were Ms Geraldine Baird (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Brendan Stones (teacher panellist) and Mrs Jane Brothwood (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Rachel Phillips of Blake Morgan 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 Pope that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Pope provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, or Mr Pope.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 4 August 2025.

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

He had been convicted at any time, of the following relevant offences:

- 1. On 11 June 2024, he was convicted at Plymouth Crown Court for 3 counts of Making Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-photograph of Children contrary to the Protection of Children Act 1978 s.1 (a).**

Mr Pope admitted the facts of the allegations and that the offences amounted to a conviction for a relevant offence.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology – page 4

Section 2: Notice of Meeting and Response – pages 6 to 16

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts and Presenting Officer Representations – pages 22 to 27

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 29 to 57

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 59 to 60

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

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Pope on 10 July 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

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

The panel proceeded to consider the case carefully, having read all of the documents, and reached a decision. It accepted the legal advice provided.

Mr Pope was previously employed as a class teacher at Saltash Community School ("the school"). He was employed from 1 September 2022 to 4 May 2023.

On 8 March 2023, Mr Pope was arrested by Devon and Cornwall Police ("the Police") at his home address and his personal devices were seized for examination. Mr Pope's arrest followed the Police receiving several referrals from the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children in relation to activity of storing and uploading indecent images of children to a cloud-based system, linked to Mr Pope.

Mr Pope was referred to the TRA on 14 March 2023.

Mr Pope's employment came to an end on 4 May 2023.

On 11 June 2024, Mr Pope was convicted of three counts of making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs contrary to the Protection of Children Act 1978. He was sentenced in the Crown Court at Plymouth on 31 July 2024.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

You have been convicted at any time, of the following relevant offences:

- 1. On 11 June 2024, you were convicted at Plymouth Crown Court for 3 counts of Making Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-photograph of Children contrary to the Protection of Children Act 1978 s.1 (a).**

The panel was presented with a certificate of conviction from Plymouth Crown Court (“the Court”), confirming that Mr Pope was convicted on 11 June 2024 of the following offences:

- Making indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child (277 Category A images).
- Making indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child (217 Category B images); and
- Making indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child (296 Category C images)

The certificate also confirmed the sentence imposed by the Court on 31 July 2024 was an effective total of eight months imprisonment suspended for two years with a rehabilitation activity requirement of 15 days, participation in an accredited sex offender programme and 100 hours of unpaid work. He was also made the subject of a sexual harm prevention order for 10 years.

The panel was presented with the sentencing remarks of the presiding judge sitting at Court on 31 July 2024, summarising the offence and the reasons for the sentence imposed.

The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of the commission of the offence by Mr Pope.

Accordingly, the panel found allegation 1 proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found that Mr Pope was convicted of the alleged offences, the panel went on to consider whether the convictions were for relevant offences.

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Pope in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, he was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position

- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of other
- 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.

In addition, the panel noted that, pursuant to the Advice it is likely that:

- A conviction for any offence that led to a term of imprisonment, including any suspended sentence will be considered "a relevant offence".
- A conviction for any offence that relates to, or involves, any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting any such activity, including one off incidents.

The panel considered that the nature of the alleged conduct relates directly to the conduct expected of those within the teaching profession and the standards which they are expected to uphold. The panel determined that Mr Pope's actions were relevant to his teaching role, working with children and working in an education setting.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Pope's behaviour in committing these offences would undoubtedly affect public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. His conduct ran counter to what should be at the very core of the practice of a teacher with a duty of care towards children. As the Court recognised when imposing the sentence, Mr Pope has been "*a party to the sexual abuse of children by creating the demand which leads to these children being abused. It causes them harm, not only physical for screamingly obvious reasons, but also psychological.*"

Mr Pope's behaviour ultimately led to a term of imprisonment (albeit it was suspended), which demonstrated the public and child protection issues raised by his actions together with the other aspects of the sentence imposed.

The panel did not consider there to be any relevant mitigating circumstances in relation to the commission of these offences.

For all these reasons, the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was directly relevant to Mr Pope's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

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

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

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of making indecent photographs of children and the category of such photographs.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Pope 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 Pope was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In the absence of any evidence that he ought to be regarded as an exceptional teacher or that he made a significant contribution to the teaching profession, the panel concluded there was not a strong public interest consideration in retaining him in the profession.

Notwithstanding 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 Pope.

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Pope. 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 are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards.
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures.
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk.
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing, or publishing any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents.

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

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

- Mr Pope made full admissions to the allegation against him and has engaged with the process.
- Mr Pope pleaded guilty to the offences at an early stage for which he was given credit in sentencing.

Weighed against this, the aggravating features in this case included that:

- Mr Pope's actions were deliberate, repeated and spanned a prolonged period. The panel noted within the police report it states Mr Pope had been accessing indecent images of children for a period of approximately two years. He accessed almost 800 images within this period.
- There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Pope was acting under duress.

- Mr Pope's actions amounted to a clear breach of the Teachers' Standards and raised serious public and child protection concerns.
- Mr Pope has been convicted of and sentenced for serious offences involving children.
- Mr Pope is subject to a sexual harm prevention order for 10 years.

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 was sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Pope of prohibition.

Mr Pope's actions were fundamentally incompatible with his being a teacher. This was conduct of the most serious nature. The nature and gravity of these offences was a matter of significant concern. Accordingly, there were particularly strong public interest considerations in this case in terms of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protecting the public, public confidence in the teaching profession and the declaring of proper standards of conduct in this case.

The panel was therefore of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Pope.

Additionally, when balancing the aggravating and mitigating circumstances present in this case, its overall seriousness called for a higher regulatory sanction to protect the wider public interest factors.

Accordingly, it 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 behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

These behaviours include any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents.

In this case, Mr Pope had engaged in making indecent images of children, a significant number of which were within the most serious category. The panel considered that this behaviour was on par with the specific circumstances listed in the Advice that would weigh against a review period.

Furthermore, the panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Pope had shown any insight or remorse as to his actions and subsequent convictions.

In light of this and the seriousness of the offences, the panel decided its findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate. The public interest considerations that Mr Pope's conviction give rise to were such that this was necessary and proportionate.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Pope is in breach of the following 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
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of other

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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a conviction for making indecent images of children.

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

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of making indecent photographs of children and the category of such photographs." 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:

"Mr Pope made full admissions to the allegation against him and has engaged with the process.

Mr Pope pleaded guilty to the offences at an early stage for which he was given credit in sentencing."

I have therefore given this element some 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 also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Pope's behaviour in committing these offences would undoubtedly affect public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the influence that teachers may have on pupils,

parents and others in the community. His conduct ran counter to what should be at the very core of the practice of a teacher with a duty of care towards children. As the Court recognised when imposing the sentence, Mr Pope has been *“a party to the sexual abuse of children by creating the demand which leads to these children being abused. It causes them harm, not only physical for screamingly obvious reasons, but also psychological.”* I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for making indecent images of children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Pope himself and the panel comment “In the absence of any evidence that he ought to be regarded as an exceptional teacher or that he made a significant contribution to the teaching profession, the panel concluded there was not a strong public interest consideration in retaining him in the profession.” The panel also said, “Notwithstanding 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 Pope.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Pope 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 “Mr Pope’s actions were deliberate, repeated and spanned a prolonged period. The panel noted within the police report it states Mr Pope had been accessing indecent images of children for a period of approximately two years. He accessed almost 800 images within this period.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that “Mr Pope’s actions were fundamentally incompatible with his being a teacher. This was conduct of the most serious nature. The nature and gravity of these offences was a matter of significant concern. Accordingly, there were particularly strong public interest considerations in this case in terms of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protecting the public, public

confidence in the teaching profession and the declaring of proper standards of conduct in this case.”

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

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

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

I have considered the panel’s comments “In this case, Mr Pope had engaged in making indecent images of children, a significant number of which were within the most serious category. The panel considered that this behaviour was on par with the specific circumstances listed in the Advice that would weigh against a review period.”

The panel has also said “Furthermore, the panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Pope had shown any insight or remorse as to his actions and subsequent convictions.”

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

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

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

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

Mr Joshua Pope has a right of appeal to the King’s Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SABuxcey', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 27 October 2025

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