



Mr Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

June 2026

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

Teacher: Mr Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis

Teacher ref number: 9909911

Teacher date of birth: 3 January 1974

TRA reference: 23823

Date of determination: 11 June 2026

Former employer: John Lyon School, London

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 11 June 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis.

The panel members were Mrs Shabana Robertson (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Ben Greene (teacher panellist) and Mrs Emma Garrett (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Samantha Cass of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Dominic Davidson of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 5 September 2025.

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

1. On 14 June 2024, he was convicted at Stoke on Trent Crown Court, of the following offences:
 - a. Meeting a child following grooming
 - b. Making indecent photographs of a child
 - c. Distributing indecent photographs of a child
 - d. 3 counts of sexual activity with a child

Mr Du Plessis provided no formal response to the allegations before the hearing and no admission to the facts of the allegations, nor whether those facts amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of hearing and response – pages 3 to 18

Section 2: TRA documents – pages 20 to 47

In addition, the panel agreed to admit the following:

- Letter from the TRA to Mr Du Plessis dated 2 Feb 2026;
- Proof of delivery certificate 4 Feb 2026; and
- Notice of hearing document dated 18 March 2026.

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

Witnesses

No witnesses were called to give oral evidence at the hearing.

Mr Du Plessis was not present at the hearing.

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 2022, Mr Du Plessis commenced employment at John Lyon School (“the School”) as a design and technology teacher.

Mr Du Plessis was suspended from work on 10 May 2024, when the School became aware of his arrest for sexual offences against a child. His employment was terminated on 21 May 2024 and a referral made to the TRA on 30 May 2024.

On 14 June 2024, Mr Du Plessis pleaded guilty to and was convicted of one count of meeting a child following sexual grooming, one count of making indecent photographs of a child, one count of distributing indecent photographs of a child/children and three counts of sexual activity with a child.

On 17 April 2025, Mr Du Plessis was sentenced at Stoke on Trent Crown Court to a custodial sentence of 8 years and 3 months.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

- 1. On 14 June 2024, you were convicted at Stoke on Trent Crown Court, of the following offences:**
 - a. Meeting a child following grooming**
 - b. Making indecent photographs of a child**
 - c. Distributing indecent photographs of a child**
 - d. 3 counts of sexual activity with a child**

The panel noted that Mr Du Plessis had provided no formal response to the allegations before the hearing and no admission to the particulars of allegations 1.a, 1.b, 1.c and 1.d.

The panel considered the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice”. Page 8 of the Advice states that where there has been a conviction at any time of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel had been provided with a copy of the certificate of conviction from Stoke on Trent Crown Court, which detailed that Mr Du Plessis had been convicted on 14 June 2024 of one count of meeting a child following sexual grooming; one count of making indecent photographs of a child; one count of distributing indecent photographs of a child/children; and three counts of sexual activity with a child. The panel noted the certificate of conviction stated that Mr Du Plessis had pleaded guilty to the offences.

In respect of the allegations, Mr Du Plessis was sentenced at Stoke on Trent Crown Court on 17 April 2025 to 8 years and 3 months imprisonment to run concurrently. In addition, he was placed on the Sex Offenders Register indefinitely and made subject to an indefinite Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

Having considered the evidence including the certificate of conviction and police national computer record, the panel found allegations 1.a, 1.b, 1.c and 1.d proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to conviction of a relevant offence.

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Du Plessis 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;
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;

- not undermining fundamental British values including...the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect...; and
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 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 noted that Mr Du Plessis' actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting, particularly as the sentencing remarks set out that the allegations involved a sexual relationship with a child who was a pupil at another school. The panel also noted that the sentencing remarks set out that a box including a bondage kit, sex toys, and a pair of boxer shorts for a child [REDACTED], had been found under Mr Du Plessis' desk at the School and therefore this was relevant to Mr Du Plessis' role as a teacher within an education setting.

The panel considered the Advice, in particular whether Mr Du Plessis' actions:

- Were contrary to the standards of personal and professional conduct expected of a teacher, with reference to the Teachers' Standards;
- Were relevant to teaching, working with children and/or working in an education setting;
- Would be likely to have an impact on the safety or security of pupils or members of the public; and/or
- Would be likely to affect public confidence in the teaching profession if the teacher were allowed to continue teaching.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence was contrary to the above factors, and in particular, the panel noted that the sentencing remarks set out that Mr Du Plessis engaged in sexual activity with a child in a public place.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Du Plessis' behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community and given the gravity of Mr Du Plessis' conviction.

The panel noted that Mr Du Plessis' behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed. The

Advice states: “it is likely that a conviction for any offence that led to a term of imprisonment, including any suspended sentence, will be considered “a relevant offence.”

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

This was a case concerning offences involving:

- Sexual activity with a child;
- Sexual communication with a child; and
- Activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting any such activity, including one-off incidents,

which the Advice states are likely to be considered “relevant offences.”

For the reasons set out above, the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Du Plessis’ ongoing suitability to teach.

The panel considered that a finding that these convictions were relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession and to safeguard children.

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 protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Du Plessis, which involved sexual activity with a child; making indecent photographs of a child; and grooming of a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils. The panel further noted that Mr Du Plessis' indefinite inclusion on the Sex Offenders Register and imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order emphasised the seriousness and gravity of his conduct.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Du Plessis 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 Du Plessis 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 Du Plessis in the profession. The panel did not see any evidence to attest to Mr Du Plessis' history or ability as a teacher. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Du Plessis 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 Du Plessis.

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, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);

- an abuse of any trust...in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing, or publishing any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- violation of the rights of pupils; and
- actions or behaviours...that undermine...the rule of law, individual liberty...

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

There was no evidence that Mr Du Plessis' actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Du Plessis was acting under extreme duress.

The panel saw no evidence that Mr Du Plessis demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character.

The panel noted that the sentencing remarks set out that Mr Du Plessis had been until the conviction of "good character". The panel also noted that Mr Du Plessis pleaded guilty to the offences and accepted that he had "destroyed two families" and "devastated his career". However, the panel also noted the judge's comment that despite Mr Du Plessis attempting to mitigate his position by suggesting that some of his conduct was not at his initiation, Mr Du Plessis went ahead with his grooming and sexual activity for the satisfaction of himself only.

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 Du Plessis 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 Du Plessis. The serious and repeated nature of the offences which included a sexual relationship with a child 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. These include serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; any sexual misconduct involving a child; any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents. The panel found that each of these behaviours was relevant for this case.

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 relevant in this case.

The panel found that there was no evidence of any mitigating circumstances. Mr Du Plessis had not engaged with the proceedings and had provided no material demonstrating remorse or acknowledgment of the impact of his actions on the victim and their family. The panel considered that, on the contrary, the available evidence suggested an attempt to minimise his culpability and involvement. The panel concluded that Mr Du Plessis had demonstrated no insight into his conduct and failed to appreciate the seriousness of his actions, including that responsibility lay with him rather than with the victim.

The panel had regard to the gravity of the offending, noting that Mr Du Plessis had been convicted of multiple serious sexual offences, including grooming, engaging in sexual activity with a child and making and distributing indecent images. The offending was

deliberate, repeated and took place over a significant period of time, involving knowingly engaging sexually with a [REDACTED] child.

The seriousness of the conduct was further reflected in the custodial sentence of over eight years' imprisonment and his indefinite inclusion on the Sex Offenders Register and the imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order. The panel considered that the impact on the victim and their family would have been significant and noted this from the sentencing remarks. The panel also noted safeguarding concerns arising from evidence of inappropriate items found under the desk [REDACTED] and considered that this indicated the potential for harm for pupils in the School within which he taught.

In light of the absence of insight or remorse, the seriousness and sustained nature of the offending, and the associated potential risk of repetition, the panel concluded that public confidence in the profession would be seriously undermined if a review period were allowed. The panel determined that the case fell at the most serious end of the spectrum and that a prohibition order was necessary to protect pupils and maintain public trust.

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 provisions 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 all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis (Mr Du Plessis) should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Du Plessis 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;
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
 - not undermining fundamental British values including...the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect...; and
 - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 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 findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a teacher being convicted of sexual offences involving a child.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing 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 Du Plessis, 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 and safeguard pupils. The panel offers this observation:

“In light of the panel's findings against Mr Du Plessis, which involved sexual activity with a child; making indecent photographs of a child; and grooming of a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils. The panel further noted that Mr Du Plessis' indefinite inclusion on the Sex Offenders Register and imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order emphasised the seriousness and gravity of his conduct.”

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 it sets out as follows:

"The panel found that there was no evidence of any mitigating circumstances. Mr Du Plessis had not engaged with the proceedings and had provided no material demonstrating remorse or acknowledgment of the impact of his actions on the victim and their family. The panel considered that, on the contrary, the available evidence suggested an attempt to minimise his culpability and involvement. The panel concluded that Mr Du Plessis had demonstrated no insight into his conduct and failed to appreciate the seriousness of his actions, including that responsibility lay with him rather than with the victim."

In my judgement, the lack of evidence of 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 comments:

"The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Du Plessis' behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community and given the gravity of Mr Du Plessis' conviction."

I am particularly mindful of the finding in this case of a teacher being convicted for sexual offences involving a child and the very negative impact that such a finding is likely to have 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 Du Plessis himself. The panel comment:

"The panel saw no evidence that Mr Du Plessis demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed

significantly to the education sector. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Du Plessis 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 very serious nature of the panel’s findings and to the nature of Mr Du Plessis’ conviction.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Du Plessis 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, 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.

In doing so, it has referred to the Advice as follows

“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 e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; any sexual misconduct involving a child; any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents. The panel found that each of these behaviours was relevant for this case.”

I have considered the panel’s concluding remarks:

“The panel had regard to the gravity of the offending, noting that Mr Du Plessis had been convicted of multiple serious sexual offences, including grooming, engaging in sexual activity with a child and making and distributing indecent images. The offending was deliberate, repeated and took place over a significant period of time, involving knowingly engaging sexually with a 15-year-old child.

The seriousness of the conduct was further reflected in the custodial sentence of over eight years’ imprisonment and his indefinite inclusion on the Sex Offenders Register

and the imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order. The panel considered that the impact on the victim and their family would have been significant and noted this from the sentencing remarks. The panel also noted safeguarding concerns arising from evidence of inappropriate items found under the desk [REDACTED] and considered that this indicated the potential for harm for pupils in the School within which he taught.

In light of the absence of insight or remorse, the seriousness and sustained nature of the offending, and the associated potential risk of repetition, the panel concluded that public confidence in the profession would be seriously undermined if a review period were allowed. The panel determined that the case fell at the most serious end of the spectrum and that a prohibition order was necessary to protect pupils and maintain public trust.

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 provisions for a review period.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response in order to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period would not be sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the offences committed by Mr Du Plessis, the lack of either insight or remorse and risk of repetition, and likely negative impact on public confidence in the profession.

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 Jacques Lodewyck Du Plessis 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 allegation found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Du Plessis 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 Du Plessis 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 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 15 June 2026

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