



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Ian Cornish: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

August 2026

Contents

Allegations	3
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Witnesses	4
Decision and reasons	4
Findings of fact	5
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	7
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	11

Professional conduct panel decision

Teacher: Mr Ian Cornish

Teacher ref number: 74-49968

Teacher date of birth: 5 March 1956

TRA reference: 18302

Date of determination: 17 August 2026

Former employer: Ewell Castle School

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 17 August 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Ian Cornish.

The panel members were Miss Louisa Munton (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Anila Rai (lay panellist) and Mr Tim Foy (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Tom Walker of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Leah Redden of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Ian Cornish was present but was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 10 March 2026, as amended at the date of the hearing.

It was alleged that Mr Cornish had been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

1. On 14 June 2022, he was convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Adult Meet a Boy Under 16 Years of Age Following Grooming on 01/12/17 - 30/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.15.
2. On 17 May 2022, he was convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Arrange/Facilitate the Commission of a Child Sex Offence on 04/05/18 - 19/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.14.

3. On 17 May 2022, he was convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Engage in Sexual Communication with a Child on 04/05/18 - 19/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.15A(1).

The panel was presented with a statement of agreed facts which set out an agreed factual background to this case. Mr Cornish accepted the factual background and accepted on the day of the hearing that the offences for which he was convicted were relevant offences.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 4 to 10

Section 2: Statement of Agreed Facts – pages 16 to 19

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 21 to 121

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 123 to 126

The panel also received the following additional documents: Teacher's Application for Privacy and TRA Response; Teacher's Response to Notice of Hearing and TRA letter to Teacher, 3 August 2026.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2018, (the "Procedures").

Witnesses

There were no witnesses.

The panel heard oral submissions from Mr Cornish.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

The background was as follows. Mr Cornish accessed a dating site and met a child under the age of 16. The child in question was 13 years of age. Mr Cornish then engaged in a series of sexualised communications with the child over a series of months. The communications culminated in meetings between them and, ultimately, sexual activity. Mr Cornish disputes the precise nature of the sexual activity, but the scope of this is not

relevant to the convictions and it is common ground that sexual activity occurred, and Mr Cornish knew that the child was under 16.

Following a police investigation and prosecution, Mr Cornish pleaded guilty to three offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. On 10 January 2023, Mr Cornish was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment and is the subject of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for 10 years. He is to be placed on the Sex Offenders register.

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:

The panel received a memorandum of conviction and a Police National Computer printout which confirmed the convictions for the three offences set out in the allegations as amended. The panel also received a signed Statement of Agreed Facts which confirmed that Mr Cornish admitted that he had been convicted of these offences. The admissions were consistent with the other evidence in the case including the certificate of conviction.

The certificate of conviction is proof of the conviction of the following offences:

1. On 14 June 2022, you were convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Adult Meet a Boy Under 16 Years of Age Following Grooming on 01/12/17 - 30/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.15.
2. On 17 May 2022, you were convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Arrange/Facilitate the Commission of a Child Sex Offence on 04/05/18 - 19/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.14.
3. On 17 May 2022, you were convicted at Harrow Crown Court for the offence of Engage in Sexual Communication with a Child on 04/05/18 - 19/11/18 contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 s.15A(1).

The panel found the factual element of each of the three allegations proven, namely that you were convicted of the offences above.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proved allegations amount to convictions of relevant offences, namely offences which are relevant to Mr Cornish's fitness to be a teacher.

At the hearing, Mr Cornish admitted that the offences were relevant offences for these purposes. However, the panel went on to consider this issue in any event.

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Cornish in relation to the facts it found proved involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that by reference to Part 2, Mr Cornish 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.

Further and in addition, the panel noted that, pursuant to the Advice it is likely that a conviction for any of the following would amount to a relevant offence:

- any offence that led to a term of imprisonment, including any suspended sentence;
- sexual activity;
- sexual communication with a child.

Over and above these matters, the panel noted that Mr Cornish’s actions did not take place within an education setting. Mr Cornish has a long and unblemished teaching career, and it is right to say that there was no immediate nexus between the offending and his teaching. The child in question was not one of his pupils.

However, the panel did determine that Mr Cornish’s actions were clearly relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. These offences were very serious in nature and related to a child.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Cornish’s behaviour in committing these offences would undoubtedly affect public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. His conduct ran counter to what should be at the very core of the practice of a teacher with a duty of care towards children. For example, in accordance with safeguarding guidance

and the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), any teacher who becomes aware of a child on an adult dating site should take safeguarding action and not engage with the child to develop a sexual relationship. This is antithetical to the duties of a teacher.

Mr Cornish's behaviour ultimately led to a significant term of imprisonment, indicative of the public and child protection issues engaged by his actions together with the other aspects of the sentence imposed.

The panel did go on to consider potential mitigating circumstances in relation to the commission of these offences. The panel had regard to the previous good character of Mr Cornish, and also to the fact that the offences took place some time ago. However, the offending in question was sustained over several months, and had elements of planning and deliberation. The child in question was also potentially vulnerable and there was a high risk of serious harm. The panel was unable to discern any features of this case that would weigh against them being relevant offences in accordance with the definition.

In conclusion and for all these reasons, the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was directly relevant to Mr Cornish's ongoing suitability to teach and his fitness to be a teacher.

The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession. The panel was thus satisfied that the convictions in question were relevant offences.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of conviction of relevant offences, 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 a punitive effect.

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

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and other members of the public;

- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the nature of the offences for which Mr Cornish was convicted and having regard to the specific context, there was an extremely strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and other members of the public. Whilst Mr Cornish's actions did not take place within a school setting or involve a pupil of his, the actions raised obvious and significant public and child protection concerns.

The panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Cornish was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the profession. This was conduct that was extremely serious.

For the same reasons, the panel decided that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present.

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

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Cornish. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved.

In the list of such behaviours, those that are relevant in this case are set out below:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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.

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

- No doubt had been cast upon Mr Cornish's abilities as an educator, albeit the panel received no detailed evidence or references in relation to this;
- Mr Cornish had an otherwise unblemished record. There was evidence of good character prior to his conviction;
- Mr Cornish had engaged with the TRA and made full admissions.

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

- Mr Cornish's actions were deliberate and sustained.
- Whilst the panel accepted that Mr Cornish was suffering personal distress at the time, there was no evidence of serious duress.
- Mr Cornish's actions amounted to a clear breach of the Teachers' Standards and raised serious public and child protection concerns;
- Mr Cornish has been convicted of and sentenced for serious sexual offences involving a child, for which he received a custodial sentence of 4 years; was made subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for 10 years and also placed on the Sex Offenders Register for life.

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

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

Mr Cornish's actions were fundamentally incompatible with him being a teacher. This was conduct at the serious end of the spectrum. The nature and gravity of these offences were a matter of significant concern.

There were, accordingly, particularly strong public interest considerations in this case in terms of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and other members of the public, public

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

Mr Cornish's behaviour led to him receiving a significant custodial sentence, which is indicative of the seriousness of the offences. The panel was therefore of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Cornish. Accordingly, it made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered.

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

The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

These behaviours include any sexual misconduct involving a child, which was directly applicable in this case. Indeed, as set out above, the sexual offences were very serious indeed. The panel noted that at no point has Mr Cornish provided any evidence of rehabilitative steps taken or of remorse for his offence. There was no evidence to indicate that any of his offending risks had been addressed. In addition to this, the panel noted that Mr Cornish did not express any remorse or concern for the victim of his offences. When speaking about the offending, his focus was on the impact of the offence on him as opposed to the victim. The panel acknowledges that Mr Cornish was the subject of a long police investigation which inevitably would have caused some distress. However, Mr Cornish's actions involved sexual activity with a 13-year-old. These actions posed a high risk of harm and Mr Cornish at no point acknowledged any remorse, regret or concern. In sum, Mr Cornish has displayed no insight into the severity or impact of his behaviour.

Given this, the panel is satisfied that there is a real risk of Mr Cornish repeating his offending behaviour and a review period is not appropriate.

In light of this and the panel's comments, above, regarding the seriousness of these offences, the panel decided its findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate.

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 Ian Cornish should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Cornish 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 Mr Cornish involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance '*Keeping children safe in education*'

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 Cornish, 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 the light of the nature of the offences for which Mr Cornish was convicted and having regard to the specific context, there was an extremely strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and other members of the public. Whilst Mr Cornish’s actions did not take place within a school setting or involve a pupil of his, the actions raised obvious and significant public and child protection concerns.”

A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk to pupils 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 noted that at no point has Mr Cornish provided any evidence of rehabilitative steps taken or of remorse for his offence. There was no evidence to indicate that any of his offending risks had been addressed. In addition to this, the panel noted that Mr Cornish did not express any remorse or concern for the victim of his offences. When speaking about the offending, his focus was on the impact of the offence on him as opposed to the victim.”

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

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel comments:

“The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Cornish’s behaviour in committing these offences would undoubtedly affect public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. His conduct ran counter to what should be at the very core of the practice of a teacher with a duty of care towards children. For example, in accordance with safeguarding guidance and the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), any teacher who becomes aware of a child on an adult dating site should take safeguarding action and not engage with the child to develop a sexual relationship. This is antithetical to the duties of a teacher.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding in this case of a teacher being convicted of 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 Cornish himself. The panel notes the following:

"No doubt had been cast upon Mr Cornish's abilities as an educator, albeit the panel received no detailed evidence or references in relation to this;"

"Mr Cornish had an otherwise unblemished record. There was evidence of good character prior to his conviction;"

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Cornish 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 seriousness of the behaviour that led to Mr Cornish's convictions, which the panel characterises as being fundamentally incompatible with him being a teacher. I have also placed considerable weight on the risk of repetition and future harm to pupils given the lack of insight and remorse identified by the panel.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Cornish 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 referenced the Advice as follows:

“The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

These behaviours include any sexual misconduct involving a child, which was directly applicable in this case. Indeed, as set out above, the sexual offences were very serious indeed.”

I have considered the panel’s concluding remarks:

“Given this, the panel is satisfied that there is a real risk of Mr Cornish repeating his offending behaviour and a review period is not appropriate.

In light of this and the panel's comments, above, regarding the seriousness of these offences, the panel decided its findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate.”

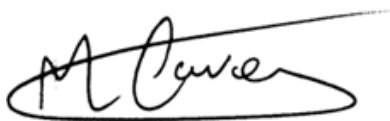
I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate sanction to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the very serious nature of the convictions against Mr Cornish and the risk of repetition and possible harm to pupils in the future.

I agree with the panel 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 Ian Cornish is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Cornish 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 Cornish 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: 19 August 2026

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