



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Mr Steven Barry Ockendon Professional conduct panel outcome

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

September 2015

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

Teacher: Mr Steven Barry Ockendon

Teacher ref number: 0048097

Teacher date of birth: 04 October 1979

NCTL case reference: 10861

Date of determination: 28 September 2015

Former employer: St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Essex
St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Essex
Fordham All Saints Church of England Primary School, Essex

A. Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (“the National College”) convened on 16 September 2015 at 53 to 55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry CV1 3BH to consider the case of Mr Steven Barry Ockendon. The panel continued the hearing on 17 September 2015 and then adjourned until 28 September 2015, when the hearing was concluded.

The panel members were Mr Martin Greenslade (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Alison Robb-Webb (teacher panellist) and Mr Tony Woodward (former teacher panellist (not having been a teacher in the five years prior to the hearing)).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Thomas Whitfield of Eversheds LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the National College was Ms Samantha Paxman of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Steven Ockendon 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 8 June 2015.

It was alleged that Mr Steven Barry Ockendon was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, in that he:

1. Abused his position of trust by repeatedly failing to adhere to professional boundaries with children/young people between 2003-2013, in that:
 - a. Whilst employed at St Thomas More's Primary School in 2003 he had an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A leading to him being issued with management advice on maintaining professional relationships with pupils;
 - b. Whilst employed at St Peter's Primary School in 2007 he acted in an inappropriate manner with ex-pupil B, who was 15 years of age at the time and on a work placement, leading to him being issued with management advice on breaching professional boundaries;
 - c. In 2007 he acted in an inappropriate manner with ex-Pupil A, a member of his theatre company, by
 - i. asking him to remove his underwear whilst he was trying on costumes for a play;
 - ii. staying in the room with him whilst he removed his underwear;
 - d. Whilst employed at Fordham All Saint's C of E Primary School he acted in an inappropriate manner by;
 - i. contacting an ex-Pupil C, who was 16 years old, via Facebook;
 - ii. allowing Pupil C to drive his car when he was under the age limit;
 - iii. Contacting D, a 14 year old member of his theatre company, on Facebook
2. He acted dishonestly by failing to inform the head teacher of Fordham All Saint's C of E Primary School, when questioned as part of a formal investigation, of relevant issues at previous schools and the advice that had been given about professional boundaries with the intention of concealing the truth from the investigation.

Mr Ockendon denied the allegations.

C. Preliminary applications

Note: An NCTL professional conduct panel hearing of allegations against Mr Ockendon (which had since been amended) had previously been adjourned at the outset due to Mr Ockendon's absence. There had also been two case management hearings prior to the hearing commencing on 16 September 2015. The preliminary applications set out below relate solely to those matters considered by the professional conduct panel following its having convened on 16 September 2015, to consider the amended allegations, set out in the notice of proceedings dated 8 June 2015.

The panel considered an application by the presenting officer for the hearing to proceed on 16 September 2015 in the absence of Mr Ockendon. The panel was satisfied that the NCTL had complied with the requirements for service of an effective Notice of Proceedings. The panel therefore went on to consider the exercise of its discretion to proceed with the hearing in the absence of Mr Ockendon.

The panel recognised that its discretion to commence a hearing in the absence of the teacher had to be exercised with the utmost care and caution, and that its discretion was a severely constrained one. The panel took account of the various factors drawn to its attention from the case of *R v Jones*.

The panel noted that Mr Ockendon had engaged in extensive correspondence with the NCTL, from which it was clear that he was aware of the proceedings. The panel was also satisfied from the evidence that Mr Ockendon was aware of the date of the hearing.

Mr Ockendon had given several indications to the NCTL that he would not attend the hearing, including on 5 May 2015, in which he indicated that he would "no longer be cooperating or partaking in any further involvement in this investigation". On the first day of the hearing (16 September 2015), Mr Ockendon sent to the NCTL a document which included an indication that Mr Ockendon was not content with the hearings having being adjourned and indicated that he had provided written submissions "with the intention of not holding up the hearing any longer".

Mr Ockendon had referred to medical reasons for being unable to attend. He had been invited to provide up to date medical evidence in support of this assertion and the hearing had been adjourned once to allow him to do so. Moreover, Mr Ockendon indicated that he would provide such evidence, but none was provided to the panel. Without such evidence the panel considered that there was no evidence before them that an adjournment of any length would result in Mr Ockendon's attendance.

The panel had regard to it being only in rare and exceptional circumstances that a decision should be taken in favour of the hearing taking place in Mr Ockendon's absence.

The panel also had regard to the extent of the disadvantage to Mr Ockendon in not being able to give his account of events, given the nature of the evidence against him. However, the panel took into account the fact that Mr Ockendon had provided extensive written submissions to the panel and the fact that the panel could question those witnesses called to give oral evidence, considering such points as were favourable to Mr Ockendon as were reasonably available on the evidence.

The panel reminded itself that it was able to exercise vigilance in making its decision, taking into account the degree of risk of it reaching the wrong decision as a result of not having heard the teacher's account.

The panel also noted that there was a former pupil who was to attend the hearing to give evidence, and that it would be inconvenient and may be distressing for him to return again.

The panel had regard to the seriousness of the case, and the potential consequences for Mr Ockendon and accepted that fairness to the teacher was of prime importance. However, the panel considered that in light of Mr Ockendon's waiver of his right to appear; by taking such measures referred to above to address unfairness insofar as is possible; and taking account of the inconvenience an adjournment would cause to the witnesses; on balance, the public interest in the hearing proceeding within a reasonable time was in favour of the hearing continuing without further delay, in the absence of Mr Ockendon.

The panel also considered an application from Mr Ockendon that the hearing should be held in private. However, the panel considered that to do so would be contrary to the public interest. The hearing was therefore conducted in public.

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, with page numbers from 1 to 5.
- Section 2: Notice of Proceedings and response, with page numbers from 6 to 29.
- Section 3: National College for Teaching and Leadership Witness Statements, with page numbers from 30 to 43.
- Section 4: National College for Teaching & Leadership Documents, with page numbers from 44 to 268.

- Section 5: Teacher Documents, with page numbers from 269 to 701.

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

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- Documents relating to proceeding in Mr Ockendon's absence and to the admission of a witness statement from Pupil A, given page numbers 702 to 733.
- Mr Ockendon's revised response to the professional conduct panel, given page numbers 734 to 767.
- The case management decision of 14 September 2015, given page numbers 768 to 769.
- A witness statement of Pupil A, given page numbers 770 to 775.
- Notes of telephone calls between the presenting officer and Pupil A, and the presenting officer and Pupil A's mother, in January 2015, given page numbers 776 to 783.

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from:

Witness A, the former head teacher of Fordham All Saints C of E Primary School, called by the presenting officer;

Witness B, the head teacher of St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, called by the presenting officer;

Witness C, the former head teacher of St Peter's Primary School, called by the presenting officer; and

Pupil A, called by the presenting officer.

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.

Mr Steven Barry Ockendon was employed as a teacher at St Thomas More's Primary School from June 2001. On 13 February 2003, Mr Ockendon was given written advice by St Thomas More's Primary School, reminding Mr Ockendon of the need to maintain professional relationships with pupils and the importance of not putting himself in a potential vulnerable position with any child. The same day, Mr Ockendon provided a letter of resignation, effective 31 August 2003.

From September 2006, Mr Ockendon was employed as a teacher at St Peter's Primary School. On 23 February 2009, the then head teacher of St Peter's Primary School met with Mr Ockendon to discuss professional boundaries between Mr Ockendon and Pupil B. The following day, Mr Ockendon provided a letter of resignation, effective at the end of the spring term 2009. St Peter's Primary School gave written advice to Mr Ockendon on 4 March 2009, which stated that Mr Ockendon's relationship with Pupil B was breaching professional boundaries and requiring Mr Ockendon to maintain a professional distance from Pupil B.

From December 2011, Mr Ockendon was employed as a teacher at Fordham All Saints C of E Primary School. By letter of 12 October 2012, Mr Ockendon was informed of a concern being raised to the safeguarding service, regarding events said to have taken place during Mr Ockendon's employment at St Thomas More's Primary School. On 15 November 2012, Mr Ockendon was invited to a disciplinary investigation meeting, which was postponed due to Mr Ockendon's health. On 3 December 2012 Mr Ockendon commenced sickness absence. On 8 July 2013 a disciplinary hearing was held, the result of which was that Mr Ockendon was dismissed from Fordham All Saints C of E Primary School, with effect from 16 July 2013.

Findings of fact

Our findings of fact are as follows:

The panel has found the following particulars of the allegations against Mr Steven Barry Ockendon proven, for these reasons:

- 1. Abused his position of trust by repeatedly failing to adhere to professional boundaries with children/young people between 2003-2013, in that:**
 - a. Whilst employed at St Thomas More's Primary School in 2003 he had an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A leading to him being issued with management advice on maintaining professional relationships with pupils;**

The panel has seen a copy of the letter to Mr Ockendon, from the head teacher of St Thomas More's Primary School, regarding the maintenance of professional relationships with pupils. The panel has also had the benefit of oral testimony from the head teacher of that school, confirming that management advice of this nature was provided to Mr Ockendon.

In a letter to the then head teacher of Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School, dated 27 October 2012, Mr Ockendon accepted that the head teacher of St Thomas More's Primary School gave Mr Ockendon advice regarding his involvement with Pupil A and also stated that he "should have followed her advice fully and not just partly", stating that this was a "foolish and silly mistake".

The panel has gone on to consider not only whether such management advice was given, but whether Mr Ockendon did indeed have an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in 2003.

In this regard, the panel was assisted by the written and oral evidence of the head teacher of St Thomas More's Primary School, Witness B. Witness B gave evidence that she had found Mr Ockendon in the staff room with Pupil A on one occasion, very close to him and giving him a drink. She also gave evidence that Mr Ockendon would on occasion eat his lunch with Pupil A during chess club, rather than Pupil A sitting with other pupils. Witness B informed the panel that in the spring term of 2003 Mr Ockendon stated that he wanted to teach Year 6 in the next academic year, else he would leave the school and also informed the panel that Pupil A would be entering Year 6 at that time. Witness B also gave evidence that Mr Ockendon sent a note to the office during teaching time, asking why Pupil A (not a member of Mr Ockendon's class) was off school that day.

Pupil A provided oral evidence to the panel in which he stated that he had felt that his relationship with Mr Ockendon was one of him being a friend. Pupil A also recounted that he (Pupil A) was "behaving as a real nuisance" during Mr Ockendon's first week at the school and yet Pupil A was given an award for best student by Mr Ockendon nonetheless. The panel found Pupil A to be a credible and compelling witness, clear in the key points of evidence on which the panel bases its decision, but open with the panel about not remembering certain other facts and providing a balanced account of Mr Ockendon, emphasising the positive aspects of his relationship with Mr Ockendon on a number of occasions.

In the light of the evidence, the panel is satisfied that Mr Ockendon's relationship with Pupil A was inappropriate in 2003 and that this was an abuse of trust, manifested by Mr Ockendon's failing to adhere to professional boundaries.

The panel finds this allegation proven.

- c. In 2007 he acted in an inappropriate manner with ex-Pupil A, a member of his theatre company, by**
 - i. asking him to remove his underwear whilst he was trying on costumes for a play;**
 - ii. staying in the room with him whilst he removed his underwear;**

The panel heard oral evidence from ex-Pupil A (being the same person identified as Pupil A in allegation 1.a.). As the panel has noted, it found Pupil A to be a credible and compelling witness. His evidence was clear that Mr Ockendon did ask ex-Pupil A to

remove his underwear whilst he was trying on costumes for a play and that Mr Ockendon did remain in the room whilst ex-Pupil A removed that underwear. The evidence from ex-Pupil A was that this resulted in ex-Pupil A's genitals being "more or less completely exposed".

Further, the panel found, on the basis of Pupil A's evidence, that Mr Ockendon was touching the straps of the costume whilst Pupil A was standing without his underwear.

The panel did not accept Mr Ockendon's evidence about the costume in question covering Pupil A to a large degree, as the panel was satisfied from Pupil A's evidence that at the time in question Pupil A was not wearing the costume identified by Mr Ockendon, which was worn in the subsequent production.

The panel is satisfied that this was acting in an inappropriate manner with ex-Pupil A and that this amounted to an abuse of Mr Ockendon's position of trust, manifesting itself in a failure to adhere to professional boundaries.

The panel finds allegations 1.c.i. and 1.c.ii. proven.

d. Whilst employed at Fordham All Saint's C of E Primary School he acted in an inappropriate manner by;

i. contacting an ex-Pupil C, who was 16 years old, via Facebook;

Mr Ockendon has admitted communicating with ex-Pupil C via Facebook and the panel has had the benefit of screen-shots, showing such communications. Mr Ockendon has also recognised that "his actions could be misinterpreted".

The Facebook messages included "dry yourself, put some clothes on", "u cud come for the drive then lol and have a shower after ... its still early haha pretty please". The panel considers the content of the messages to be wholly inappropriate for a communication with an ex-pupil who was 16 years old at the time.

The panel has also seen Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School's Code of Conduct, which includes a section on social interaction with pupils past and present, in which it is stated that employees should be circumspect in personal network contact with former pupils, particularly those under the age of 18 years.

The panel is satisfied that Mr Ockendon did act in an inappropriate manner by contacting ex-Pupil C via Facebook and that this amounted to an abuse of Mr Ockendon's position of trust, manifesting itself in a failure to adhere to professional boundaries.

ii. allowing Pupil C to drive his car when he was under the age limit;

Mr Ockendon has admitted, to the Police, that he allowed Pupil C to drive his car when he was under the age limit and has accepted that this may not have been the best way to try to "cheer up" Pupil C.

The panel is satisfied that Mr Ockendon did act in an inappropriate manner by allowing Pupil C to drive his car when he was under the age limit and that this amounted to an

abuse of Mr Ockendon's position of trust, manifesting itself in a failure to adhere to professional boundaries.

iii. Contacting D, a 14 year old member of his theatre company, on Facebook

Mr Ockendon has admitted communicating with D via Facebook and the panel has had the benefit of screen-shots, showing such communications.

The panel has also seen the theatre company's safeguarding policy and procedures, which provide that "it is inappropriate to communicate with members via social internet sites".

The panel is satisfied that Mr Ockendon did act in an inappropriate manner by contacting D via Facebook and that this amounted to an abuse of Mr Ockendon's position of trust, manifesting itself in a failure to adhere to professional boundaries.

2. He acted dishonestly by failing to inform the head teacher of Fordham All Saint's C of E Primary School, when questioned as part of a formal investigation, of relevant issues at previous schools and the advice that had been given about professional boundaries with the intention of concealing the truth from the investigation.

Mr Ockendon states that he confirmed to the head teacher of Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School that he had spoken to Witness B when at St Thomas More's Primary School and had received advice from her. Mr Ockendon states that he told the head teacher that he could not remember receiving written advice about the issue from Witness B.

Mr Ockendon states that he "did not deny" to the head teacher of Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School that he had received written advice from Witness C when at St Peter's Primary School. Mr Ockendon also states that during the questioning, he was muddled and confused.

The panel has also heard oral evidence from the then head teacher of Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School, in which he confirmed that Mr Ockendon had not informed him of any written management advice on maintaining professional boundaries.

The panel does not find Mr Ockendon's explanation credible. He had received written advice on professional boundaries with pupils on two separate occasions, arising from two sets of complaints, from two separate schools. He had resigned from these two schools very shortly after the advice being given to him (albeit in one instance following the advice being given orally, with the written advice being sent after Mr Ockendon's resignation). The panel finds it incredible that Mr Ockendon could possibly have

forgotten about two pieces of written advice which, in the experience of the panel, would have been highly significant in a teacher's career. Mr Ockendon has not provided medical evidence which supports to the panel's satisfaction any suggestion that a medical condition, or conditions, could have caused a lapse in memory in relation to such significant advice.

In the circumstances, the panel concludes that Mr Ockendon intentionally concealed the fact that he had been given written advice, arising from relevant issues at previous schools, with the intention of concealing the truth from the investigation at Fordham All Saints' C of E Primary School.

The panel finds this allegation proven.

The panel finds the following allegation against Mr Steven Barry Ockendon not proven, for the following reasons:

1. Abused his position of trust by repeatedly failing to adhere to professional boundaries with children/young people between 2003-2013, in that:

- b. Whilst employed at St Peter's Primary School in 2007 he acted in an inappropriate manner with ex-pupil B, who was 15 years of age at the time and on a work placement, leading to him being issued with management advice on breaching professional boundaries;**

The panel heard a significant amount of evidence regarding Mr Ockendon's relationship with ex-Pupil B. However, that evidence largely related to events that occurred after 2007, when ex-Pupil B was no longer on a work placement. The panel has not however been provided with sufficient evidence that Mr Ockendon abused his position of trust or failed to adhere to professional boundaries during the period that ex-Pupil B was on a work placement at St Peter's Primary School. Accordingly, the panel finds this allegation not proven.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct

The panel is satisfied that the conduct of Mr Ockendon in relation to the facts found proven, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considers that by reference to Part Two, Mr Ockendon 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, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

The panel has also considered whether Mr Ockendon displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 8 and 9 of the Advice and has found that none of these offences are relevant.

Nonetheless, the panel has found that Mr Ockendon has failed to maintain professional boundaries, over a ten year period. This involved, at various times, three pupils (Pupils A, C and D), in different settings. Moreover, the panel has found that Mr Ockendon's conduct continued despite his having received written individual advice expressing concern about the need to maintain professional boundaries. Indeed, the panel has found that Mr Ockendon has intentionally concealed from an employer his previous receipt of such advice.

The panel finds that such conduct is misconduct of a serious nature, falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher.

The panel notes that the allegations numbered 1.c. and 1.d. took place outside of the education setting. However, the panel considers that Mr Ockendon's conduct, which caused Pupil A distress and potential harm and which encouraged and led to Pupil C committing a criminal act, led to pupils being exposed to and influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way.

Accordingly, the panel is satisfied that Mr Ockendon is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct, 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 a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely the protection of pupils, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There is a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils given the panel's finding that Mr Ockendon has abused his position of trust by repeatedly failing to adhere to professional boundaries with children.

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

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

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

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 Ockendon. 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;

In this regard, the panel noted that Mr Ockendon had encouraged Pupil C to perform a criminal act (which he had in fact carried out) and that Pupil A had been distressed by the events underlying allegation 1.c.i.

- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving vulnerable pupils) or violation of the rights of pupils; and

The panel noted its findings of abuse of position of trust in relation to allegations 1.a. and 1.c. above.

- dishonesty especially where there have been serious consequences, and/or it has been repeated and/or covered up.

In relation to dishonesty, the panel had regard to allegation 2.

Even though there were behaviours that would point to a prohibition order being appropriate, the panel went 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.

The panel did not find that Mr Ockendon's actions were not deliberate. In fact, the panel has found that Mr Ockendon has acted dishonestly in relation to allegation 2.

Similarly, there was no evidence that Mr Ockendon was acting under duress.

The panel notes that the misconduct found proven stretched over ten years. Nonetheless, the panel did bear in mind that there was no indication that Mr Ockendon had anything other than a good record, prior to 2003.

The panel has had regard to the references provided by Mr Ockendon. They note that there is some evidence that Mr Ockendon's teaching was good.

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 Ockendon.

In coming to this conclusion the panel was particularly mindful that Mr Ockendon's failure to maintain professional boundaries persisted over a ten year period, despite receiving written advice on such issues on two separate occasions, from two schools. Mr Ockendon's dishonesty in concealing previous issues and advice was another significant factor in the panel forming its 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 for them to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. The panel was mindful that the Advice provides 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. The panel has not found any of these to be present.

Notwithstanding this, the panel felt the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate. In reaching this conclusion, the panel was particularly mindful of the following. Mr Ockendon has been given several opportunities to alter his view of professional boundaries with children and young people and has failed to do so. In reaching this conclusion, the panel notes the two pieces of written advice that Mr

Ockendon received before the events that gave rise to allegation 1.d. Indeed, the facts giving rise to allegation 1.d. occurred whilst Mr Ockendon was under investigation in relation to earlier events. Moreover, the panel notes that Mr Ockendon submitted to the panel a character reference from a 15 year old child, who describes Mr Ockendon as “one of my closest and dearest friends”. In light of all of the above, it appears to the panel that Mr Ockendon has no insight into appropriate boundaries between adults and children, notwithstanding repeated advice on the matter from several sources.

In the light of Mr Ockendon’s complete lack of insight or remorse, and given the severity of his conduct, the panel has 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 careful consideration to the findings and recommendations of the panel in this case. The panel has found a number of allegations proven in respect of Mr Ockendon’s failure over a period of time to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. In addition it has found that Mr Ockendon was dishonest when questioned as part of a formal investigation.

Mr Ockendon’s behaviour represents a serious departure from the standards expected of a teacher. The panel has given due regard to the public interest considerations and has found the following to be relevant:

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

The panel has judged Mr Ockendon’s actions to be deliberate and has determined that he was not acting under duress.

Mr Ockendon has been given several opportunities to alter his view of professional boundaries with children and young people and has failed to do so. He has no insight into appropriate boundaries between adults and children, notwithstanding repeated advice on the matter from several sources.

I agree with the panel recommendation that prohibition is an appropriate and proportionate sanction and that Mr Ockendon should not be allowed to apply for the order to be set aside at any point in the future.

This means that Mr Steven Barry Ockendon 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 Steven Barry Ockendon 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 Steven Barry Ockendon 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 read 'P Heathcote', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Decision maker: Paul Heathcote

Date: 30 September 2015

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