



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Christopher Shepherd: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

August 2026

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Statement of agreed facts	5
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	5
Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence	7
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	9
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	12

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

Teacher: Mr Christopher Shepherd

Teacher ref number: 1146763

Teacher date of birth: 13 December 1986

TRA reference: 25233

Date of determination: 14 August 2026

Former employer: E-ACT Willenhall Academy, West Midlands

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 14 August 2026 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Christopher Shepherd.

The panel members were Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Sofia McGreavy (lay panellist) and Dr Lee Longden (former teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr James Corrish of Birketts LLP Solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Shepherd that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Shepherd provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Allana Edwards of Brabners LLP, Mr Shepherd or any representative of Mr Shepherd.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 20 May 2026.

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

On 15 October 2025 he was convicted at Cannock Magistrates' Court of:

1. Two counts of making Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-Photograph of Children between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Protection of Children Act 1978 s.1(a).
2. Three counts of possessing an Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-Photograph of Children between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 s.160.
3. One count of possession of Extreme Pornographic Images – of Intercourse or Oral Sex with a Dead or Alive Animal between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 s.63(1)(7)(d).

Mr Shepherd admitted the allegations, including that the offences for which he was convicted were relevant offences, as set out in the statement of agreed facts signed by Mr Shepherd on 16 March 2026.

[REDACTED]

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section A: Notice of proceedings – pages 2 to 17

Section B: Statement of agreed facts – pages 18 to 20

Section C: TRA documents – pages 21 to 59

Section D: Teacher documents – page 60

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

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

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Shepherd and the presenting officer on 16 March 2026.

Decision and reasons

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

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

Mr Shepherd commenced employment as an English teacher at E-ACT Willenhall Academy ('the School') on 1 September 2024.

On 15 January 2025, Mr Shepherd was arrested by Staffordshire police further to allegations of making indecent images of children. He was released on bail pending investigation.

Mr Shepherd was suspended from the School on 16 January 2025 and subsequently dismissed on 31 January 2025.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 24 February 2025.

On 15 October 2025, it was alleged that Mr Shepherd pleaded guilty to, and was convicted of: 1) two counts of making indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child; 2) three counts of possessing indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child; and 3) one count of possession of an extreme pornographic image/images portraying an act of intercourse/oral sex with a dead/alive animal.

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:

On 15 October 2025 you were convicted at Cannock Magistrates' Court of:

- 1. Two counts of making Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-Photograph of Children between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Protection of Children Act 1978 s.1(a).**

- 2. Three counts of possessing an Indecent Photograph or Pseudo-Photograph of Children between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 s.160.**
- 3. One count of possession of Extreme Pornographic Images – of Intercourse or Oral Sex with a Dead or Alive Animal between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025 contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 s.63(1)(7)(d).**

The panel considered the statement of agreed facts, in which Mr Shepherd admitted the allegations and further admitted that the facts of the allegations amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel noted that, within the statement of agreed facts, the particular counts itemised in the allegation were set out and expressly admitted to by Mr Shepherd.

The panel also considered the notice of referral form, signed by Mr Shepherd on 21 January 2026, in which he admitted being convicted of these offences and that they were relevant offences.

The panel had also been provided with a record sheet from Cannock Magistrates' Court, which set out that Mr Shepherd had been convicted on 15 October 2025 of two counts of making indecent photograph/pseudo-photograph of a child. The panel noted that the certificate showed that the particulars of the first count were that between 25 April 2023 and 15 January 2025, at Wolverhampton, Mr Shepherd made an indecent photograph, namely 14 Category C images of a child. The particulars of the second count were that between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025, at Wolverhampton, Mr Shepherd made an indecent photograph, namely one Category B image of a child.

The record sheet further detailed that Mr Shepherd had been convicted on 15 October 2025 of three counts of possessing indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of a child. The panel noted that the certificate showed that the particulars of the first count were that between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025, at Wolverhampton, Mr Shepherd had in his possession an indecent photograph, namely 40 Category C still images of children. The particulars of the second count were that between 25 April 2023 and 15 January 2025, at Wolverhampton, Mr Shepherd had in his possession an indecent photograph, namely 1 Category B still image of children. The particulars of the third count were that between 24 April 2023 and 15 January 2025, at Wolverhampton, Mr Shepherd had in his possession an indecent photograph, namely 4 Category A movies of children.

The certificate of conviction detailed that Mr Shepherd had been convicted on 15 October 2025 of one count of possession of extreme pornographic image/images portraying an act of intercourse/oral sex with a dead/alive animal.

The panel noted that it appeared that Mr Shepherd pleaded guilty to each offence.

The panel also noted that it appeared from the record that Mr Shepherd had been sentenced in respect of the allegations to a prison sentence of 12 months suspended for two years and a 20 day rehabilitation activity requirement. In addition, he was subject to police notification requirements for 10 years and a 10 year Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, including the record sheet from Cannock Magistrates' Court, the notice of referral form and the statement of agreed facts, the panel was satisfied that the allegations had been proven to the standard of the balance of probabilities.

The panel found allegations 1, 2 and 3 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 convictions of relevant offences.

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Shepherd 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 [...]
- 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 Shepherd's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting insofar as they related to convictions for offences concerned with indecent photographs or pseudo-photograph of children including category "A" videos of children.

The panel therefore considered it clear that the behaviour involved in committing the offences could clearly have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils and/or members of the public.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Shepherd's behaviour, in engaging in the conduct which he had so as to commit the offences, could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Shepherd's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment (albeit suspended) which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed. The panel was of the view that the offences were very serious. The child protection and public protection issues engaged by Mr Shepherd's behaviour were demonstrated by the terms of the sexual harm prevention order imposed which included a prohibition on Mr Shepherd having any unsupervised contact with a child under 16 without the informed consent of the child's parents or guardian and children's social services.

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

This was a case concerning offences involving any 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 is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel were not made aware of any mitigating circumstances in Mr Shepherd's case.

The panel saw no evidence that Mr Shepherd's teaching proficiency was of note, and the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the convictions was relevant to Mr Shepherd's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that the convictions were for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of 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 the light of the panel's findings against Mr Shepherd, which involved convictions related to indecent images of pupils, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Shepherd 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 Shepherd 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 Shepherd in the profession.

There was no evidence before the panel regarding Mr Shepherd's abilities as an educator, and the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Shepherd 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 Shepherd.

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 [...] safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature [.....];
- 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 to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk e.g. failed to notify the designated safeguarding lead and/or make a referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies when abuse, neglect and/or harmful cultural practices were identified;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including [...] failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- violation of the rights of pupils;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;

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 Shepherd's actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Shepherd was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

There was no evidence before the panel that Mr Shepherd demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel had no evidence before it to demonstrate that the incident was out of character.

The panel was not provided with any evidence in mitigation. The panel did not have any evidence before it to demonstrate that Mr Shepherd demonstrated any insight or remorse for his actions, other than an email from Mr Shepherd to the presenting officer in which he stated that he was “*deeply devastated that this has happened and I am sorry for what happened*”.

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 Shepherd 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 Shepherd. The seriousness of the offending behaviour which involved making and/or possessing indecent images of children including category A videos 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 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. It was clear that this offence type was directly engaged by the nature of Mr Shepherd’s convictions.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period

before a review is considered appropriate. None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The panel considered that there was no evidence of mitigation in this case and the only comment that Mr Shepherd had offered was that he was “*deeply devastated that this has happened and I am sorry for what happened*”.

Whilst the panel noted this apology, which it considered an acknowledgment that Mr Shepherd had been found guilty of the offences, it did not consider it had any meaningful evidence at all of insight or remorse on Mr Shepherd's part. The panel considered there was a significant risk that the offending behaviour could be repeated.

The panel again carefully considered the relevant offences of which Mr Shepherd had been convicted. The panel considered that these serious offences, displaying, as they apparently did, a sexual interest in children and an active engagement in progressing that interest via the conduct it had found proven, were fundamentally incompatible with Mr Shepherd being allowed to return to any teaching role.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Shepherd 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 [...]
- 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 Shepherd involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they involve a conviction for the relevant offence of making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of a child.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of a relevant conviction, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Shepherd, 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 has observed:

“In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Shepherd, which involved convictions related to indecent images of pupils, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public.”

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 has set out as follows:

"The panel was not provided with any evidence in mitigation. The panel did not have any evidence before it to demonstrate that Mr Shepherd demonstrated any insight or remorse for his actions, other than an email from Mr Shepherd to the presenting officer in which stated that he was *"deeply devastated that this has happened and I am sorry for what happened"*."

In my judgement, the 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 has observed:

"Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Shepherd were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for making indecent images of a child and possessing extreme pornographic images in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Shepherd himself. The panel has commented:

"There was no evidence before the panel that Mr Shepherd demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel had no evidence before it to demonstrate that the incident was out of character."

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the "seriousness of the offending behaviour which involved making and/or possessing indecent images of children including category A videos".

I have also noted the panel's findings that there was no evidence that Mr Shepherd's actions were not deliberate or to suggest that he was acting under extreme duress.

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

The panel has noted that the Advice states that where cases involve making indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of a child, the public interest will weigh in favour of not offering a review period. The panel has commented that it "was clear that this offence type was directly engaged by the nature of Mr Shepherd's convictions."

I have considered the panel's comments on the lack of evidence of mitigation and the risk of repetition. The panel has said:

"The panel considered that there was no evidence of mitigation in this case and the only comment that Mr Shepherd had offered was that he was *"deeply devastated that this has happened and I am sorry for what happened"*.

Whilst the panel noted this apology, which it considered an acknowledgment that Mr Shepherd had been found guilty of the offences, it did not consider it had any meaningful evidence at all of insight or remorse on Mr Shepherd's part. The panel considered there was a significant risk that the offending behaviour could be repeated."

I have also taken account of the panel's concluding comment:

"The panel again carefully considered the relevant offences of which Mr Shepherd had been convicted. The panel considered that these serious offences, displaying,

as they apparently did, a sexual interest in children and an active engagement in progressing that interest via the conduct it had found proven, were fundamentally incompatible with Mr Shepherd being allowed to return to any teaching role.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response 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 serious nature of the offences of which Mr Shepherd was convicted, the lack of evidence of insight and remorse, and the risk of repetition.

I consider therefore that allowing for no review period is necessary to maintain public confidence and is proportionate and in the public interest.

This means that Mr Christopher Shepherd 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 Shepherd 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 Christopher Shepherd 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 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 17 August 2026