



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Charlotte Venables: Professional conduct panel 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

Teacher: Ms Charlotte Venables
TRA reference: 21589
Date of determination: 4 March 2026
Former employer: Stewards Academy - Science Specialist, Essex (the “School”)

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 2 to 4 March 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Charlotte Venables.

The panel members were Dr Martin Coles (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Patrick Berry (teacher panellist) and Mr Robert Della-Sala (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lucy Churchill of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr James Lloyd of Mountford Chambers, instructed by Kingsley Napley LLP.

Ms Venables was present and was represented by Mr Gurmair Singh of JSC Chambers.

The hearing took place in public save that portions of the hearing were heard in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 15 December 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Venables was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a sports teacher at Stewards Academy:

1. On or around 6 September 2022, you used inappropriate and/or excessive force in that you:
 - a) Pulled Child A's ankle and/or foot off the side of a bench and onto the floor;
 - b) Pulled Child A by the wrist and/or right arm;
 - c) Dragged Child A across the floor and/or out of the changing room; and/or
 - d) Pushed Child C out of the changing room.
2. On or around 6 September 2022, you did not report the incidents at paragraph one above to:
 - a) the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead;
 - b) and/or the Headteacher;
 - c) and/or record the incident.

Ms Venables admitted to the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a), 2(b), and 2(c), and denied allegation 1(d). In respect of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a), 2(b), and 2(c), she admitted that her conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In respect of allegation 1(d) although she did not admit the conduct, she admitted that the conduct may be seen to amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, list of key people and anonymised pupil list – pages 5 to 7

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 8 to 20

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 21 to 31

Section 4: TRA exhibits – pages 32 to 560

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 561 to 654

In addition, the panel agreed to accept Ms Venables' additional redacted documents, the second bundle of documents consisting of 59 pages as referred to above.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, watched three CCTV videos in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

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 – Child A

Witness B – Child C

Witness C – [REDACTED]

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by Ms Venables' representative:

Ms Venables

Witness D – [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.

On 1 September 2018, Ms Venables commenced employment as a sports teacher at the School in Harlow, Essex.

On 6 September 2022, during a year 8 PE lesson, Ms Venables allegedly pulled Child A's ankle/foot off a bench whilst she was tying her shoelaces, causing Child A to fall to the floor. She also allegedly grabbed Child A by her wrist and dragged her across the

changing room floor, and out into the corridor. During the same incident, Child C reported being pushed out of the changing room.

On the same day, at around 5pm Child A's parent attended the School and reported the incident to assistant headteacher Individual A.

Between 7 and 9 September 2022, the preliminary fact-finding took place, during which Ms Venables denied using force on Child A. The School gathered initial student accounts, including statements from Child A, Child B, and Child C.

On 21 September 2022, Ms Venables was formally suspended from duty pending the outcome of the investigation and invited to a formal investigatory meeting.

On 17 November 2022, the disciplinary investigation concluded, and the completed investigation report was submitted to the headteacher.

On 9 March 2023, parent of Child A reported the allegations to the TRA.

On 2 May 2023, the matter was formally referred to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. On or around 6 September 2022, you used inappropriate and/or excessive force in that you:

a) Pulled Child A's ankle and/or foot off the side of a bench and onto the floor;

The panel noted Ms Venables admitted allegation 1(a). Notwithstanding Ms Venables' admission the panel made its own determination as to the facts.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Venables. She explained that she had been left by her colleague to lock up both PE changing rooms, and once all of Ms Venables' class were out and waiting in the corridor ready to start their lesson, she locked her changing room and went over to her colleague's changing room to lock it up. Ms Venables explained that PE staff normally give regular countdowns to pupils to encourage them to change and leave the changing room, for example starting with a minute warning and then 10 seconds and that they usually give them countdowns by standing half-way in the changing room doorway holding the door open. Ms Venables stated that she gave these countdowns on 6 September 2022, when standing in the doorway of her colleague's class's changing room.

Ms Venables stated that Child A and Child C were the only two remaining pupils in her colleague's changing room, and once Child C left, she went into the changing room to

understand what was holding up Child A, as she had not left despite repeated warnings of the need to lock up the changing room. Ms Venables admitted that she reached for Child A's shoe, and in doing so pulled her foot off the changing room bench and in doing so Child A was pulled on to the floor.

Ms Venables explained that she was concerned as both classes were ready for their lesson and were left unsupervised while she had to wait for Child A to leave the changing room. She stated that she did not have any means of calling in another member of staff for support.

The panel noted that Ms Venables expressed deep regret and remorse for her actions, and that it was entirely out of character, she had not acted in this manner before and has not since the incident. Ms Venables explained that in the lead up to the incident she had been under immense personal strain which the School was not aware of.

The panel noted that it was not disputed that save for this incident, Ms Venables had an unblemished record.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Child A, whereby she attested to the written statement she gave on 6 September 2022 during the School's investigation. Within her statement to the School dated 6 September 2022, she stated that she had PE and whilst everyone was getting ready, Ms Venables counted down from 60 telling the pupils if they didn't leave the changing room, she would lock them in. She stated that the other pupils rushed out of the changing room and that she and Child C were the last people in the changing room, and she asked for 20 more seconds to tie up her shoes. Child A stated that Ms Venables then grabbed her trainer and pulled her to the floor.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Child C, whereby they attested to the written statement they gave on 9 September 2022 during the School's investigation. Within their statement to the School dated 9 September 2022, Child C stated that Ms Venables *"grabbed Child A's foot and dragged her off the bench."*

The panel noted the investigation meeting notes with Parent A (parent of Child A) dated 26 September 2022, who reported the disclosure made to her by Child A after School on 6 September 2022. Parent A explained that Child A told her she had been the last pupil remaining in the changing room during a PE lesson and that Ms Venables had first pulled her by the foot before grabbing her wrist and placing her at the doorway. Parent A reported that, after hearing this initial disclosure, she immediately went back into the School and met with Individual A at approximately 5pm. She informed him of Child A's account, including that Child A had been pulled by the foot while tying her shoelace. Parent A said that her primary concern was that her daughter had been physically handled inappropriately while doing nothing more than fastening her shoe. Parent A

stated that, once they returned home, she asked Child A to again describe what had happened.

During this second discussion, Child A disclosed a fuller account, which Parent A described as “*worse than what she’d originally said.*” Parent A said that this reinforced her belief that the physical action of pulling Child A by the foot had been significant enough to cause Child A distress and had not been an accidental or light-hearted gesture. Parent A stated that Child A was clear in her recollection that her fall resulted directly from this physical pulling, and that it was not accidental or incidental but a deliberate attempt by Ms Venables to make her leave the changing room more quickly.

Parent A described Child A as visibly upset when talking about this to her. Parent A further explained that the following morning she contacted the School again because Child A had made it clear that the incident involved not only the pulling of her foot, but also subsequent physical actions by Ms Venables.

The panel noted Parent A’s evidence was hearsay and gave it due weight.

The panel considered that Ms Venables’ acted inappropriately in pulling Child A’s foot off the bench.

In light of the above evidence and considering that Ms Venables’ admitted the facts of allegation 1(a), on the balance of probabilities the panel concluded that allegation 1(a) was proven.

b) Pulled Child A by the right wrist and/or right arm;

c) Dragged Child A across the floor and/or out of the changing room;

The panel noted Ms Venables admitted allegations 1(b) and (c). Notwithstanding Ms Venables’ admission the panel made its own determination as to the facts.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Venables. In which she stated: “*I recognise that I made an error in judgment in how I responded to the situation in September 2022. At the time of the initial investigation, I did not recall this action. When I was shown the CCTV footage during the disciplinary process, I immediately accepted that it was me and that my conduct was inappropriate.*”

Further the panel noted that she stated: “*I deeply regret my actions, as they were not in line with the values I hold, nor the standards that were expected of me, Please know that my intention was never to cause harm or distress to the child. However, I fully understand that my approach was inappropriate, and I take responsibility for the negative impact it may have caused.*”

As above in relation to allegation 1(a), the panel noted Ms Venables’ evidence in relation to the context of the situation leading to the incident, and her concerns for the safety of

the waiting pupils, while Child A did not leave the changing room despite repeated instructions to do so.

The panel noted CCTV footage 1, date stamped 6 September 2022 in which a pupil can be seen pointing towards their wrist and rubbing it. The panel also noted the CCTV summary of *"PE Camera 1"* which stated that Child A walked out of the PE block in full PE kit with four students walking closely behind as Child A holds out her wrist.

The panel noted CCTV footage 2, in which a pupil can be seen being dragged along the floor by the arm surrounded by numerous students. The panel then considered the CCTV summary of *"PE Camera 2"* which stated that it showed numerous PE students in the hallway and then Child A being pulled from the changing rooms along the floor and then she is lying on the floor in the hall outside the changing rooms. Child A then stands up and moves out of shot. The CCTV summary for the camera at *"Quad Form block 4"* states that *"Student A exits the building as she walks across the ground; she holds out her wrist."*

The panel noted from the CCTV footage that, following the incident, Child A went to participate in her PE lesson and did not appear from the footage to be visibly distressed.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Child A, whereby she attested to the written statement she gave on 6 September 2022 during the School's investigation. Within her statement to the School dated 6 September 2022 she stated that after she had been dragged from the changing room, she was moved *"out of the changing room to the corridor."*

The panel also considered the written statement of Child C, whereby they attested to the written statement they gave on 9 September 2022 during the School's investigation. Child C stated that Ms Venables *"grabbed her [Child A's] arm and pulled her forcefully out the room."* Child C further stated that she looked at Child A's wrist and *"it was bright red."*

The panel considered the investigation meeting notes with Parent A (parent of Child A). Parent A stated that when she picked Child A up from School on that day (6 September), she was informed by Child A *"Ms Venables dragged her across the floor by her wrist and put her out of the door and into the corridor."*

The panel considered the School's Positive Handling Policy, and noted it stated that reasonable force could be used to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.

Despite that policy, the panel considered that Ms Venables' acted inappropriately in pulling Child A's wrist and removing her from the changing room by the wrist.

In light of the above evidence and considering that Ms Venables admitted the facts of allegation 1(b) and (c), the panel found, on the balance of probabilities, allegation 1(b) and (c) proven.

d) Pushed Child C out of the changing room.

The panel noted that Ms Venables denied this allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Venables, in which she stated that the allegation is “*wholly untruthful and did not occur*” and that there was no evidence to corroborate the allegation. Ms Venables maintained that Child C left the changing room before Child A, and Child C passed her as she was holding the changing room door open with one hand. Ms Venables could not recall making physical contact with Child C but accepted in her oral evidence that this may have happened.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Child C, whereby they attested to the written statement they gave on 9 September 2022 during the School’s investigation. Within their statement to the School dated 9 September 2022, Child C stated that she had just got into the girls’ changing room and everyone had already started to get changed. Child C stated that Ms Venables told them that she was only going to give them 10 seconds to get changed or she is locking them in there. Child C stated that a pupil then said, “*you can’t do that it’s against the rules?*” and then Ms Venables ignored what she said and started counting down from 10. Child C stated that everyone rushed up and ran out of the changing room and that she and Child A were the last two people in there. Child C stated that Ms Venables then walked in and said, “*that’s enough time let’s go*” she was “*very heavy handed and pushed me at the door with her hand.*”

Child C stated that whilst Child A was putting on her shoes, they got up to leave the changing room, and Ms Venables put her hand on their back and pushed them out of the room. Child C described the force used by Ms Venables as “*similar to the way in which you would shove a sibling if they were annoying you.*” Child C further said that the push did not hurt them, but they were very shocked that a teacher had put their hands on them, stating that it was “*weird*”.

The panel noted that in Child C’s oral evidence that having reflected on the incident the push rated a 3 or 4 out of 10 for force, it did not hurt her, and she confirmed that she did not see who made contact with her upper back on leaving the changing room. Child C confirmed that she continued with the PE lesson.

The panel also considered the oral evidence and written statement of Child A, whereby she attested to the written statement she gave on 6 September 2022 during the School’s investigation. Within her statement to the School dated 6 September 2022 she stated that everyone rushed out of the changing room and that she and Child C were the last

people in the changing room. Child A wrote that Child C was on her way out and that *“Ms Venables pushed her out heavily and then told me to get out.”*

In Child A’s oral evidence, she confirmed that she did not see Ms Venables push Child C, but that she heard Child C say, *“don’t touch me”*. The panel noted the oral evidence of Child C that she did not recall saying anything to Ms Venables at the relevant time.

The panel considered the evidence and concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, Ms Venables did not push Child C out of the changing room. The panel further concluded that to any extent Ms Venables made any physical contact with Child C, as she left the changing room, Ms Venables did not use inappropriate or excessive force.

In light of the above evidence, on the balance of probabilities, the panel concluded allegation 1(d) was not proven.

2. On or around 6 September 2022, you did not report the incidents at paragraph one above to:

- a) the Academy’s Designated Safeguarding Lead;**
- b) and/or the Headteacher;**
- c) and/or record the incident.**

The panel noted Ms Venables admitted allegation 2 (a) to (c). Notwithstanding Ms Venables’ admission the panel made its own determination as to the facts.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Venables. She stated that she *“fully acknowledges and accepts responsibility for failing to report the incidents that occurred on 6th September 2022 to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and for not recording them on CPOMs. I understand the critical importance of adhering to safeguarding protocols and deeply regret my oversight in this matter. At the time, I was overwhelmed by the situation and did not fully consider the necessity of reporting the incidents promptly. My focus was on managing the immediate circumstances, but I now recognise that failing to report and document these events was a significant lapse in judgment and procedure for which I am deeply sorry.”*

The panel considered the School’s child protection policy. The policy stated that any member of staff who receives a disclosure or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the DSL. The section on *“use of reasonable force,”* stated that reasonable force involves a degree of physical contact used to control or restrain children and that *“reasonable”* means using no more force than is needed. It stated that the use of reasonable force should always be considered in a safeguarding context.

The panel then considered the School’s Positive Handling Policy (which follows guidance from the Department of Education), which states that physical intervention often occurs in

response to highly charged emotional situations and that there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. It stated that the headteacher or a senior member of staff should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. It states that an appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and that any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

The policy states that all incidents should be recorded immediately so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. It stated that this record will provide essential and accurate information in the event of any future complaint or allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness C, who stated that all staff received annual safeguarding training, as well as regular safeguarding updates every half term. She explained that safeguarding policies are shared with staff at each update and training session and stated that the School also used an online safeguarding resource for top-ups on safeguarding knowledge, which would be completed via quizzes.

Witness C stated that safeguarding training was delivered annually via an online application and that teachers were required to complete the training and pass an assessment as proof of understanding. She stated that this process was organised by the DSL and that any non-completion was followed up until all members of staff had completed the training. She also stated staff were required to sign a copy of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education to confirm that they had read it and that this process was "*diligently*" followed up by the headteacher's personal assistant in conjunction with the DSL.

Witness C stated that on Friday 9 September 2022, the DSL, Witness D, informed her that "*the LADO had contacted her regarding an incident that had been reported to her by a parent.*" She stated that she confirmed that she had no prior knowledge of the incident at that stage, and that on making enquiries, she discovered that a meeting had taken place between the parent and Individual A regarding the incident.

Witness C explained that any safeguarding incidents involving an allegation against a member of staff must be reported either to the DSL, the headteacher, or the senior deputy headteacher. She stated that although Ms Venables was the instigator in this incident, the expectation is that she should have reported it. Witness C confirmed that Ms Venables did not report the incident to the DSL or Witness D. She stated that the first time she became aware of the incident was when Witness D informed her after Parent A had contacted the LADO directly.

The panel considered the written statement of Individual A, who stated that he raised the matter with the senior deputy headteacher the following morning because, in his words,

the incident “*was quite serious.*” Individual A also stated that he was aware of the School’s safeguarding obligations, referencing that “*it says in KCSIE, paragraph 55, that such concerns should be reported to the DSL or the deputy,*” and that he therefore reported it to the senior deputy headteacher.

The panel noted that Individual A’s evidence was hearsay and placed due weight on it.

The panel accepted on the evidence that Ms Venables did not intentionally fail to report the incident or seek to hide it, her state of mind at the relevant time being temporarily impaired by personal family circumstances.

However, considering the above evidence and the fact that Ms Venables admitted the facts of allegation 2(a), 2(b), and 2(c), on the balance of probabilities, the panel concluded that allegation 2 (a), 2(b) and 2(c) was proven.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Venables, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Venables was in breach of the following standards:

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

The panel considered that Ms Venables had demonstrated a serious lapse in judgement in respect of the way she removed Child A from a changing room. However, the panel

was satisfied that it was a brief, isolated incident (lasting approximately 30 to 40 seconds), was entirely out of character, and was motivated by Ms Venables' wish to remove an insubordinate child, who had already ignored a number of verbal instructions, from a changing room to ensure a safe environment for the large number of pupils gathered waiting in the hallway ready for their PE lesson.

The panel considered Ms Venables' failure to report the incident in line with the School's established procedures to be concerning and undermined the School's ability to safeguard staff and pupils.

The panel considered Ms Venables' state of mind due to matters outside of work and that this may have impacted her judgement with regards to the manner she removed Child A, and her failure to report the incident.

The panel considered that the conduct of Ms Venables, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE"). However, this breach led from her desire to ensure the safety of other pupils which was compromised by Child A's behaviour.

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

The panel also considered whether Ms Venables' conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

For these reasons, on balance, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Venables 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 Venables was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Ms Venables' 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 Venables' 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 Venables was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel considered that the public has an expectation that teachers should have the ability to remove insubordinate children, in circumstances where the pupil's behaviour is impacting the safe environment and learning of other pupils and can use reasonable force to do so. While the panel considered that Ms Venables' mode of removing Child A from the changing room was inappropriate in the circumstances, it was not sufficiently serious enough to bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

The panel did not consider that the conduct displayed would potentially damage the public perception. The panel therefore did not find that Ms Venables' 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, 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 light of the panel's findings against Ms Venables, which involved removing Child A from a changing room in an inappropriate fashion, and failing to appropriately report the incident, 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 Venables was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

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 Venables in the profession.

The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator or her ability to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel heard evidence of Ms Venables' good character and continued dedication to the profession, which the panel agreed was exceptional.

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 Venables.

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards.
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk.
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE).

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order could 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 light of the panel's findings, the panel considered whether any of the mitigating factors set out in the Advice were present.

There was no evidence that Ms Venables' actions were not deliberate or that she was acting under extreme duress (a physical threat or significant intimidation). However, the panel noted from the evidence that Ms Venables' state of mind was temporarily impaired by extenuating personal circumstances.

Ms Venables did demonstrate exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct (outside of this incident) and contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.

The panel noted and accepted the presenting officer's submissions on behalf of the TRA that this was a "*genuinely exceptional case, where the teacher's remediation was exceptional and prohibition would be entirely disproportionate in the circumstances*" for the following reasons:

- Ms Venables had made clear admissions from the outset of these proceedings, only challenging an allegation which was not found proven by the panel.
- Ms Venables in her evidence had demonstrated a deep level of insight into the seriousness of her conduct and remorse. She clearly understood and appreciated what she did and why it was inappropriate.
- While the behaviour was serious, no serious injury or lasting harm was sustained by Child A.
- Ms Venables explained and the panel accepted that at the time of the incident she was dealing with matters the School was unaware of including [REDACTED]
- Ms Venables had undertaken significant and extensive safeguarding training since the incident in 2022 and taken other steps well beyond what the panel would ordinarily see to avoid repetition of the behaviours. For example, [REDACTED] and ensuring she had a support network at the School from whom she could seek advice, guidance and support as appropriate.
- Ms Venables had continued to contribute to the School, her colleagues and pupils, working well beyond her contracted hours, running PE fixtures, being responsible for the School's Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, organising and leading on residential School trips, and progressed in her career to the head of girls PE.
- There had been no repetition of the behaviour following the incident for a sustained period (over three years) and no evidence of a long-term attitudinal risk, so the panel was satisfied there is minimal risk of repetition.

The panel considered the character references provided on behalf of Ms Venables. The panel had sight of character references from the following individuals:

[REDACTED]

The panel noted the following statements about Ms Venables in particular:

- *“never picked up any concerns... in a safeguarding context”; “highly regarded by her pupils, their families and her colleagues.”*

[REDACTED]:

- *“worked tirelessly to prove herself... experience, competence, and character... reassurance we would never see an incident again.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“tremendous work ethic... great personal integrity... valued her support.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“strong work ethic... dedication, professionalism, and positive influence... commitment... unwavering.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“high level of professionalism... invaluable member... made even greater efforts to improve herself.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“children are always her first concern... willingly taken on additional role... look forward to supporting Charlotte in her career.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“hard-working, dedicated teacher... can totally rely on her... kind and caring.”*

[REDACTED]

- *“extremely well organised... never had any concerns about conduct as a teacher or first aider.”*

[REDACTED]

The panel noted the extensive mitigation documentation in the bundle, including records of the extensive training completed by Ms Venables, award certificates and appreciative cards from pupils which recognised the positive impact Ms Venables made on their lives.

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.

For the reasons set out above, the panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

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 sanction.

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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel has also found an allegation not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct, in relation to Ms Charlotte Venables, should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

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

- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The panel note that the findings of misconduct “...*demonstrated a serious lapse in judgement in respect of the way she removed Child A from a changing room*”.

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, 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 Venables, 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, “*In light of the panel’s findings against Ms Venables, which involved removing Child A from a changing room in an inappropriate fashion, and failing to appropriately report the incident, 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, “*Ms Venables in her evidence had demonstrated a deep level of insight into the seriousness of her conduct and remorse. She clearly understood and appreciated what she did and why it was inappropriate*”.

The panel has also commented that “*There had been no repetition of the behaviour following the incident for a sustained period (over three years) and no evidence of a long-term attitudinal risk, so the panel was satisfied there is minimal risk of repetition*”.

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 Venables was 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, 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 Venables herself. The panel comment, *“The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator or her ability to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel heard evidence of Ms Venables’ good character and continued dedication to the profession, which the panel agreed was exceptional”*.

The panel also note, *“... the extensive mitigation documentation in the bundle, including records of the extensive training completed by Ms Venables, award certificates and appreciative cards from pupils which recognised the positive impact Ms Venables made on their lives”*.

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Venables 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 concerning the many positive character references provided in support of Ms Venables.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that *“Ms Venables had continued to contribute to the School, her colleagues and pupils, working well beyond her contracted hours, running PE fixtures, being responsible for the School’s Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, organising and leading on residential School trips, and progressed in her career to the head of girls PE”*.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

S. Blomfield

Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 12 March 2026

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