



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Mr Anthony Conroy: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

19 February 2016

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| A. Introduction | 3 |
| B. Allegations | 4 |
| C. Preliminary applications | 6 |
| D. Summary of evidence | 7 |
| Documents | 7 |
| Witnesses | 7 |
| E. Decision and reasons | 7 |
| Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State | 16 |
| Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State | 19 |

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

Teacher: Mr Anthony Conroy

Teacher ref number: 92/46935

Teacher date of birth: 24 October 1969

NCTL case reference: 13371

Date of determination: 19 February 2016

Former employer: Service Children's Education, Ministry of Defence.

A. Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (“the National College”) convened on 18 and 19 February 2016 at 53 to 55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Mr Anthony Conroy.

The panel members were Mr Phillip Riggon (teacher panellist – in the chair), Professor Ian Hughes (lay panellist) and Mrs Kulvinder Sandal (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Paddy Roche of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the National College was Mr Ben Chapman of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mr Anthony Conroy was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

B. Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Proceedings dated 30 October 2015.

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

Whilst employed at the Gloucester School by the Service Children's Education, Ministry of Defence in Northern Germany, he:

1. Engaged in inappropriate contact with one or more students in that he:

a. Stated to Pupil A about Pupil B that;

i. Pupil A wanted to give him a "bj";

ii That he can always get "you know what....";

iii. That she would "work hard";

iv. That if she could suck his cock she could accept his friend request;

b. Called them:

i. Darling;

ii. Babe;

c. Asked about the love lives of one or more students;

d. Used kisses in one or more messages;

e. Asked who he should not accept Facebook friends requests from;

f. Asked who he should add on Facebook;

g. Discussed the crushes of one or more students with one or more students;

h. Embarrassed Pupil B at the Prom by announcing she fancied a teacher;

i. Spoke negatively about one or more students;

j. Used inappropriate language, in particular;

i. "friggin";

ii. "fuckin";

iii. "bitch";

- iv. "pisses";
- v. "bollocked";
- vi. "suck my cock";
- k. Discussed his girlfriend, in particular;
 - i. His girlfriend's negative reaction to finding out one or more students had a crush on him;
 - ii. Sent pictures of her;
 - iii. Her "fake boobs";
 - iv. How he "bought her boobs";
 - v. That she thought he should have a gay fling;
 - vi. Arguments with her;
 - vii. Called her a "silly bitch" for missing her flight;
 - viii. That he "fuckin bollocked her";
 - ix. Called her a "high maintenance diva";
 - x. Said "she comes for a week and packs for a fuckin fortnight";
- l. How gay men are attracted to him;
- m. Referred to one or more gay and/or bisexual people as:
 - i. "gaybois";
 - ii. "bois";
 - iii. "bi bois";
 - iv. "femme gayer";
- n. Described straight men as "real men";
- o. Discussed the sexuality of one or more students;
- p. Requested information on the sexuality of one or more students;
- q. Disclosed the sexuality of one or more members of staff;
- r. Discussed the personality of one or more members of staff;

2. Added and/or accepted as friends on Facebook:

- a. one or more students;**
- b. one or more ex- students;**

3. His conduct in respect to allegation 1 was inappropriate in that he:

- a. Used sexualised language;**
- b. Disclosed personal information to one or more students for whom he was in a position of trust;**
- c. Sought personal information about one or more students for whom he was in a position of trust.**

In the absence of a response to the Notice of Proceedings from Mr Conroy the allegations were taken to have not been admitted.

C. Preliminary applications

In view of the fact that Mr Conroy was, at the time of the events covered by the allegation, employed at a service school run by the Ministry of Defence in Northern Germany the panel considered whether it had jurisdiction in accordance with the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) regulations. The panel heard submissions from the presenting officer and decided that as Mr Conroy had previously been employed as a teacher at a school in Wigan between 1993-2003 the panel did have jurisdiction to hear the case. The panel was advised as to the interpretation of the phrase in regulation 2 "teacher means a person who is employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at: (a) a school in England." Although expressed in the present tense in order to achieve the purpose of the legislation and to reflect its public duty, the panel could interpret it to cover persons who had taught in schools in England in the past but no longer did so. The panel being satisfied from documents in the case papers that Mr Conroy had previously taught in a school in England determined that it had jurisdiction to hear this case.

As Mr Conroy failed to attend the hearing the panel considered an application from the presenting officer to proceed in the absence of the teacher. The panel noted that the Notice of Proceedings had been sent to the teacher's last known address on 30 October 2015. The Notice of Proceedings was included in the case papers at pp 5-8. The panel was satisfied it was in proper form.

The panel was told of a telephone conversation between the presenting officer and Mr Conroy on 20 January 2016 in which the teacher had said that he had been unaware, until receiving correspondence from the NCTL, that there was a hearing listed to consider the allegations against him. Mr Conroy also said that he accepted the allegations and had no intention of returning to the UK to teach. It appeared that he was at that time in

Dubai. The Presenting Officer had sent an email that same day to Mr Conroy asking whether he wanted to attend the hearing or have anyone represent him (p17). The panel was told that Mr Conroy had not responded to that email nor to a further email sent on 27 January attaching an application to proceed in his absence if he should fail to attend (p18). In that further email he was advised he could attend by telephone or Skype. Nothing more had been heard from Mr Conroy.

In the circumstances the panel was satisfied that Mr Conroy was aware of the hearing but had chosen not to attend. Thus he had waived his right to be present and the panel determined to proceed with the hearing in his absence.

D. Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 1 to 3

Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and Response – pages 4 to 18

Section 3: NCTL witness statements – pages 19 to 25

Section 4: NCTL documents – pages 26 to 165

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

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witness called by the presenting officer:

1. Witness A

E. Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

The panel confirms that it has read all the documents provided in the bundle in advance of the hearing.

The case concerns Mr Conroy's alleged engagement with two female pupils of the Gloucester School in Northern Germany on Facebook in June and July 2014. At the time of the Facebook exchanges both girls were 16. Mr Conroy was head of English at the

school, a position he had held since 2004. The evidence in the case papers suggests that he was highly regarded and liked by staff and pupils.

A transcript of the Facebook conversations is included in the case papers and the accuracy of the transcripts appears not to be challenged by Mr Conroy in the school's internal disciplinary hearing which led to his dismissal. The transcripts contain the words and comments set out in particular 1 of the allegation.

Mr Conroy, in other documents submitted during the course of the school's investigation, recognises that his behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. He says that what he did was totally out of character and expresses regret for his behaviour. At the time of these events he says he was in substantial debt, he was affected by the deaths of two close colleagues, he was uncertain about his future because of changes in the education service, he had taken on outside tuition and was struggling to cope with this additional responsibility, his sleep patterns were erratic and he was drinking too much.

Several testimonials from colleagues of Mr Conroy are included in the case papers.

Findings of fact

Our findings of fact are as follows:

The panel has found the following particulars of the allegations against Anthony Conroy proven, for these reasons:

The college's case on all the particulars under paragraph 1 which are set out below, with the exception of particular 1h, relies substantially on the transcripts of the Facebook conversations between Mr Conroy and Pupils A and B which took place in June and July 2014. The transcripts are set out at pp 83-85 of the case papers (re Pupil A) and at pp 88-108(re Pupil B). The panel has therefore considered carefully whether it can rely on the transcripts as being an accurate record of the Facebook conversations between Mr Conroy and the two pupils.

The headteacher, Witness A, who the panel judged to be a straightforward and credible witness, told the hearing that the transcript of the conversations with Pupil A "had been screenshotted and pasted by the pupil" and was emailed to the headteacher. In a subsequent interview with Pupil A, accompanied by her parents, on 15 July 2014 attended by the headteacher and Individual A (education social worker) they "talked through the Facebook printout which Student A had sent to Witness A the previous week." There is no suggestion in the notes of that meeting (pp109/110) that any issue was raised as to the accuracy or authenticity of the transcript.

In due course – on 18 November 2014 - Mr Conroy appeared before a misconduct hearing held at HQ Service Children's Education, Bielefield. He was accompanied by his union representative. Notes of the hearing were recorded as being taken by a note taker. The notes are included in the case papers at pp 145 – 160. In the course of the hearing

Mr Conroy is asked "Do you accept that the print out at Annex A was a Facebook conversation between you and Student A? " He replies "Yes."

In relation to Pupil B, Witness A told the hearing the transcript had been printed off the pupil's Facebook account and provided to the headteacher. Pupil B was also seen (separately from Pupil A) on 15 July 2014 and was accompanied by her father. This interview was also conducted by the headteacher and Individual A. The notes of the meeting are at pp111 – 112 of the case papers. The notes record that "we talked through the Facebook account print out which Student B had provided to Witness A on the previous Friday when in school accompanied by her mother". No suggestion appears to have been made at that meeting that the notes were not accurate.

At Mr Conroy's misconduct hearing on 18 November 2014 the same question is put to him about this print out and he agrees that it is a Facebook conversation between himself and Student B.

The panel has also seen notes of other interviews with Mr Conroy during the school's investigation and, at no time, does he challenge the accuracy of the transcripts. In fact he seems, on several occasions, to accept the accuracy of the records. He clearly expresses his regret for his involvement on social media with these two pupils and recognises the unacceptable nature of what he said to them over the internet. The panel is therefore satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the transcripts are accurate and can be relied upon. Those admissions are reaffirmed by Mr Conroy more than once in his responses to questions put at the school's misconduct hearing referred to above.

Thus the panel has been through the transcripts carefully and simply identifies below, under each particular, the page reference where comments are made by Mr Conroy that establish each particular is proved. The panel has not identified every page reference as, in some instances, offending or inappropriate comments are repeated.

The panel is further satisfied that the comments identified in these particulars are properly described as inappropriate especially as they are made by a mature teacher to two 16 year old female pupils.

Whilst employed at the Gloucester School by the Service Children's Education, Ministry of Defence in Northern Germany, he:

1. Engaged in inappropriate contact with one or more students in that he:

a. Stated to Pupil A about Pupil B that;

i. Pupil A wanted to give him a "bj";

Page 98.

ii That he can always get "you know what....";

Page 107.

iii. That she would "work hard";

Page 108.

iv. That if she could suck his cock she could accept his friend request;

Page 108.

b. Called them:

i. Darling;

Page 84

ii. Babe;

Page 84

c. Asked about the love lives of one or more students;

Page 93

d. Used kisses in one or more messages;

Page 88

e. Asked who he should not accept Facebook friends requests from;

Page 90

f. Asked who he should add on Facebook;

Page 104

g. Discussed the crushes of one or more students with one or more students;

Page 98

h. Embarrassed Pupil B at the prom by announcing she fancied a teacher;

Evidence of this particular is found at p111 of the case papers in the notes of interview of Pupil B. She is said to have mentioned "an incident at the prom where the teacher (Mr Conroy) had embarrassed her and a friend as they had previously made a comment about fancying another teacher."

It was also covered by Witness A in her witness statement and her evidence to the hearing. She said that following the prom three members of staff had been to see her.

They felt the comments made had been unfair and embarrassed Pupil B and the member of staff concerned. He had been publicly described by Mr Conroy as being gorgeous and Mr Conroy said Pupil B fancies him.

i. Spoke negatively about one or more students;

Page 91

j. Used inappropriate language, in particular;

i. "friggin";

Page 91

ii. "fuckin";

Page 94

iii. "bitch";

Page 107

iv. "pisses";

Page 103

v. "bollocked";

Page 107

vi. "suck my cock";

Page 108

k. Discussed his girlfriend, in particular;

i. His girlfriend's negative reaction to finding out one or more students had a crush on him;

Page 91

ii. Sent pictures of her;

Page 92

iii. Her "fake boobs";

Page 92

iv. How he "bought her boobs";

Page 92

v. That she thought he should have a gay fling;

Page 99

vi. Arguments with her;

Page 100

vii. Called her a "silly bitch" for missing her flight;

Page 107

viii. That he "fuckin bollocked her";

Page 107

ix. Called her a "high maintenance diva";

Page 107

x. Said "she comes for a week and packs for a fuckin fortnight";

Page 107

I. How gay men are attracted to him;

Page 93

m. Referred to one or more gay and/or bisexual people as:

i. "gaybois";

Page 93

ii. "bois";

Page 95

iii. "bi bois";

Page 96

iv. "femme gayer";

Page 97

n. Described straight men as "real men";

Page 104

o. Discussed the sexuality of one or more students;

Page 96

p. Requested information on the sexuality of one or more students;

Page 96

q. Disclosed the sexuality of one or more members of staff;

Page 97

r. Discussed the personality of one or more members of staff;

Page 97

2. Added and/or accepted as friends on Facebook:

a. one or more students;

This particular is admitted by Mr Conroy in the course of his Misconduct hearing. At p.147 he says "In June to July 2014 I found I was using Facebook roughly three times more than usual, therefore I was adding and being friend requested a lot more. My friends list nearly doubled with students I got on well with and helped a lot over the years."

In addition in the minutes of a meeting with Mr Conroy as part of the school's investigation which took place on 19 September 2014 he is asked how many students he had "interacted" with on Facebook. Mr Conroy is recorded as saying he believed it to be between 40-50 students. He also believed that 1/3 of these were male (p 124). In the disciplinary hearing he says "the ratio is about 60% female and 40% male."

b. one or more ex- students;

In an interview on 3 September 2014 held as part of the school's investigation Mr Conroy is recorded as being asked if he had Facebook contact with pupils. He replies as follows "I have kept in contact with students. I have never added anyone still at school until the last few weeks of term. I added 3 students in a two week period. I was under the impression she had left school. I would not add anyone still at school." He goes on to say that he uses Facebook to keep in contact with pupils and find out how they are getting on. (p 116).

In the course of the disciplinary hearing on p154 Mr Conroy mentions adding Pupil D in November 2013 and notes that she left school in June 2013.

From these comments the panel is satisfied that he has added or accepted as friends one or more ex pupils as alleged.

3. His conduct in respect to allegation 1 was inappropriate in that he:

a. Used sexualised language;

The content of the Facebook transcripts allows no other conclusion since it contains references to oral sex, fake boobs, gay persons and sexuality of both staff and some pupils. This particular is proved.

b. Disclosed personal information to one or more students for whom he was in a position of trust;

This particular is proved in relation to the disclosures made during the Facebook conversations about the sexuality of a staff colleague and the very personal details of Mr Conroy's relationship with his then girlfriend as set out under particulars 1 (k) (i) to (x).

c. Sought personal information about one or more students for whom he was in a position of trust.

This particular is established in relation to Mr Conroy's questions to Pupil B about the sexuality of members of her year group as recorded in the Facebook transcripts.

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

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

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

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Anthony Conroy in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considers that by reference to Part Two, Mr Conroy 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;
- 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.

Thus the panel is satisfied that the conduct of the teacher fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel has also considered whether Mr Conroy's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 8 and 9 of the Advice.

The panel has found that the offence of intolerance of sexual orientation is relevant.

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

The panel is satisfied that Mr Conroy is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct being misconduct of a serious nature falling significantly short of the standards of conduct expected of a teacher - as evidenced by his failure to comply with fundamental safeguarding principles despite having received training at the school. The panel noted in particular the effect that Mr Conroy's unwelcome behaviour had on Pupils A and B who were both described as vulnerable pupils by the headteacher. Pupil A is quoted as saying she did not want to be in school the following September if the teacher was in school and that she was scared she may bump into him. Pupil B said that she felt awkward when she saw him in school and did not speak to him. She did not really want to see him. At the end of her interview with the headteacher she said "This is not a place I want to be, I feel bad for getting him in trouble."

In addition the panel has taken into account how the teaching profession is viewed by others and considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel has taken account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way they behave.

The findings of misconduct are serious and the conduct displayed would likely have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher. The public rightly expects teachers to behave as role models and by his flagrant breach of the professional boundaries which he should have observed the panel judges that Mr Conroy has damaged the collective reputation of the profession. The serious nature of his conduct is further aggravated by the age of the pupils involved, the sexualised and graphic language deployed, his intolerance of gay people and the breach of trust disclosed by this case.

The panel therefore finds that the teacher's actions also constitute conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct/conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it is 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 has to consider whether it is an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it is 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 has considered the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and having done so has found all of them to be relevant in this case, namely:-

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

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Conroy, there is a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils arising from his entirely inappropriate contact with Pupils A and B on Facebook. The panel is also particularly concerned at the content of his conversations and that, on his own admission, Mr Conroy added a very significant number of current and recent pupils as friends on Facebook.

Similarly, the panel considers that public confidence in the profession could be adversely affected if conduct such as that found against Mr Conroy were not treated with appropriate seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel also recognises the strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession that needs to be considered in cases where inappropriate relationships with pupils on social media are involved.

Notwithstanding the clear public interest considerations that are present, the panel has considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order taking into account the effect that this would have on the teacher. However the panel has little information about the teacher as he failed to attend the hearing. The panel knows that he has been a member of the profession for approximately 20 years and that he spent 10 years at the Gloucester school before being dismissed for these events. The panel has been told by the presenting officer that he is now believed to be in Dubai and indicated in a telephone conversation with the presenting officer on 20 January 2016 that he accepted the allegations and has no intention of returning to the UK to teach.

In carrying out the balancing exercise the panel has considered the public interest considerations both in favour of and against prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Conroy. 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 proven. In the list of such behaviours, those that are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position of trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils) or violation of the rights of pupils;
- deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues;

Even though there were behaviours that would point to a prohibition order being appropriate, the panel has gone on to consider whether or not there were sufficient mitigating factors to militate against a prohibition order being an appropriate and proportionate measure to impose, particularly taking into account the nature and severity of the behaviour in this case.

Although Mr Conroy says that the offending conversations often occurred at times when he had drunk substantial quantities of alcohol it cannot be said that his actions were not deliberate. He was not acting under duress.

The panel does, however, accept that he has a previous good record in teaching over a period of about 20 years. Witness A, spoke highly of him when questioned by the panel. She described him as a highly respected member of staff. She said that academic results had improved significantly under him and he was highly regarded by colleagues. She had personally observed his lessons and until the disclosures made to her by Pupils A and B she had no concerns about him. That impression was supported by six written testimonials in the case papers (albeit most were unsigned) mainly from staff colleagues at the school which had been presented to the school's disciplinary hearing. A consistent picture emerged of a teacher with a previous good history.

Mr Conroy himself in the investigation interviews and in other documents in the case papers also refers to various personal difficulties at the time of this episode of unacceptable conduct. Those difficulties include being in debt, the recent loss of two close colleagues, uncertainty about his future because of changes in the education service, taking on too much additional tutoring, and difficulties sleeping. He says those issues led to him drinking too much.

We recognise also that he expresses regret for his behaviour and some insight. He says that his behaviour was out of character and certainly his previous record supports that

assertion. However his failure to attend this hearing allowed the panel no opportunity to question him and thus assess his reaction to what he did and his understanding of the seriousness of his conduct and its potential impact on those directly affected by it. In a school where many pupils were the children of serving personnel and therefore, the hearing was told, some will have had parents away serving abroad this is a particularly acute consideration in the panel's judgement.

Taking all of these matters into account the panel is of the view that prohibition is both proportionate and appropriate. The panel has decided that the public interest considerations outweigh the interests of Mr Conroy. The number of Facebook conversations, the nature of the language used and the topics discussed being unrelated to school matters, the timing of the contact made which was mostly late at night, the personalisation of many of the comments and the intolerance towards gay people expressed are all significant factors in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel makes 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 decide to recommend that a review period of the order should be recommended. The panel was mindful that the Advice advises 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 proven, would militate against a review period being recommended. One of these behaviours includes intolerance on the grounds of sexual orientation. The panel has found that the teacher has been responsible for making some unacceptable remarks about gay persons but the panel judges that those remarks, in the circumstances and context in which they were made, are not so extreme as to exclude the possibility of a review period being allowed in this case. In making this judgement the panel has given weight to the teacher's previous record and his candid acknowledgement throughout the school's investigation and the disciplinary hearing that his conduct had been inappropriate and unacceptable.

The panel felt the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and as such decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended with a review period of five years.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendations of the panel both in respect of sanction and review.

The panel has made findings of fact and found all allegations proven. The panel has also found unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Mr Conroy involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

There is a strong public interest consideration in this case, in respect of the protection of pupils arising from Mr Conroy's entirely inappropriate contact with pupils on Facebook. I note the panel's consideration that Mr Conroy has a previous good record of teaching over a period of about 20 years. The panel also recognised that Mr Conroy expressed regret for his behaviour and some insight.

I am mindful of the fact that many pupils at the school were children of serving personnel, some will have had parents away serving abroad, and this is a particularly acute consideration in the panel's judgement.

I have taken into account the need to balance the public interest with the interests of the teacher. I have also taken into account the need to be proportionate. I have read and taken into account the guidance published by the Secretary of State. The panel has decided that the public interest considerations outweigh the interests of Mr Conroy. The number of Facebook conversations; nature of language; the timing of the contact; personalisation of many of the comments and the intolerance towards gay people are significant factors in forming that opinion. I agree with the panel's view.

Taking all of the facts into account I support the recommendation of the panel that Mr Conroy be prohibited. This seems to me to be proportionate and appropriate.

I have also considered the matter of a review period. I have noted that the panel has given weight to the teachers' previous record and his candid acknowledgement throughout the school's investigation and the disciplinary hearing that his conduct has been inappropriate and unacceptable. However I have also given careful consideration to the language used by Mr Conroy which is offensive, sexual, derogatory and intolerant. The serious nature of his conduct is further aggravated by the age of the pupils involved, his intolerance of gay people and the breach of trust disclosed by this case.

The panel has recommended a review period of 5 years. For the reasons set out above, I disagree with the panel's recommendation that a review period is appropriate.

This means that Mr Anthony Conroy 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 Conroy 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 Anthony Conroy has a right of appeal to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Millions', written on a light-colored background.

Decision maker: Jayne Millions

Date: 23 February 2016

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