



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Ben Walker**

# **Professional conduct**

# **panel meeting outcome**

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

**March 2026**

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Mr Ben Walker
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	1540493
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	23 March 1987
<b>TRA reference:</b>	23189
<b>Date of determination:</b>	02 March 2026
<b>Former employer:</b>	Edisford Primary School, Clitheroe

### Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 2 March 2026 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Ben Walker.

The panel members were Mrs Pam Thompson (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Victoria Walker (lay panellist) and Mrs Wendy Baxter (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Harry Taylor of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP Solicitors.

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 Walker that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Walker provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Alexander Walton of Brabners LLP solicitors, Mr Walker or his representative, Olliers Solicitors Ltd.

The meeting took place in private.

## **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 18 December 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Walker was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that:

He is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a Teacher at Edisford Primary School, he:

1. On 13 July 2022 he engaged in the exchange of sexually explicit material whilst on School premises and/or in the vicinity of children, by sending:
  - a. Text messages;
  - b. Voice notes;
  - b. An image.
2. His conduct as described at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated.

By way of an agreed statement of facts signed by Mr Walker on 16 May 2025, Mr Walker has admitted the allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Pleadings – pages 3 to 16

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency Witness Statements – pages 17 to 35

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency Documents – pages 36 to 156

Section 4: Teaching Documents– pages 157 to 178

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020 (the “Procedures”).

## Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Walker on 16 May 2025.

## Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Walker for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

Mr Walker was employed as a teacher at the School from September 2016 until his resignation on 30 November 2023. On 12 November 2022 Mr Walker was [REDACTED]. In the course of the [REDACTED], sexualised communications were discovered between Mr Walker and Person A, an adult female not connected with the School. The communications had been sent between the two on 13 July 2022, some of which whilst Mr Walker was on School premises.

The LADO reported this information to the School, following which the School commenced its disciplinary investigation. On 30 November 2023 Mr Walker resigned his position at the School.

## Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

### **Whilst working as a Teacher at Edisford Primary School:**

- 1. On 13 July 2022 you engaged in the exchange of sexually explicit material whilst on School premises and/or in the vicinity of children, by sending:**
  - a. Text messages;**
  - b. Voice notes;**
  - c. An image.**

## **2. Your conduct as described at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated.**

The panel considers it appropriate to deal with both allegations together as they are inextricably linked.

Mr Walker has admitted to the allegations by way of an agreed statement of facts, which he signed on 16 May 2025. Within the agreed statement of facts, Mr Walker admitted to having sent sexualised voice notes and images of him shirtless and having exposed himself to Person A, who was an adult not connected with the School. The panel has been provided with copies of the messages which indicate that the conversation was mutual between Mr Walker and Person A. The photographs of Mr Walker with his shirt off, and one with him appearing to expose himself (although this is redacted in the panel's bundle of documents), are taken in the same room – which appears to be the toilets. The panel is therefore satisfied that those photographs were taken at School. Mr Walker has admitted that those photographs were taken in the male toilets at School, although for clarity, the panel notes that Mr Walker asserted these were the male staff toilets.

The panel has not been provided with transcripts of the voice notes but given that Mr Walker has admitted to the allegations, the panel is of the understanding that it is not disputed those voice notes were sexual in nature and sexually motivated. Some of the voice notes are in amongst the photographs described above, and the panel is therefore satisfied that these were recorded and sent/received at around the same time, when Mr Walker was still in School. The panel also accepts that, whilst ordinary school time had ended, there were still children present on site in an after school club. This is also admitted by Mr Walker.

For the avoidance of doubt the panel is satisfied that no children saw Mr Walker take the photos in question, nor is there any suggestion that any child heard Mr Walker making or receiving the sexualised voice notes. Notwithstanding this, the panel is of the view that children were still on School premises and were therefore in the vicinity of Mr Walker when he was engaging in the alleged activity. The panel accepts that the risk of children witnessing his activities was probably low, but it cannot rule out there was at least some risk of exposing a child to harm by carrying out the activities on School premises.

The panel considered whether the messages were sexually motivated. The nature of some of the messages that the panel has had sight of are particularly graphic and are unquestionably of a sexual nature. They indicate the participants' desire to engage in a sexual relationship and the panel is therefore satisfied that Mr Walker was sexually motivated in sending the messages.

For the reasons above, the panel finds these allegations proved.

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

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Walker 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
  - at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Walker, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”).

The panel considered that Mr Walker was in breach of the requirement not to behave in a way that may pose a risk of harm to children.

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Walker, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel also considered whether Mr Walker’s conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual’s conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel found that the offence of sexual activity was relevant, although the panel does note that Mr Walker's sexual activity was not with or in relation to a child.

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

Accordingly, the panel is satisfied that Mr Walker was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Walker's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Walker's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Walker's was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offence of sexual activity was relevant.

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

For these reasons, the panel finds that Mr Walker's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. 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.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Walker, which involved sending messages, voice notes and images, all of a sexual nature, to Person A whilst on School premises and in the vicinity of children, 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 Mr Walker 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 Walker was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Walker in the profession. No doubt had been cast on Mr Walker's abilities as an educator and the panel saw from the evidence that Mr Walker was committed to the teaching profession; for example, he had worked at the School for approximately 7 years. However, whilst there is no evidence to dispute Mr Walker's ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Walker in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

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

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 Walker.

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;

- 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).

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.

In the light of the panel's findings, based on the evidence available, the panel consider that Mr Walker's actions were deliberate and he was not acting under duress.

The panel was provided with limited evidence to demonstrate that Mr Walker had exceptionally high standards in his professional conduct and had contributed significantly to the education sector. The only evidence the panel was provided with was in Mr Walker's submissions, which describe his achievements within School. However, the panel also had no evidence to dispute that Mr Walker had a previously good history. The panel's view was that it did not have sufficient evidence to assess whether this was out of character for Mr Walker. The panel did, however, note that although Mr Walker's actions were deliberate, there was no evidence to demonstrate a pattern of this behaviour.

The panel noted that Mr Walker did not appear to demonstrate a high level of insight or remorse. The messages he had sent to Person A from School premises had only been discovered coincidentally, following a completely [REDACTED] that is not before the panel for consideration. Mr Walker's initial response to the allegations was that he denied them, albeit the panel accepted that Mr Walker does not appear to have been provided with all relevant information at that stage. He later changed his position upon receipt of the messages relied on by the TRA. That being said, Mr Walker has actively engaged with the TRA throughout these proceedings and the panel considered this to be demonstrative of him having taken this matter seriously.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Walker of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Walker. The fact that Mr Walker had created some risk of harm to children by taking sexualised photos and sending sexually explicit voice notes on School premises was a significant factor 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's view was that the seriousness of the conduct was mitigated, to an extent, by the fact the photos were taken in a staff toilet, which, again to some extent, mitigated the risk of causing harm to children. The panel also considered that there was no evidence of a sustained pattern of inappropriate behaviour from Mr Walker. Notwithstanding the mitigation, the panel still held the view that the risk that Mr Walker had created was inexcusable and a clear lack of judgement. The images appear to have been taken by Mr Walker in the main part of the bathroom, rather than in a locked cubicle. The images show a door and two sinks, behind and next to where Mr Walker is standing (respectively). The [REDACTED] confirmed that the image appeared to have been taken by Mr Walker in the main part of the bathroom, and that there was no lock on the door into the bathroom. The panel's concern is that if a child had inadvertently entered the staff toilet at the time, the harm to that child could have potentially been significant.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with 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 all of 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 Mr Ben Walker should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Walker 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
  - at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Walker, 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 Mr Walker fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of sexual motivation, although as the panel notes, Mr Walker's sexual activity was not with or in relation to a child, but another consenting adult.

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 Mr Walker, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “...*Mr Walker had created some risk of harm to children by taking sexualised photos and sending sexually explicit voice notes on School premises...*” A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, “*The panel noted that Mr Walker did not appear to demonstrate a high level of insight or remorse. The messages he had sent to Person A from School premises had only been discovered coincidentally...*”

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

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “...*the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Walker were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession*”. I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual motivation 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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Walker himself. The panel comment “*No doubt had been cast on Mr Walker’s abilities as an educator and the panel*

*saw from the evidence that Mr Walker was committed to the teaching profession; for example, he had worked at the School for approximately 7 years”.*

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse. In the case the panel has found that Mr Walker does not appear to have demonstrated a high level of insight or remorse.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that Mr Walker has created some risk of harm to children by creating sexualised content on school premises.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Walker has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full remorse or insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a two year review period.

*I have considered the panel’s comments “The panel’s view was that the seriousness of the conduct was mitigated, to an extent, by the fact the photos were taken in a staff toilet, which, again to some extent, mitigated the risk of causing harm to children. The panel also considered that there was no evidence of a sustained pattern of inappropriate behaviour from Mr Walker. Notwithstanding the mitigation, the panel still held the view that the risk that Mr Walker had created was inexcusable and a clear lack of judgement”.*

Having considered all of the factors in this case, including the seriousness of the proven conduct, the risk of causing harm to children and the mitigation presented, I consider that a two year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

**This means that Mr Ben Walker is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England.** He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 6 March 2028, two years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider

whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Walker remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Walker 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 that reads "S. Blomfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

**Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield**

**Date: 3 March 2026**

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