



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Miss Lauren Melvin: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

March 2022

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

Teacher:	Miss Lauren Melvin
Teacher ref number:	441355
Teacher date of birth:	8 April 1980
TRA reference:	19204
Date of determination:	30 March 2022
Former employer:	Newstead Wood School, Kent

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 30 March 2022 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Miss Melvin.

The panel members were Dr Zubair Hanslot (lay panellist – in the chair), Dr Angela Brown (lay panellist) and Ms Jasmin Choudhury (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lucy Churchill of Birketts LLP solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Miss Melvin that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Miss Melvin provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Chantelle Browne of Fieldfisher LLP solicitors, Miss Melvin or her representative, Mr Christopher Ford of NASUWT.

The meeting took place in private by way of a virtual meeting.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 2 March 2022

It was alleged that Miss Melvin was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst a teacher at Newstead Wood School, she:

1. Between on or around 11 November 2019 and on or around 13 November 2019,
 - a) sat next to Pupil A on a coach and touched Pupil A's thigh, hand and arm;
 - b) pulled Pupil A on top of her and/or lay behind Pupil A on a bed and touched Pupil A's thigh;
 - c) pushed Pupil A against a wall;
 - d) fed Pupil A a biscuit;
 - e) drank alcohol on a school trip and/or shared alcohol with Pupil A;
 - f) stated to Pupil A 'if you ever tell anyone about the wine, I'll kill you' or words to that effect and/or wiped student A's lips to remove the wine;
 - g) When asked by Pupil A to stop touching her, she fixed Pupil A's bra straps and touched Pupil A's face and/or hands and/or clavicle and/or lower back and/or thigh;
 - h) said to Pupil A 'I am good at giving massages' or words to that effect;
 - i) spent time alone in a bedroom with Pupil A;
 - j) had an intimate conversation with Pupil A, and asked 'do you fancy me' and/or 'do you want to kiss me' and/or 'I love you' or words to that effect;
 - k) invited one or more pupils into her bedroom while on a School trip;
 - l) told Pupil A that she had a dream about Pupil A;
2. On or around 14 November 2019,
 - a) drove Pupil A to her home in her car;
 - b) said to Pupil A 'this song is about a lesbian who has never had sex and who does it with someone more experienced' or words to that effect;
3. On an unknown date on or around November 2019 when hugging Pupil A stated 'your boobs are getting in the way' or words to that effect;

4. On an unknown date on or around November 2019, made a comment about Pupil B's clothing and/or stated that Pupil B's necklace was 'too S&M' and/or discussed bondage representations;
5. On or around one or more unknown dates in November 2019, she:
 - a) said to Pupil B that "you would look good in pink stripes" or words to that effect;
 - b) told Pupil A that "jumper you wore smells like you, I smell it in my own home";
6. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and on or around November 2019, hugged Pupil A and/or Pupil B;
7. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and November 2019 shared intimate personal information with Pupil A and/or Pupil B including;
 - a) a doctor's report and/or
 - b) the loss of a child and/or
 - c) your past relationships';
8. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and November 2019, had an inappropriate personal relationship with Pupil A and/or made inappropriate comments to Pupil A;
9. By her conduct set out in one or more of the allegations above, she failed to observe a proper boundary appropriate to a teacher's professional position;
10. Her conduct as set out in one or more of the allegations above was:
 - a) sexual;
 - b) sexually motivated.

Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegations 1 to 10 and that her behaviour amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, as set out in the response to the notice of referral dated 24 May 2021 and in the statement of agreed facts signed by Miss Melvin on 24 November 2021.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications.

The panel noted that since the date of the referral to the TRA in this case, new 'Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession' were published in May

2020 (the “May 2020 Procedures”). The panel understands that the earlier provisions contained within the ‘Teacher misconduct: disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession’ updated in April 2018 (the “April 2018 Procedures”) apply to this case, given that those provisions applied when the referral was made. Although the panel has the power to direct that the May 2020 Procedures should apply in the interests of justice or the public interest, the panel had received no representations that this should be the case. For the avoidance of doubt, therefore, the panel confirms that it has applied the April 2018 Procedures in this case.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

- Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 1 to 2
- Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 3 to 20
- Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 21 to 27
- Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 28 to 195
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 196 to 221

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 a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Miss Melvin on 24 November 2021.

Decision and reasons

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

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

Miss Melvin was employed as a teacher by Newstead Wood School ('the school') from 16 July 2015.

On 12 December 2019, Pupil A made a disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL') regarding Miss Melvin. The disclosures were shared with the Local Authority Designated Officer ('LADO') and the police.

On 13 December 2019, Pupil B also made a disclosure regarding Miss Melvin, which was shared with the LADO. Miss Melvin was suspended from work and the police commenced their investigation.

A strategy meeting was held on 19 December 2019.

On 17 January 2019, the police investigation concluded. The United Learning Investigation Officer was appointed to commence internal proceedings.

On 7 February 2020, the internal investigation was completed and the disciplinary hearing was arranged for 10 March 2020.

On 28 February 2020, Miss Melvin asked if she could resign from her role at the School, which was agreed. Miss Melvin was informed that a referral was going to be made to both the TRA and the DBS.

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:

- 1. Between on or around 11 November 2019 and on or around 13 November 2019,**
 - a) sat next to Pupil A on a coach and touched Pupil A's thigh, hand and arm;**
 - b) pulled Pupil A on top of you and/or lay behind Pupil A on a bed and touched Pupil A's thigh;**
 - c) pushed Pupil A against a wall;**
 - d) fed Pupil A a biscuit;**
 - e) drank alcohol on a school trip and/or shared alcohol with Pupil A;**
 - f) stated to Pupil A 'if you ever tell anyone about the wine, I'll kill you' or words to that effect and/or wiped student A's lips to remove the wine;**

- g) When asked by Pupil A to stop touching her, you fixed Pupil A's bra straps and touched Pupil A's face and/or hands and/or clavicle and/or lower back and/or thigh;**
- h) said to Pupil A 'I am good at giving massages' or words to that effect;**
- i) spent time alone in a bedroom with Pupil A;**
- j) had an intimate conversation with Pupil A, and asked 'do you fancy me' and/or 'do you want to kiss me' and/or 'I love you' or words to that effect;**
- k) invited one or more pupils into your bedroom while on a School trip;**
- l) told Pupil A that you had a dream about Pupil A;**

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 1(a) to 1(l). Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegations 1(a) to 1(l) proved.

2. On or around 14 November 2019,

- a) drove Pupil A to her home in your car;**
- b) said to Pupil A 'this song is about a lesbian who has never had sex and who does it with someone more experienced' or words to that effect;**

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 2(a) and 2(b). Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegations 2(a) and 2(b) proved.

3. On an unknown date on or around November 2019 when hugging Pupil A stated 'your boobs are getting in the way' or words to that effect;

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 3. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegation 3 proved.

4. On an unknown date on or around November 2019, made a comment about Pupil B's clothing and/or stated that Pupil B's necklace was 'too S&M' and/or discussed bondage representations;

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 4. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegation 4 proved.

5. On or around one or more unknown dates in November 2019, you:

a) said to Pupil B that "you would look good in pink stripes" or words to that effect;

b) told Pupil A that "jumper you wore smells like you, I smell it in my own home";

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 5(a) and 5(b). Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegations 5(a) and 5(b) proved.

6. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and on or around November 2019, hugged Pupil A and/or Pupil B;

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 6. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegation 6 proved.

7. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and November 2019 shared intimate personal information with Pupil A and/or Pupil B including;

- a) a doctor's report and/or**
- b) the loss of a child and/or**
- c) your past relationships';**

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegations 7(a) to 7(c). Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegations 7(a), 7(b) and 7(c) proved.

8. On one or more occasions between on or around September 2019 and November 2019, had an inappropriate personal relationship with Pupil A and/or made inappropriate comments to Pupil A;

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 8. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegation 8 proved.

9. By your conduct set out in in one or more of the allegations above, you failed to observe a proper boundary appropriate to a teacher's professional position;

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 9. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

The panel found allegation 9 proved.

10. Your conduct as set out in one or more of the allegations above was:

- a) sexual**

b) Sexually motivated

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts, which Miss Melvin signed on 24 November 2021, Miss Melvin admitted the facts of allegation 10. Notwithstanding this, the panel made its own determination on the facts available to it.

The panel noted the disciplinary investigation report submitted as part of the bundle together with the notification of allegation against a professional.

Having found the facts of particulars 1(a)-1(l), 2(a), 2(b), 3, 4, 5(a), 5(b), 6, 7(a), 7(b), 7(c), 8, 9 and 10 proved, the panel considered the inappropriate comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B (which included touching) were because of their nature and the circumstances sexual. The panel considered the inappropriate comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B were sexually motivated in that they demonstrated a pattern of behaviour which was consistent with Miss Melvin being in pursuit of a sexual relationship.

The panel found allegation 10(a) and 10(b) proved.

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

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others

- 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.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Miss Melvin fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel also considered whether Miss Melvin's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offences of sexual activity, sexual communications, controlling behaviour, and serious offences involving alcohol were relevant. The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is more likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel noted that allegations 2(a) and 2(b) took place outside the education setting in that Miss Melvin drove Pupil A home in her car. However, the panel considered that the nature of Miss Melvin's misconduct still impacted upon her profession as a teacher.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Miss Melvin was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

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.

The panel therefore found that Miss Melvin's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1(a)-1(l), 2(a), 2(b), 3, 4, 5(a), 5(b), 6, 7(a), 7(b), 7(c), 8, 9 and 10 proved, the panel further found that Miss Melvin'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 and 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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct; and that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

In light of the panel's findings against Miss Melvin, which involved inappropriate comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils, given the serious findings of inappropriate relationships with children.

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

The panel decided that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Miss Melvin 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 Miss Melvin.

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 Miss Melvin. 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;

- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- any abuse of any trust, knowledge or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- 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;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- sustained or serious bullying, or other deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

There was no evidence that Miss Melvin's actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Miss Melvin was acting under extreme duress.

The panel noted the letter from Miss Melvin's representative, dated 25 November 2021, and the statement of mitigation dated 20 January 2022. Miss Melvin's representative submitted on her behalf that Miss Melvin was genuinely remorseful for her actions, not only because of the impact on herself but also because of the potentially negative impact on students. Miss Melvin recognised that there was no justification for her conduct.

Miss Melvin's representative submitted that Miss Melvin had been [REDACTED] In addition to Miss Melvin's five day per week teaching as head of science, she was on a two-day contract working on the science learning partnership for STEM learning. Miss Melvin felt that she had not been given enough time to complete her work [REDACTED].

Miss Melvin increasingly found comfort in spending time with pupils, which was particularly the case with Pupil A and Pupil B. Miss Melvin admitted that she failed to observe proper boundaries appropriate to her professional position.

Miss Melvin further submitted that she is a person of good character and other than the circumstances giving rise to the allegations against her, she had a good record of professional performance and had made a valuable contribution to the profession.

Miss Melvin's representative submitted that Miss Melvin had fully cooperated with the police throughout and had engaged, as fully as possible providing responses to the school disciplinary investigation.

The panel noted several character references submitted on behalf of Miss Melvin, which attested to Miss Melvin's previous history as a teacher. In particular, the panel noted the following:

- Individual A has known Miss Melvin as a former colleague at the School and a friend for 5 years.
 - *"Lauren is a talented and passionate teacher, this is demonstrated both via her promotion to Head of Science as well as a nomination for a Kent Teacher of the Year Award (this nomination was submitted by her own students)."*
 - *"Lauren has always got on well with her colleagues and conducted herself in a professional manner."*
 - *"Outside of her fantastic subject knowledge and effective pedagogy, Lauren was also a strong form tutor and always put the safety and happiness of her tutees first."*
- Individual B has known Miss Melvin for 14 years as a former colleague and friend.
 - *"She was a respected colleague who had a reputation amongst the staff as a teacher whose lessons were always engaging and enjoyable. She was also a very supportive colleague who was highly thought of and well liked. She was considered a team player, always willing to be observed and share best practice."*
 - *"In the time I worked with her as a colleague, Lauren was very encouraging towards students and did everything she could to help them in their learning, including through interventions."*
- Individual C has known Miss Melvin since 2016 as a former colleague at the School
 - *"... on the occasions I saw Lauren teach she demonstrated imagination and variation in her teaching methods and showed an obvious enthusiasm for Science. Her subject knowledge was evident."*
 - *"She ran a Science Club for younger students, gave lunchtime Chemistry Masterclasses, oversaw a Science Magazine run by the Sixth Form and ran evening Science Speaker events for students and Parents."*
 - *"Lauren played an active part in the wider life of the school; she sometimes helped the PE Department with Netball and Rounders."*

- Individual D has known Miss Melvin since 2013 as a former colleague and friend
 - *“Lauren was professional and a real team player and we soon became firm friends. She was popular with both colleagues and students.”*
 - *“She has been trustworthy and reliable in both babysitting and tutoring and I would not hesitate whatsoever in recommending her to other friends.”*
- Individual E has known Miss Melvin for 10+ years as a former employer and a friend
 - *“Lauren had a good eye for the practicalities on the ground with a pupil centred approach, focussed on creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment and always happy to get involved on ground level when needed. Furthermore Lauren enabled the pastoral role for our teachers, with a clear vision of pupil wellbeing and adherence to safeguarding.”*
 - *“Lauren is professional, and sets a high standard for her work, and combines this with a great sense of humour, so all in all it was a pleasure to employ Lauren and I would do so again.”*
- Individual F has known Miss Melvin for 10+ years as a former colleague
 - *“Lauren was an excellent colleague to work alongside. As a former student at Sydenham, Lauren was held in much affection by both those who once taught her and those of us who grew to know her professionally. Her warm and caring nature and sharp humour making her a good person to confide in and talk through problems with.”*
 - *“During our time working together I observed Lauren as pastorally sensitive. Her awareness of safeguarding procedures was strong, and she was always cautious to refer matters of concern. She was often the first adult to notice if something was wrong with a young person in her care. She was a particularly attentive form tutor with a good listening ear. She had a sound instinct for when pupils needed her support or referral to more senior colleagues.”*
- Individual G
 - *“I have benefitted from her professional skills as Head of Science. She has always been approachable, leading in an effective manner, and supporting me as..”*
- Individual H has known Miss Melvin for 16 years as a former colleague
 - *“In my opinion Lauren is an excellent classroom teacher.”*

- *"I enjoyed working with Lauren as a colleague and as a head of science she was always very approachable. In my opinion she clearly always had the welfare of the students at heart and was dedicated to maintaining the highest professional standards."*
- Individual I has known Miss Melvin for 7 years as a former colleague
 - *"I found her to be unfailingly diligent and enthusiastic in her role as an educator and a very supportive and caring colleague. Lauren was and is very concerned with the health and wellbeing (both physical and emotional) of both pupils and her fellow members as demonstrated by the real care she showed me during what were difficult times for me in the Exams Office."*
- Individual J has known Miss Melvin for 8 years as a close friend
 - *"Lauren is the sort of friend you can always turn to in a crisis and rely on 100% to be very calm and considered in her response, thoughtfully taking into account all points of view and offering endless creative solutions and words of comfort and reassurance."*
 - *"She is a very perceptive person when it comes to other people's feelings and is a little prone to putting other's feelings first to her own detriment."*
- Individual K has known Miss Melvin for 9 years
 - *"Lauren has throughout that time shown an exemplary level of professionalism and dedication to her teaching and pastoral care for all her students. It has been an inspiration to see Lauren's enthusiasm and commitment to the quality and content of her lessons as well as the wellbeing of her students, which has no doubt inspired and prepared several new generations of students to join the important ranks for the scientific community."*
 - *"Lauren is kind, hardworking, selfless and trust worthy in nature. These qualities added to her exceptional ability and experience in her teaching practice would represent an irreplaceable loss to the teaching profession if she were not allowed to teach again."*

The panel also noted a letter to Miss Melvin, dated 19 April 2016, following her nomination in the 2016 Kent Teacher of the Year Awards which demonstrated high standards in her professional conduct and that she had contributed significantly to the education sector.

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 Miss Melvin 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 Miss Melvin. The seriousness of her actions, as an experienced and senior teacher who abused her position of trust by forging inappropriate relationships (as per the allegations) with [REDACTED], 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 two years.

The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period. These behaviours include serious sexual misconduct, such as where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used her professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons, any sexual misconduct involving a child.

The panel found that Miss Melvin was responsible for inappropriate comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B which were sexual and/or sexually motivated. Further the panel found that Miss Melvin's comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B were reported [REDACTED].

The Advice also indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer review period.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Miss Melvin should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Miss Melvin 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, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was also, "satisfied that the conduct of Miss Melvin fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession."

The panel also, "considered whether Miss Melvin's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice."

The panel, "found that the offences of sexual activity, sexual communications, controlling behaviour, and serious offences involving alcohol were relevant. The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is more likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct."

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexual activity.

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 Miss Melvin, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “that the offences of sexual activity, sexual communications, controlling behaviour, and serious offences involving alcohol were relevant.” 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, “Miss Melvin’s representative submitted on her behalf that Miss Melvin was genuinely remorseful for her actions, not only because of the impact on herself but also because of the potentially negative impact on students. Miss Melvin recognised that there was no justification for her conduct.”

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “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.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual behaviour 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 Miss Melvin herself. The panel were provided with many examples of favourable testimony. Nonetheless, the panel comment “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 Miss Melvin of prohibition.”

A prohibition order would prevent Miss Melvin from teaching and 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 concerning the behaviour, “The panel found that Miss Melvin was responsible for inappropriate comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B which were sexual and/or sexually motivated. Further the panel found that Miss Melvin’s comments and actions towards Pupil A and Pupil B were reported [REDACTED].”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Miss Melvin 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. The serious nature of the misconduct here and the clear terms of the Advice support my thinking and my judgement.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments, “The Advice also indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer review period.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.”

I have considered whether allowing for no review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is proportionate to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the


profession. In this case, the factors which mean that a no review is necessary are the nature of the misconduct and the impact that it had.

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

This means that Miss Melvin 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 her, I have decided that Miss Melvin shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of her eligibility to teach.

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

Miss Melvin 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 grey ink, appearing to read 'Alan Meyrick', followed by a vertical line.

Decision maker: Alan Meyrick

Date: 31 March 2022

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