



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Gemma Beckett: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

January 2021

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	5
Documents	5
Statement of Agreed Facts	5
Decision and reasons	6
Findings of fact	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	11
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	14

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

Teacher:	Ms Gemma Beckett
Teacher ref number:	1236052
Teacher date of birth:	19 November 1989
TRA reference:	19087
Date of determination:	20 January 2021
Former employer:	John Henry Newman Catholic College, Birmingham

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 20 January 2021, over Microsoft Teams, to consider the case of Ms Gemma Beckett.

The panel members were Ms Karen McArthur, lay panellist – in the chair, Ms Dawn Hawkins, teacher panellist and Mr Zubair Hanslot, lay panellist.

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr James Danks of Blake Morgan LLP.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Ms Beckett that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Ms Beckett provided a signed Statement of Agreed Facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer or Ms Beckett.

The meeting took place in private and the decision was announced in public.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Meeting dated 17 December 2020.

It was alleged that Ms Beckett was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst employed as History Teacher and Sixth Form Coordinator at John Henry Newman Catholic College in Birmingham:

1. She failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and/or engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A from approximately December 2016 in that:
 - a) She replied to and sent emails which:
 - i. were extensive in number;
 - ii. were sent to Pupil A's personal email address;
 - iii. were sent late at night on one or more occasions;
 - iv. referred to her feelings towards Pupil A on one or more occasions; and
 - v. contained information about her personal life.
 - b) She exchanged mobile telephone numbers with Pupil A
 - c) She used her personal mobile telephone number to correspond with Pupil A on one or more occasions
 - d) She sent gifts to Pupil A on one or more occasions
 - e) She accepted gifts from Pupil A, which you failed to disclose to the School
 - f) She met 1:1 with Pupil A outside the School
 - g) She invited and/or permitted Pupil A to visit her home on one or more occasions
 - h) She engaged in sexual activity with Pupil A
 - i) She moved Pupil A to live in her home
2. Her behaviour as may be found proven at 1 above was conduct of a sexual nature and / or was sexually motivated.
3. Her behaviour as may be found proven at 1 above was notwithstanding that she knew / ought to have known that Pupil A was vulnerable [redacted].
4. She failed to disclose to the School:
 - a) That Pupil A contacted her by her personal email and mobile phone;

- b) That Pupil A gave her gifts;
 - c) That Pupil A described her feelings towards her;
 - d) That Pupil A came to her house; and
 - e) That she was living with Pupil A.
5. Her conduct as may be found proven at 4 above lacked integrity and / or was dishonest.

Ms Beckett admitted all of the allegations in her response to the Notice of Referral Form, signed by her on 2 September 2020. Ms Beckett also accepted the facts alleged, as set out within the Statement of Agreed Facts ('the Statement'). The Statement is signed and dated, by both the teacher and the TRA's presenting officer.

Within the Statement, Ms Beckett has admitted that her conduct amounts to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology – pages 2 - 3

Section 2: Notice of proceedings, response and Notice of Meeting – pages 5 – 12C

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts and the Presenting Officer Representations - pages 14 - 21

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 23 - 342

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 344 – 346.

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

Statement of Agreed Facts

The panel considered the Statement, which was signed by Ms Beckett on 2 November 2020.

The panel has also considered all the other evidence within the documents.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Ms Beckett for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel is aware of its power to direct that the case be considered at a hearing but does not consider that such a direction was necessary, appropriate or in the interests of justice in this case.

Ms Beckett had been employed as a History Teacher at the John Henry Newman Catholic College ('the College') since September 2013. In September 2016, Pupil A commenced Year 13 at the College, and turned 18 in that month. Shortly afterwards, Pupil A's mother died.

In late 2016, Ms Beckett and Pupil A developed a mutual romantic relationship with each other, which intensified in 2017. Pupil A left the College's roll in July 2017 and moved into Ms Beckett's home in October 2017.

In September 2019, the College was notified that Ms Beckett was in a relationship with a former pupil and an investigation commenced. Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, on 4 November 2019, Ms Beckett resigned from her role at the College.

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:

It was alleged that Ms Beckett was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst employed as History Teacher and Sixth Form Coordinator at John Henry Newman Catholic College in Birmingham:

- 1. You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and/or engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A from approximately December 2016 in that:**
 - a) You replied to and sent emails which:**
 - i. were extensive in number;**
 - ii. were sent to Pupil A's personal email address;**
 - iii. were sent late at night on one or more occasions;**

- iv. **referred to your feelings towards Pupil A on one or more occasions; and**
- v. **contained information about your personal life.**

b) You exchanged mobile telephone numbers with Pupil A

c) You used your personal mobile telephone number to correspond with Pupil A on one or more occasions

The panel noted that Ms Beckett had unequivocally accepted the facts of these particulars within the Statement. On the basis that she, along with Pupil A, was best placed to confirm the events that took place between the two of them, the panel considered her admissions within the Statement to carry significant weight.

The panel noted that, within the bundle before it, were a number of emails between Ms Beckett and Pupil A. Whilst the emails from Ms Beckett were sent from her official, College account, it was clear from the documents that these were sent to a 'Gmail' account, which included Pupil A's name at the start of the email address. The panel was therefore content that Ms Beckett had corresponded with Pupil A, via Pupil A's personal email account.

From the timings of the emails, it was similarly clear to the panel that these were sent out of College hours and, on occasion, late at night or early in the morning. These emails included conversations of a personal nature, such as information on Ms Beckett's university degree, and nicknames and slang terminology being used. The emails also stated that there was some technology problem with texts being sent between Ms Beckett and Pupil A, which clearly indicated that mobile phone numbers had been exchanged.

Teachers and pupils must maintain appropriate boundaries. In the panels view, the emails were inappropriate in their frequency, timing, content and that they were sent to Pupil A's personal account.

Similarly, whilst the panel did not have evidence as to the content of the text messages, a teacher exchanging messages with a pupil, for a non-educational reason, crosses the boundary was to what is appropriate.

On the basis of the Statement, and additional documentary corroboration, the panel was satisfied that these particulars were proved.

d) You sent gifts to Pupil A on one or more occasions

e) You accepted gifts from Pupil A, which you failed to disclose to the School

The panel noted that Ms Beckett had unequivocally accepted the facts of these particulars within the Statement.

The panel also had reference to an email from Ms Beckett to Pupil A, which references a gift from her, and photographs from Pupil A's Instagram account that indicates presents having been received.

The panel also noted that the record of interview from the local investigation conducted by the College, which Ms Beckett had signed as being accurate, stated that gifts had both been sent, and received, by her to/from Pupil A.

In the panel's view, the multiple exchange of gifts between a teacher and pupil, especially when the gifts are of some value and profess to personal feelings, is clearly inappropriate. The panel determined that these particulars were proved.

f) You met 1:1 with Pupil A outside the School

g) You invited and/or permitted Pupil A to visit your home on one or more occasions

h) You engaged in sexual activity with Pupil A

i) You moved Pupil A to live in your home

The panel noted that Ms Beckett had unequivocally accepted the facts of these particulars within the Statement. This acceptance was consistent with Ms Beckett's position of the facts given to the College during the investigatory interview.

A teacher meeting a pupil outside of school, in the teacher's own home and engaging in sexual activity, is clearly inappropriate. On balance, the panel was content that the TRA had discharged its burden and found these particulars proved.

2. Your behaviour as may be found proven at 1 above was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

The panel accepted the legal advice on this matter, and noted Ms Beckett's admission, in the Statement, that her conduct had been of a sexual nature and sexually motivated.

The facts relating to allegation 1 suggested to the panel that Ms Beckett's actions with Pupil A may have been sexually motivated, albeit there was no substantive evidence that this was undertaken in a deliberately exploitative manner.

When determining the state of mind of a person, a panel must give weight to that person's explanation of what their state of mind was, or had been, at the relevant time. That person would be best placed to give such evidence, rather than the panel having to rely on possible inferences. In this case, Ms Beckett had made unequivocal admissions and the panel found this allegation proved in respect of sexual motivation.

In respect of Ms Beckett's conduct being of a sexual nature, there was nothing inherent in particulars 1.a to 1.g and 1.i that necessarily made those acts 'of a sexual nature'.

The panel accepted Ms Beckett's admission to 1.h, which was an act clearly sexual in nature, but in the absence of any other evidence, did not find 1.a to 1.g, and 1.i, proved.

4. You failed to disclose to the School:

- a) That Pupil A contacted you by her personal email and mobile phone;**
- b) That Pupil A gave you gifts;**
- c) That Pupil A described her feelings towards you;**
- d) That Pupil A came to your house; and**
- e) That you were living with Pupil A.**

The panel noted Ms Beckett's unequivocal admission that she had not disclosed these facts to the College. In the absence of any evidence that she had done, the panel found this allegation proved.

5. Your conduct as may be found proven at 4 above lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

The panel again noted that Ms Beckett had accepted that her conduct lacked integrity and was dishonest. When an allegation referenced a particular person's state of mind, the panel considered that person best placed to confirm this.

The panel also noted that Ms Beckett admission was consistent with the account she gave to the College in 2019. In this account, she accepted that she had 'been discreet' about the relationship so she did not put colleagues into difficult position and had 'moved the conversation on' if asked about her personal life. In the panel's view, this clearly indicated that Ms Beckett was aware that her conduct in allegation 4 was not appropriate and that she should have volunteered this information to the College but did not.

The panel was content that, on the basis of the Statement and earlier account given by Ms Beckett, that this allegation was proved.

The panel did not find the following allegation proved.

3. Your behaviour as may be found proven at 1 above was notwithstanding that you knew / ought to have known that Pupil A was vulnerable [redacted].

The panel noted that Ms Beckett had admitted this allegation. Nevertheless, the panel also reminded itself that it was not obliged to accept this admission.

It was accepted that [redacted] the conduct alleged in allegation 1 commenced in December 2016. Whilst [redacted] must have been traumatic, and will have increased

Pupil A's vulnerability at the time, the panel was cognisant that the conduct complained of was, at least, three months after this event. This time-period was a significant factor in the panel's consideration.

There was no evidence that Pupil A remained vulnerable, to whatever extent, in December 2016. The panel noted that Pupil A [redacted] in that period, but this did not automatically equate to her being vulnerable.

On this basis, for such a serious allegation, the panel do not consider Ms Beckett's admission to be sufficient evidence to prove this allegation.

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

Having found the majority of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel noted that Ms Beckett accepted that her behaviour amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and also conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. However, such a decision was one for the panel to turn its own, independent mind to, and it did so without consideration to Ms Beckett's position.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Beckett in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Beckett was in breach of the following standards:

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

The panel had found proved that Ms Beckett's conduct was sexually motivated and that she had entered into an inappropriate relationship with a pupil. In the panel's view, whilst

Pupil A was over the age of 18 from the start of the conduct complained of, and had left the College before the most serious conduct commenced, the relationship had arisen as a result of Ms Beckett being her teacher and there was some culpability even after Pupil A was no longer on the roll at the College.

The panel had also determined that Ms Beckett's actions had been dishonest and that she lacked integrity, which can only be viewed as a serious failing by a teacher.

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

The panel also considered whether Ms Beckett's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 10 and 11 of the Advice and found none of these to be relevant.

The panel took into account the way 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 also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way they behave.

The findings of misconduct were serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception.

Having found the facts of particulars 1, 2 (in part), 4 and 5 proved, the panel further found that Ms Beckett's conduct amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and 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 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 protection of pupils;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Ms Beckett, which involved her developing feelings for Pupil A and entering into a relationship with her whilst, for a short time, she remained a pupil at the College, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils.

Similarly, in the light of there being findings of dishonesty and a lack of integrity against Ms Beckett, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against her was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel determined that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Ms Beckett was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

The panel decided that there was some public interest consideration in retaining Ms Beckett in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator and she would be able to make some contribution to the profession.

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 Ms Beckett.

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 Ms Beckett. 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:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils) or violation of the rights of pupils;
- dishonesty especially where there have been serious consequences, and/or it has been repeated and/or covered up;
- sexual misconduct, for example, 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;

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.

In the light of the panel's findings, and full admissions by Ms Beckett, there was no evidence that her actions were not deliberate.

Similarly, there was no evidence to suggest that Ms Beckett was acting under duress, and the panel found, in part, her to be sexually motivated, albeit within a relationship of mutual desire.

Ms Beckett did have a previously good history but the panel did not have any recent references regarding her teaching ability, which would have been of assistance.

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 Ms Beckett 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 Ms Beckett. The conduct, specifically entering into a sexual relationship and then failing to disclose its existence, for a considerable period of time, 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 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. The panel did not find any of these to be present. Whilst these behaviours include serious dishonesty and serious sexual misconduct, the panel did not consider Ms Beckett's actions to be deemed 'serious' in these respects. Her dishonest conduct was, effectively, one of omission / diversion and the sexual misconduct was with an adult, albeit one who was a pupil (or had been a pupil in recent

time). In the panel's view, these factors just mitigated the seriousness to a level that did not require them to be deemed 'serious'.

Ms Beckett had been involved in the TRA proceedings to a limited extent. However, this participation had included her making full admissions to all of the allegations, including those relating to her state of mind. Ms Beckett had done so at an early stage, which was to her credit and could indicate some appreciation that her behaviour was unacceptable.

The panel did not, however, have any further material before it from Ms Beckett to explain how she allowed the events to develop. This would have assisted the panel in its consideration as, being mindful that Ms Beckett was a relatively newly qualified teacher, she should have been more aware of the risks regarding teacher / pupil relationships, by virtue of her training.

Similarly, there was no material from Ms Beckett as to how she had reflected on her actions to ensure similar incidents would not reoccur in the future, nor an indication of an appreciation as to the effect her actions may have had on former colleagues, the College or Pupil A (and her family).

Dishonesty and acts of sexual motivation can only be considered as serious failings. However, for the reasons above, the panel did not consider Ms Beckett's actions in these respects to be at the most serious end of the spectrum. The panel did think that her conduct was remediable, albeit only after some considerable reflection, which would allow her to evidence the development she had made to her insight and strategies she now has in place to minimise the risk of anything similar occurring in the future.

The panel decided that 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 provisions for a review period after 5 years.

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

the profession into disrepute. In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven, and/or found that some allegations do not amount to unacceptable professional conduct or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Gemma Beckett should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of five years.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Beckett 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 finds that the conduct of Ms Beckett fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and/or engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a pupil, dishonesty and lack of integrity.

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

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children. The panel has observed, "In the light of the findings against Ms Beckett, which

involved her developing feelings for Pupil A and entering into a relationship with her whilst, for a short time, she remained a pupil at the College, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils". A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, "Ms Beckett had been involved in the TRA proceedings to a limited extent. However, this participation had included her making full admissions to all of the allegations, including those relating to her state of mind. Ms Beckett had done so at an early stage, which was to her credit and could indicate some appreciation that her behaviour was unacceptable". I have also noted "The panel did not, however, have any further material before it from Ms Beckett to explain how she allowed the events to develop. This would have assisted the panel in its consideration as, being mindful that Ms Beckett was a relatively newly qualified teacher, she should have been more aware of the risks regarding teacher/pupil relationships, by virtue of her training". In my judgement, the lack of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, "In the light of there being findings of dishonesty and a lack of integrity against Ms Beckett, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against her was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession". I am particularly mindful of the finding which involved Ms Beckett developing feelings for Pupil A, entering into a relationship with her, whilst she remained a pupil at the College and the dishonesty found 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 unacceptable professional conduct, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Beckett herself. Although she is no longer working at the school the panel commented "Ms Beckett did have a previously good history but the panel did not have any recent references regarding her teaching ability, which would have been of assistance" and "no doubt had been cast upon

her abilities as an educator and she would be able to make some contribution to the profession". A prohibition order would prevent Ms Beckett from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments "The conduct, specifically entering into a sexual relationship and then failing to disclose its existence, for a considerable period of time, was a significant factor in forming that opinion". I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Beckett 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, that is not backed up by evidence of remorse or insight, 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 a 5 year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments "Dishonesty and acts of sexual motivation can only been considered as serious failings. However, for the reasons above, the panel did not consider Ms Beckett's actions in these respects to be at the most serious end of the spectrum. The panel did think that her conduct was remediable, albeit only after some considerable reflection, which would allow her to evidence the development she had made to her insight and strategies she now has in place to minimise the risk of anything similar occurring in the future. The panel has also said that "it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period after 5 years".

I have considered whether a 5 year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case a number of factors mean that a 2 year review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the dishonesty and lack of integrity found and the lack of either insight or remorse to show how Ms Beckett had reflected on her actions to ensure similar incidents would not reoccur in the future and that Ms Beckett understood the effect her actions may have had on colleagues, the College, Pupil A and her family.

I consider therefore that a 5 year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession, after which the teacher may apply for a prohibition order to be set aside.

This means that Ms Gemma Beckett is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 28 January 2026, 5 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Beckett remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Ms Beckett has a right of appeal to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Buxcey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 22 January 2021

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