



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Christopher Pickup: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**November 2025**

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Christopher Pickup
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	6406949
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	14 April 1946
<b>TRA reference:</b>	21390
<b>Date of determination:</b>	12 November 2025
<b>Former employer:</b>	St Martin's Church of England School, Fitton Hill, Oldham ("St Martin's") and St Paul's Church of England School, Royton, Oldham ("St Paul's")

## Introduction

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 12 November 2025, by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Christopher Pickup.

The panel members were Mr Nick Watkiss (teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Alexandra Burton (lay panellist) and Ms Gill Lyon (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Clare Strickland of Blake Morgan solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Zahra Evans of Capsticks solicitors.

Mr Pickup 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 27 August 2025.

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

1. On 10 August 2022, at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court, he was convicted of approximately 37 counts of indecent assault on a boy under the age of 14 years.

Mr Pickup made no formal admission to the facts alleged or the allegation that he has been convicted of a relevant offence.

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

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

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 5 to 23

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 24 to 98

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 99 to 101

In addition, the panel had received:

- Proceeding in absence bundle – 49 pages

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the Procedures.

### **Witnesses**

The panel did not hear any oral evidence.

## Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

Mr Pickup was employed as a teacher at St Martin's in the early 1970s, and at St Paul's as head teacher in the late 1970s/early 1980s. In August 2019, an allegation of historic sexual abuse was made against him by one of his former pupils, who alleged that Mr Pickup had sexually assaulted him on a number of occasions when the former pupil was 8 or 9 years old.

A number of other former pupils came forward and made similar allegations. The allegations involved sexual touching of the boys' genitalia over their clothing. This generally took place in the presence of other boys, and on school premises or during school trips. On occasion, the sexual touching took place while Mr Pickup was administering corporal punishment. All of the victims were of a similar age when the assaults took place.

Mr Pickup was interviewed by the police and denied all allegations. He was charged with multiple offences of indecent assault of boys under the age of 14 years. He pleaded not guilty. Following a trial, he was convicted on 10 August 2022, and sentenced to a total of 10 years' imprisonment, and ordered to register as a sex offender indefinitely.

## 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 10 August 2022, at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court, you were convicted of approximately 37 counts of indecent assault on a boy under the age of 14 years.**

This allegation was proved by the certificate of conviction dated 5 November 2024. Further evidence before the panel confirmed that in March 2023, Mr Pickup accepted that he had been convicted but continued to maintain his innocence of the offences.

In accordance with the TRA's publication "Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers" (referred to as "the Advice"), the panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction. There were no exceptional circumstances suggesting that a different approach was required.

## Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proven allegation amounted to a conviction for a relevant offence.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the Advice.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Pickup's conduct would have been in breach of the following standards, had it been committed while they were in place:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- 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 offences were committed by Mr Pickup prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards, therefore the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of teaching standards at that time. The panel was clear that the conduct committed by Mr Pickup would have been wholly unacceptable at the time and amounted to a clear and serious breach of the teacher / pupil boundary and the need to keep children safe.

The panel noted that Mr Pickup's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. Mr Pickup sexually assaulted multiple pupils at two different schools, on school premises and/or during school activities, including while he was teaching them. His offences were a gross breach of trust, particularly given he occupied a position as headteacher at St Paul's.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offences would have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils. The panel received evidence of the adverse impact that Mr Pickup's offending had on the well-being of his victims.

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

The panel noted that Mr Pickup's behaviour ultimately led to a long sentence of imprisonment and him being included on the sex offenders register, which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed.

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

This was a case concerning an offence involving sexual activity, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

Taking all of these factors into account, the panel was satisfied that the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Pickup's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that these convictions were 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, 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 finding that Mr Pickup was convicted of serious sexual offences against multiple pupils in his care and placed on the sex offenders register indefinitely.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Pickup were not treated

with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. It was a gross breach of trust that caused significant and long-term harm to pupils and resulted in a lengthy prison sentence that Mr Pickup is still serving.

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 Pickup was far 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 Pickup in the profession. The panel concluded there was no such public interest. He ceased to teach over 40 years ago, and there was no evidence that he had any positive contribution to make to teaching.

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. A teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a threat to the public interest.

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Pickup.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence;
- 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);
- sexual misconduct;
- violation of the rights of pupils;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;

Even though 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 it had the only mitigating factor was the absence of any other findings against Mr Pickup. However, given his offending spanned such a long period of time, and multiple pupils at two schools, this provided very little mitigation.

Otherwise, it was clear that Mr Pickup's actions were deliberate and he was not acting under duress. There was no evidence of insight or remorse for his actions.

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. The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations significantly outweighed the interests of Mr Pickup, given the seriousness and nature of his offending. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

The panel was satisfied that these factors were present in this case, and agreed that on the facts of this case, they indicated that there should be no review period.

Further, there was no evidence of insight or remediation, and even had there been, the panel considered that public confidence requires that offences of such seriousness result in permanent exclusion from the teaching profession.

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

## Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found the allegation 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 Christopher Pickup should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Pickup conduct would have been in breach of the following standards, had it been committed while they were in place:

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a conviction for serious sexual offences involving pupils.

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 Pickup, 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 finding that Mr Pickup was convicted of serious sexual offences against multiple pupils in his care and placed on the sex offenders register indefinitely.”

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, “it was clear that Mr Pickup’s actions were deliberate and he was not acting under duress. There was no evidence of insight or remorse for his actions.” In my judgement, the lack of evidence 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 Mr Pickup’s behaviour in committing the offences would affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of serious sexual offences involving children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Pickup himself and the panel comment “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 Pickup in the profession. The panel concluded there was no such public interest. He ceased to teach over 40 years ago, and there was no evidence that he had any positive contribution to make to teaching.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the following comments “The panel noted that Mr Pickup’s actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. Mr Pickup sexually assaulted multiple pupils at two different schools, on school premises and/or during school activities, including while he was teaching them. His offences were a gross breach of trust, particularly given he occupied a position as headteacher at St Paul’s.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding that “The panel concluded that it had the only mitigating factor was the absence of any other findings against Mr Pickup. However, given his offending spanned such a long period of time, and multiple pupils at two schools, this provided very little mitigation.”

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

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

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

I have considered the panel’s comments:

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

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

The panel was satisfied that these factors were present in this case, and agreed that on the facts of this case, they indicated that there should be no review period.

Further, there was no evidence of insight or remediation, and even had there been, the panel considered that public confidence requires that offences of such seriousness result in permanent exclusion from the teaching profession.”

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 conviction, the lack of evidence of either 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 Christopher Pickup 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 Pickup 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 Pickup has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

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

**Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey**

**Date: 17 November 2025**

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