



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Joshua Wring: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

September 2024

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

Teacher: Mr Joshua Wring

TRA reference: 22613

Date of determination: 13 September 2024

Former employer: Brimsham Green School, Yate

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 11 to 13 September 2024 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Joshua Wring.

The panel members were Mrs Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Ian McKim (lay panellist) and Ms Jan Stoddard (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Samantha Cass of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Callum Heywood of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mr Wring was present and was not represented.

The hearing took place by way of a virtual hearing in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 27 June 2024.

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

Whilst employed at Brimsham Green School;

1. You engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A, by:
 - a. Sending one or more emails to Pupil A, including the following emails:
 - i. Discussing Pupil A's [REDACTED];
 - ii. Discussing your own [REDACTED];
 - iii. Discussing personal plans with Pupil A;
 - iv. Discussing your favourite alcohol;
 - v. Stating that seeing Pupil A was 'the highlight of [your] day' or words to that effect;
 - vi. Discussing and/or apologising for one or more interactions you had with Pupil A at school;
 - vii. Making a bet regarding whether Pupil A would talk to individual H;
 - viii. Stating 'all I want to do is catch your eye and smile at you at school...';
 - ix. Stating that it was 'gutting' not to see Pupil A at school, or words to that effect;
 - x. Failing to challenge Pupil A describing a colleague as 'up her own ass';
 - xi. Acting as a spy for Pupil A and discussing Pupil C's movements and actions with Pupil A;
 - b. Engaging in e-mail conversations at night;
 - c. Buying Pupil A one or more gifts
2. You engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B, by:
 - a. Sending one or more emails to Pupil B, including the following emails:

- i. 'you are a breathe[sic] of fresh air and I couldn't be more proud of you', or words to that effect;
 - ii. 'I'm so lucky to know an incredible person like you. Do you want to see me this week?!', or words to that effect;
 - iii. 'I really care so much about you and how you feel.', or words to that effect;
 - iv. 'Pretty please can you come in tomorrow so we can speak?', or words to that effect;
 - v. '...I just wanted to give you a hug!', or words to that effect;
 - vi. 'I just have always seemed to get you', or words to that effect;
- b. Engaging in e-mail conversations at night;
 - c. Buying one or more gifts for Pupil B;
 - d. Meeting with Pupil B outside of School hours and/or away from School premises.
3. You failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with one or more safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or B, including the following concerns:
- a. On around 9 January 2023, Individual G reported Pupil A to be at risk of grooming behaviour from [REDACTED] [Individual H] who had previously encouraged her to self-harm;
 - b. On or around 24 May 2023, Pupil D and/or Pupil E had reported that Pupil A was being abused;
 - c. Pupil A reporting to you that [REDACTED];
 - d. Pupil A and Pupil B's emotional concerns related to Individual I;
 - e. Having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B were left home alone at night;
 - f. Having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B had a lack of food in the family home;
 - g. Having been informed that Pupil A may have been groomed;
 - h. Having been informed that Pupil A was at risk of self-harm;
4. You sought to conceal that Individual G had left Pupil A and/or Pupil B alone overnight, by:

- a. Encouraging Individual G to deny leaving Pupil A and Pupil B alone;
 - b. Encouraging Individual G to pressure Pupil A and/or Pupil B to deny having been left alone.
5. You sought to conceal that you were [REDACTED] and/or your conduct towards Pupils A and/or B by:
- a. Failing to disclose [REDACTED] to the School;
 - b. Attempting to permanently delete approximately 228 emails between yourself and Pupil A and/or Pupil B and/or Individual G;
 - c. Requesting that Individual G [REDACTED]
 - d. Instructing Individual G to save you as a contact with an alternative name;
 - e. Stating to Individual G that you needed to “watch [your] backs” or words to that effect.
6. Your conduct as may be found proven at:
- a. Allegations 1-5 was notwithstanding that you knew or ought to have known that Pupil A and/or Pupil B were vulnerable;
 - b. Allegations 1-5 demonstrated a lack of insight into previous advice provided by the School relating to maintaining appropriate boundaries, which was given to you in or around February 2021;
 - c. Allegations 4 and/or 5 above lacked integrity and/or were dishonest.

Mr Wring admitted the particulars of allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii), 1(a)(iii), 1(a)(iv), 1(a)(v), 1(a)(vi), 1(a)(vii), 1(a)(viii), 1(a)(ix), 1(a)(x), 1(a)(xi), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a)(i), 2(a)(ii), 2(a)(iii), 2(a)(iv), 2(a)(v), 2(a)(vi), 2(b), 2(c), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 5(a), 5(b), 5(d), 6(a), 6(b), 6(c), and denied allegations 2(d), 4(a), 4(b), 5(c) and 5(e). Mr Wring admitted that his conduct amounted to unacceptable conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications. However, as the matter arose, the panel agreed that any part of the hearing relating to either Mr Wring or any other relevant individuals' health and personal matters should be heard in private throughout the course of the hearing. The presenting officer did not object to this and the panel considered that it was not contrary to the public interest for those parts of the hearing to be heard in private.

The panel considered that these areas legitimately related to aspects of those individuals' private lives and there was no contrary public interest in favour of these matters being discussed in public. The hearing was still being held in public and these were discrete and limited areas which would not undermine the public's ability to otherwise understand the case.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

- Section 1: Chronology, statement of agreed and disputed facts and anonymised person list – pages 5 to 21
- Section 2: Notice of referral and response, notice of proceedings and response – pages 23 to 60
- Section 3: TRA witness evidence – pages 62 to 538
- Section 4: TRA documents – pages 540 to 559
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 561 to 638.

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

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from Witness A, [REDACTED], who was called by the TRA.

The panel also heard oral evidence from Mr Wring and Individual G.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

On 1 September 2017, Mr Wring began employment at Brimsham Green School ('the School').

On 25 February 2021, Mr Wring was given case management advice related to pupil distancing.

In September 2022, Mr Wring allegedly began making regular contact with Individual G.

On 19 May 2023, Mr Wring was allegedly [REDACTED] Individual G and Pupil B at a local park.

On 24 May 2023, concerns were raised with the [REDACTED] at the School by Pupil D and Pupil E that Pupil A was being ill-treated by [REDACTED].

On 5 June 2023, the School's investigation began.

On 22 September 2023, a disciplinary hearing took place.

On 8 October 2023, a referral was made to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. Engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A, by:

a. Sending one or more emails to Pupil A, including the following emails:

i. Discussing Pupil A's [REDACTED];

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel noted that Mr Wring had commented that, as head of house for Pupil A, who [REDACTED], he took an interest in [REDACTED] as this was something that impacted her School life. He stated that he would ask her questions about her home life due to her attendance and that they would discuss it. Mr Wring stated that he would do what he could to help Pupil A.

The panel considered Page 189 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Pupil A and Mr Wring on 21 May 2023 within which Pupil A talked about Individual G to Mr Wring and stated *"I've told you before what [REDACTED] done to me...I know someone who genuinely knows right from wrong would not continue you [sic] something like this with a [REDACTED] like that buddy."* The panel noted that this was sent in response to an email of the same date from Mr Wring to Pupil A within which he stated *"I only have heard from [REDACTED] side, and I keep saying to [REDACTED] should be so proud of you..."*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A and discussing Pupil A's [REDACTED] by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(i) proved.

ii. Discussing your own [REDACTED];

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 192 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Pupil A and Mr Wring on 21 May 2023 within which Pupil A says to Mr Wring “*you two have been all loved up.*”

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A and [REDACTED] email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(ii) proved.

iii. Discussing personal plans with Pupil A;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 198 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Pupil A and Mr Wring on 15 November 2022 within which Mr Wring stated “*I have to go round and see my friend now as he is struggling!*” and another example on Page 294 within which Mr Wring stated “*I have got the dance show tonight again!*”.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A and discussing personal plans with Pupil A by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(iii) proved.

iv. Discussing your favourite alcohol;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 194 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Pupil A and Mr Wring on 14 December 2022 within which Mr Wring responded to a question from Pupil A regarding his favourite drink and aftershave with “*lager...or fruity cider...*”.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A and discussing his favourite alcohol with her by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(iv) proved.

v. Stating that seeing Pupil A was ‘the highlight of [your] day’ or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring submitted that Pupil A had notoriously poor attendance and so he was always looking to encourage her to come to School, and that he said that seeing her *'was the highlight of his day'* in order to hopefully further encourage her to attend School on a more regular and reliable basis.

The panel considered Page 294 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Pupil A and Mr Wring on 20 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated that *"it was genuinely refreshing and nice to see you in school today, a massive highlight of my day"*.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in making the statement as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(v) proved.

vi. Discussing and/or apologising for one or more interactions you had with Pupil A at school;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 297 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 1 February 2023 within which Mr Wring stated that *"on reflection I probably shouldn't have spoken to you in front of your friends about the situation."*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in apologising for an interaction with Pupil A at School by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(vi) proved.

vii. Making a bet regarding whether Pupil A would talk to individual H;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring stated that in regards to the bet regarding Individual H, that this was not a bet for money. He stated that he had been aware that Individual H had got more in contact with Pupil A and that he had previously had a detrimental impact on her. Mr Wring submitted that this was a more effective method than to just ask her to stop talking to Individual H.

The panel considered Pages 299 to 300 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 23 January 2023 within which Pupil A stated that

“when we were talking you bet me 100 i want it” with reference to a bet regarding Individual H.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in discussing whether Pupil A would talk to Individual H by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(vii) proved.

viii. Stating ‘all I want to do is catch your eye and smile at you at school...’;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

In regards to catching Pupil A’s eye, Mr Wring stated that his understanding was that Pupil A was upset and/or angry about him and [REDACTED] and so he wanted to catch her eye to reassure her that everything would be okay.

The panel considered Page 190 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 21 May 2023 within which Mr Wring stated *“all I want to do is catch your eye and smile at you at school and hope that everything goes ok”*.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(viii) proved.

ix. Stating that it was ‘gutting’ not to see Pupil A at school, or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 312 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 14 October 2022 within which Mr Wring stated *“I never got to catch you again today which is gutting...”*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(ix) proved.

x. Failing to challenge Pupil A describing a colleague as ‘up her own ass’;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring recalled that Pupil A was ranting to him about a poor lesson she had had with another teacher, and that he allowed her to vent but did not agree to her comment, nor did he encourage or condone it.

The panel considered Page 311 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 18 October 2022 within which Pupil A stated *“but she is like so up her ass...”* Mr Wring did not challenge this reference in the emails that followed in this exchange and responded with a *“..haha..that did make me chuckle.”*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in failing to challenge Pupil A for describing a colleague in this way by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(x) proved.

xi. Acting as a spy for Pupil A and discussing Pupil C’s movements and actions with Pupil A;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring stated that Pupil C was [REDACTED], and he should not have agreed to update Pupil A on the movements of another student.

The panel considered Page 337 to 338 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil A on 16 February 2023 within which Mr Wring stated *“I have kept a close eye on him and I will be honest it has not been comfortable to watch.”* This was in response to a suggestion from Pupil A to the effect that *“I am not saying spy on them but...let me know if they are being a bit close.”*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A in acting as a spy for Pupil A and discussing Pupil C’s movements and actions with Pupil A by email.

The panel found allegation 1(a)(xi) proved.

b. Engaging in e-mail conversations at night;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Pupil A provided within the bundle. The panel noted that emails within these email conversations were sent late at night, for example on 21 May 2023 Mr Wring sent an email to pupil A at 21:04 and another email sent at 21:18 on 30 October 2022.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring who accepted that he should not have had conversations at night but stated that his intention was to be supportive and so he would respond to pupils outside of hours thinking that he was being helpful.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A by engaging in email conversations at night.

The panel found allegation 1(b) proved.

c. Buying Pupil A one or more gifts

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Individual G provided within the bundle. The panel noted that in an email on 17 March 2023, Mr Wring stated that he had a present to give to pupil A.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring who stated that he gave Pupil A a set of weighing scales to help her with her food technology work.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A by gifting her the item.

The panel found allegation 1(c) proved.

2. Engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B, by:

a. Sending one or more emails to Pupil B, including the following emails:

- i. 'you are a breathe[sic] of fresh air and I couldn't be more proud of you', or words to that effect;**

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he said to Pupil B that it was a breath of fresh air to see her in School as she had not come in the day before and Individual G had expressed concern about her coming into School.

The panel considered Page 209 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 18 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated *"You are a breathe of fresh air and I couldn't be more proud of you..."*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(i) proved.

ii. 'I'm so lucky to know an incredible person like you. Do you want to see me this week?!', or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 209 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 18 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated *"I'm so lucky to know an incredible person like you. Do you want to see me this week?!"*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(ii) proved.

iii. 'I really care so much about you and how you feel.', or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered Page 209 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 18 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated *"I really care so much about you and how you feel I don't like seeing you like this..."*

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(iii) proved.

iv. 'Pretty please can you come in tomorrow so we can speak?', or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring stated that he was trying to be encouraging and supportive in some of the language he used, and that it was part of his role as head of house that students could come and ask him questions and he would offer to see pupils in his free periods, and Pupil B needed support. He stated that he was looking to unpick why Pupil B was not attending School, and so was asking if she wanted to see him for a regular catch up as he was [REDACTED].

The panel considered Page 208 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 19 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated “...*pretty please can you come in tomorrow so we can speak?*” The panel also noted that Mr Wring stated “*please come in, I can’t help or do anything when you are at home.*”

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(iv) proved.

v. ‘...I just wanted to give you a hug!’, or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Regarding the hug, Mr Wring stated that he believes that Pupil B appeared sad or upset and so he made the comment to comfort her and show her that he cared about her wellbeing.

The panel considered Page 207 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 19 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated “...*I am really proud of you, I just wanted to give you a hug!*”

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(v) proved.

vi. ‘I just have always seemed to get you’, or words to that effect;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

Mr Wring stated that he said ‘*I just have always seemed to get you*’, in his capacity as head of house and that he had a good rapport with Pupil B and a good understanding of how her mind worked and why she did not attend School. He stated that this comment was made in this context.

The panel considered Page 207 of the bundle which was an email exchange between Mr Wring and Pupil B on 19 April 2023 within which Mr Wring stated “...*I just have always seemed to get you.*”

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B in making the comment as alleged by email.

The panel found allegation 2(a)(vi) proved.

b. Engaging in e-mail conversations at night;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Pupil B provided within the bundle. The panel noted that emails within these email conversations were sent at night, for example on Tuesday 18 April 2023, Mr Wring emailed Pupil B at 22:58 and 23:11 during their conversation.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B by engaging in email conversations at night.

The panel found allegation 2(b) proved.

c. Buying one or more gifts for Pupil B;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he gifted Pupil B a notepad and a pen to use for recording her thoughts as a result of [REDACTED]. He stated that this was not an expensive item, was something which was in the pastoral office and was intended to assist Pupil B with her wellbeing.

The panel considered that this was Mr Wring engaging in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B by gifting her these items.

The panel found allegation 2(c) proved.

d. Meeting with Pupil B outside of School hours and/or away from school premises.

The panel noted that Mr Wring denied this allegation.

The panel heard oral evidence from Mr Wring and Individual G. They both stated that the meeting was arranged between Mr Wring and Individual G and Mr Wring was not expecting Pupil B to be present. It transpired that Pupil B did come to the park with [REDACTED] but remained separate from Mr Wring and Individual G, playing on the rock climbing wall with friends and [REDACTED].

Whilst the panel noted that it was accepted by Mr Wring and Individual G that Mr Wring and Pupil B were in close proximity outside of School hours and away from School premises, there was insufficient evidence that this was either a “*meeting with Pupil B*” or that he interacted with Pupil B in any way.

The panel considered that this fell short of amounting to Mr Wring having engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B by meeting her in the manner alleged.

The panel found allegation 2(d) not proved.

3. Failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with one or more safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or B, including the following concerns:

- a. On around 9 January 2023, Individual G reported Pupil A to be at risk of grooming behaviour from [REDACTED] [Individual H] who had previously encouraged her to self-harm;**

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Individual G provided within the bundle. The panel noted that Individual G sent an email to Mr Wring on 9 January 2023 where [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] was worried about Pupil A and that Individual H [REDACTED].

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that [REDACTED] he should have reported this.

The panel also considered Pupil D and Pupil E's reports and Mr Wring's reasons for not having reported this, namely that he believed the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were already aware of this.

The panel considered Mr Wring's oral evidence which was that he thought he could take this all on himself, but he accepted that he should have escalated his concerns through the correct channels and processes.

The panel noted therefore that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action or ensure appropriate action was taken in respect of Pupil A and/or Pupil B and his admissions that his judgments were clouded at the time and/or he was not aware or did not feel that he needed to take further action. However, the panel considered that there was sufficient evidence of Mr Wring's failure to act as required in respect of safeguarding concerns relating to Pupils A and B, including in respect of a report by Individual G that Pupil A was at risk of grooming behaviour by Individual H

The panel found allegation 3(a) proved.

- b. On or around 24 May 2023, Pupil D and/or Pupil E had reported that Pupil A was being abused;**

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written submissions of [REDACTED], who stated that on 24 May 2023, she was approached by Pupil D and Pupil E, who stated that they had spoken to Mr Wring regarding concerns they had about Pupil A having been [REDACTED] Witness A stated that she would have expected Mr Wring to have logged the disclosure on MyConcern so that appropriate action could have been taken given the nature of the conduct and the timing of the disclosure.

The [REDACTED] submitted that no concern was logged by Mr Wring, either on the MyConcern system or in person.

Witness A stated that during his interview on 21 June 2023, Mr Wring said that he had told Pupil D and Pupil E to report the matter to her and that this may explain their approach. She stated that despite this, Mr Wring did not make use of his radio to inform her that Pupil D and Pupil E would be coming to see her with a safeguarding concern.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that Pupil D and Pupil E spoke to him about their concerns but Pupil A had just described an argument in the car she had with Individual G regarding Pupil A looking unwell [REDACTED] and so he thought that an argument in a car would not be significant enough to amount to abuse, and, as he was teaching a class outside when the students spoke to him, he advised them to go to the [REDACTED].

The panel considered Mr Wring's oral evidence which was that he felt that he had managed this at the time but acknowledged that he should have dealt with things differently and should have reported this correctly.

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken in respect of safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of a report by Pupil D and/or Pupil E that Pupil A was being abused.

The panel found allegation 3(b) proved.

c. Pupil A reporting to you that [REDACTED];

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email chain between Mr Wring and Pupil A and noted that Pupil A had written in an email to Mr Wring on 21 May 2023 "*mate she [REDACTED] for my phone does that sound okay to you*".

The panel considered the written evidence of Pupil A, who stated that she told Mr Wring over email that [REDACTED], and that she sent this email when [REDACTED] her and she did not want to hand it over. Pupil A stated that Mr Wring asked her to confirm if this was true the next day as he would need to take appropriate action, and that she told him it was not true.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that the following day Pupil A stated that this was not true so he did not feel that this needed to be actioned.

The panel considered the oral evidence of Mr Wring who stated that he did not believe Pupil A to be at risk. However, he acknowledged that he should have reported this correctly and not dealt with this himself or made this assessment himself.

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of a report by Pupil A that [REDACTED].

The panel found allegation 3(c) proved.

d. Pupil A and Pupil B's emotional concerns related to Individual I;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he acknowledged that Pupil A and Pupil B [REDACTED] but that he never saw this as a specific safeguarding concern and that the School was aware of this.

The panel considered the oral evidence of Mr Wring who stated that he acknowledged that, whilst his intentions were to safeguard Pupils A and B himself, he should have reported this in the correct way.

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken in respect of safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of Pupil A and Pupil B's emotional concerns relate to Individual I.

The panel found allegation 3(d) proved.

e. Having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B were left home alone at night;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email from Individual G on 28 March 2023 stating [REDACTED].

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he accepted that he was told that Pupil A and Pupil B were left home alone at night but did not see this to be a safeguarding concern. Mr Wring and Individual G stated that Individual G has [REDACTED], and so he understood that she would be in the house on nights that Individual G was working.

The panel considered Individual G's oral evidence which was that [REDACTED] was always present in the house while Individual G was working nights. The panel did not consider whether or not Pupils A and B were left home alone but considered that Mr Wring should still have taken action regarding this information.

Notwithstanding, the panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B were left home alone at night.

The panel found allegation 3(e) proved.

f. Having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B had a lack of food in the family home;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the emails between Mr Wring and Individual G, and noted an email which contained a screenshot of texts between Pupil B and Individual G, where Pupil B had stated that there was no food in the house.

The panel considered Mr Wring's oral evidence within which he stated that he was not aware that there had been a lack of food in the family home of Pupils A and B.

The panel noted that it was not sufficiently clear when there would have been shortages of food in the house but Mr Wring was aware that this was an issue.

The panel considered Individual G's oral evidence which was that [REDACTED].

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of having been informed that Pupil A and Pupil B had a lack of food in the family home.

The panel found allegation 3(f) proved.

g. Having been informed that Pupil A may have been groomed;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence from Witness A which was that she had acted on concerns about Pupil A by liaising with the [REDACTED] and Individual G. However, the panel also noted that Mr Wring acknowledged that he tried to take on the safeguarding matters himself by talking to Pupil A which he recognises was inappropriate and that he should have reported this correctly.

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of having been informed that Pupil A may have been groomed.

The panel found allegation 3(g) proved.

h. Having been informed that Pupil A was at risk of self-harm;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Individual G provided within the bundle. The panel noted that Individual G sent an email to Mr Wring on 9 January 2023 where she stated that she was worried about Pupil A and that Individual H [REDACTED].

The panel noted Mr Wring's oral evidence which was that he recognised that he should have reported this.

The panel found that Mr Wring had failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken with safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, including in respect of having been informed that Pupil A was at risk of self-harm.

The panel found allegation 3(h) proved.

4. Sought to conceal that Individual G had left Pupil A and/or Pupil B alone overnight, by;

a. Encouraging Individual G to deny leaving Pupil A and Pupil B alone;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that, while he initially accepted this allegation, Mr Wring changed his position and subsequently denied this allegation.

Mr Wring's position was that there were no occasions where Pupils A and B were left alone and without supervision from Individual J. This was reflected in the oral evidence the panel heard from him and Individual G.

However, the panel considered that the evidence was not consistent with what Mr Wring had said in emails at the time, and other documents before the panel. The panel noted that Mr Wring had stated that all he was trying to do was to ensure that Pupils A and B made the true position clear if the issue ever arose as to Individual G leaving them alone at night.

The panel considered an exchange of emails between Mr Wring and Individual G on 15 and 16 March 2023. Mr Wring stated that *"I always knew that was something I had to guard and protect for you as a family, if for any how it slips out in school, I always say [Individual J] is there to look after them."* Individual G responds thanking Mr Wring for *"keeping it quiet and protecting us about night times. I always tell the girls to say [Individual J] is there. They are totally safe."* The panel considered that the references to the need to *"protect"* Individual G and *"keeping it quiet"* were not consistent with his contention. If Individual J was always there and there were therefore no safeguarding concerns, then there would be no need to keep anything regarding this *"quiet"* or to *"protect"* the family from anything.

The panel also considered a report submitted by Mr Wring from [REDACTED] which referenced Individual J not always having been present.

The panel noted that Mr Wring was seeking to guard and protect the family but that, on the balance of probabilities, he was more likely to have been seeking to conceal that Individual G had left Pupils A and B alone overnight especially given the [REDACTED].

The panel felt that there was sufficient evidence that, on the balance of probabilities, there were times when Pupils A and B were alone overnight and that the language that Mr Wring had used when discussing this was consistent with encouraging Individual G to deny leaving Pupil A and Pupil B alone to seek to conceal this information in an attempt to protect Individual G.

The panel found allegation 4(a) proved.

b. Encouraging Individual G to pressure Pupil A and/or Pupil B to deny having been left alone.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the email exchanges between Mr Wring and Individual G dated 15 March 2023, where Mr Wring stated *"no way would I want people sniffing round that or child services"*. The panel felt that Mr Wring was concealing the fact that Individual G was

leaving Pupil A and Pupil B home alone at night and encouraging [REDACTED] to deny the fact that she was doing this.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he accepted that he made the above comment to Individual G but did not look to actively conceal what [REDACTED] was doing but merely make [REDACTED] aware of how others may see it. He stated that he presumed Pupil A and Pupil B were being left under the supervision of Individual G's [REDACTED], Individual J.

However, despite the fact that the panel had found that there was more likely than not to have been occasions where Mr Wring sought to conceal the situation regarding Pupils A and B being left alone, it did not find sufficient evidence of him having encouraged Individual G to pressure Pupils A and B to deny this. The panel did not consider that the TRA's case had been made out or that the evidence relating to this amounted to encouraging Individual G to pressure Pupils A and B.

The panel found allegation 4(b) not proved.

5. Sought to conceal that you were involved in a [REDACTED] and/or your conduct towards Pupils A and/or B by:

a. Failing to disclose [REDACTED] to the school;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the evidence from Mr Wring and Individual G that [REDACTED] in September 2023 after his employment with the School had ended. They both maintained that [REDACTED].

The panel did not need to determine the point at which the [REDACTED] but rather the point at which [REDACTED] it was potentially clouding Mr Wring's judgment and therefore ought to have been disclosed to the School so that any appropriate safeguards could be put in place.

Mr Wring accepted in oral evidence that between January and March 2023 the [REDACTED] Witness A evidence was that, as soon as she became aware in May 2023 of the nature of [REDACTED], she immediately perceived a need to put safeguards in place for the protection of Pupils A and B and also Mr Wring himself. [REDACTED] evidence was that, had she been aware of this [REDACTED] in January 2023, she would have put the necessary safeguards in place even sooner.

The panel considered the written submissions and oral evidence of Mr Wring, who stated that he did not realise that he was under an obligation to disclose this [REDACTED] to the School and therefore did not do this. He further stated that he did not feel he had

received any guidance about raising such matters. However, the panel also considered Witness A oral evidence which was that this was sufficiently clear in the School's Code of Conduct.

The panel considered the fact that Mr Wring and Individual G had discussed communicating via alternative methods other than the School email and that, in doing so, had sought to conceal [REDACTED] Although they stated that this was an attempt to conceal this information from Pupil A, the panel considered that it was also likely to be to conceal this from the School. In the panel's view, this demonstrated that Mr Wring was aware of the potential inappropriateness of the [REDACTED] at that point.

The panel further found that in failing to disclose his [REDACTED] to the School, he sought to conceal that he was involved in a [REDACTED]. The panel found allegation 5(a) proved.

b. Attempting to permanently delete approximately 228 emails between yourself and Pupil A and/or Pupil B and/or Individual G;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written submissions of Witness A, who stated that it was apparent as part of her investigation that Mr Wring had deleted around 228 emails, of which 10 email chains were recovered.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he accepted that he deleted the emails but this was just a housekeeping task as he was in his notice period before moving to another school so was sorting through his inbox with no idea that there would be a School investigation.

The panel considered that due to the volume of emails which Mr Wring sought to delete between himself and Individual G, he was more likely than not to have been seeking to conceal [REDACTED] by deleting the emails.

The panel found allegation 5(b) proved.

c. Requesting that Individual G [REDACTED];

The panel noted that Mr Wring denied this allegation.

The panel noted that Mr Wring had sent an email to Individual G in March 2023 asking [REDACTED] to communicate with him via another method.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he asked Individual G to communicate via text as he knew he was leaving the School and did not want to lose communication contact with her.

The panel considered the email exchange on Page 423 of the bundle within which Mr Wring said to Individual G “*I’m worried about saying on here. So we can either text or something else xx.*” The panel noted that Mr Wring suggested this on more than one occasion.

The panel considered that there was sufficient evidence of Mr Wring having sought to conceal his [REDACTED] by encouraging their conversations to move away from School emails.

The panel found allegation 5(c) proved.

d. Instructing Individual G to save you as a contact with an alternative name;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel noted that Mr Wring had sent an email to Individual G in March 2023 asking Individual G to save his contact details under a different name.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he suggested this to Individual G to avoid distress to Pupil A and Pupil B as they were not happy with how [REDACTED].

The panel considered that there was sufficient evidence of Mr Wring having sought to conceal his [REDACTED] by instructing Individual G to save him as a contact with a different name.

The panel found allegation 5(d) proved.

e. Stating to Individual G that you need to “watch [your] backs” or words to that effect.

The panel noted that Mr Wring denied this allegation.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that these discussions between himself and Individual G were with the intention of protecting Pupil A and Pupil B from any unnecessary worry or concern about their [REDACTED] as they felt it was best it was kept unofficial as he was soon to leave the School, and then many of their concerns would have no longer been an issue.

However, the panel noted the email on Page 423 of the bundle where Individual G had referenced that they needed to “*watch [their] backs.*” The panel did not find sufficient evidence that Mr Wring had made this comment, as alleged and that the most that was evidenced was that Mr Wring may have adopted this suggestion in response to Individual G stating this.

The panel therefore found allegation 5(e) not proved.

6. Your conduct as may be found proven at:

a. Allegations 1-5 was notwithstanding that you knew or ought to have known that Pupil A and/or Pupil B were vulnerable;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel considered this in light of the allegations found proved within allegations 1-5.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring, who stated that he did not consider Pupil A and Pupil B particularly [REDACTED] as usually students who are vulnerable have special educational needs or were suffering from serious mental health problems; he stated neither of which applied to Pupil A and Pupil B. However, the panel noted from Mr Wring's oral evidence that he was aware of [REDACTED] the family situation and that he did therefore have knowledge that they were vulnerable.

The panel found allegation 6(a) proved.

b. Allegations 1-5 demonstrated a lack of insight into previous advice provided by the school relating to maintaining appropriate boundaries, which was given to you in or around February 2021;

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation.

The panel noted that after having received management advice Mr Wring still sent emails at inappropriate times to Pupils A and B and Individual G using language which was not commensurate with his professional position and that this demonstrated a lack of insight into the previous advice. The panel noted from his oral evidence that Mr Wring accepted that he should have followed the management advice given and that he wished that he could turn back the clock and that he would do things differently now.

The panel found allegation 6(b) proved.

c. Allegations 4 and/or 5 above lacked integrity and/or were dishonest.

The panel considered the written submissions of Mr Wring and noted that he accepted this allegation, but stated that it was never his intention to be dishonest.

The panel firstly considered whether Mr Wring had failed to act with integrity. The panel considered the case of *Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority*.

The panel considered that Mr Wring had failed to act within the higher standards expected of a teacher by his conduct as found proven at allegations 4 and 5. The panel considered that the information he had received regarding Pupil A and Pupil B being left alone should have been reported rather than concealed, and that he should have informed the School of his [REDACTED] as he was communicating with her via school email.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Wring's conduct lacked integrity.

The panel then considered whether Mr Wring acted dishonestly. In reaching its decision on this, the panel considered the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford*.

The panel firstly sought to ascertain the actual state of Mr Wring's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel concluded that Mr Wring, in his position as a teacher, should have known to report the potential safeguarding issue that Pupil A and Pupil B were being left home alone overnight, rather than attempt to conceal the information.

The panel noted that overall Mr Wring had sought to conceal information and had acted dishonestly according to the standards of ordinary decent people and that this was most likely as a result of the developing [REDACTED].

The panel found allegation 6(c) proved.

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

Having found a number 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Wring, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Wring 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 an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Wring amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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

The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel received legal advice as to the possibility of findings being cumulated in accordance with guidance given in the judgment of *Schodlok v General Medical Council [2015]*. However, as the panel concluded that each of the allegations found proved, amounted to unacceptable professional conduct when considered in the full context; the panel did not need to determine whether it would be appropriate to cumulate any of those allegations.

The panel noted that although some of the allegations took place outside the education setting, they were still relevant to Mr Wring's position as a teacher, in that they involved pupils, [REDACTED] and were sufficiently linked to the School education setting.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Wring 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 that they behave.

The findings of misconduct are 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 Mr Wring's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii), 1(a)(iii), 1(a)(iv), 1(a)(v), 1(a)(vi), 1(a)(vii), 1(a)(viii), 1(a)(ix), 1(a)(x), 1(a)(xi), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a)(i), 2(a)(ii), 2(a)(iii), 2(a)(iv), 2(a)(v), 2(a)(vi), 2(b), 2(c), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h), 4(a), 5(a), 5(b), 5(c), 5(d), 6(a), 6(b), 6(c) proved, the panel further found that Mr Wring'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.

The panel was aware that 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 view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Wring. The panel was mindful of the need to strike the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest.

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 Mr Wring. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- failure to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk e.g. failed to notify the designated safeguarding lead and/or make a referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies when abuse, neglect and/or harmful cultural practices were identified;

- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests;
- collusion or concealment including:
 - any activity that involves knowingly substantiating another person’s statements where they are known to be false;
 - failure to challenge inappropriate actions, defending inappropriate actions or concealing inappropriate actions;
 - encouraging others to break rules;
 - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing;

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

There was no evidence that Mr Wring’s actions were not deliberate. The panel found Mr Wring’s actions to be deliberate albeit motivated by a desire to help others and to support by acting in a way that would promote the wellbeing of students.

There was no evidence that Mr Wring was acting under extreme duress.

Although the panel noted that Mr Wring had not properly reported numerous safeguarding risks, these were largely procedural failures and the panel did not have evidence before it that there was actual harm suffered as there was no resulting serious risk to pupils which was left unaddressed. The panel noted that this was also recognised by [REDACTED].

There was evidence that Mr Wring demonstrated high standards in both personal and professional conduct and had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel considered character references provided on behalf of Mr Wring. The panel noted the following comments in particular:

- *“if I were to rate Josh in terms of competence I would place him towards the top end”*

Individual A, [REDACTED]

“My opinion of Josh’s teaching was consistently high”

- *“Josh was identified as a strong practitioner”*

Individual B, [REDACTED]

“the care and attention that Josh displayed, in my opinion, went above and beyond, in trying to help young people and their families for a better life...On balance I would state that Josh was naïve at best and should have maintained a more distanced approach to working with some families”.

Individual C, [REDACTED]

- *“Josh is a kind, caring and excellent teacher”*

Individual D, [REDACTED]

The panel 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. In the circumstances, the panel considered that Mr Wring had demonstrated clear insight and remorse into his actions and did not consider there to be a risk of repetition. Mr Wring demonstrated a real awareness of the impact that his actions had had on all involved and of how best to approach any safeguarding situations in the future.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, in particular that Mr Wring was trying to do the right thing by supporting the family and pupils, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

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 sanction.

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 (including allegations 2d, 4b and 5e). I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Joshua Wring 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 an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Wring involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Wring fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include findings of engaging in inappropriate relationships with pupils and failing to take action on safeguarding concerns.

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 likely to 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 Mr Wring, 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. Failure to take action on safeguarding concerns is a serious matter. However, in this case the panel has observed:

“Although the panel noted that Mr Wring had not properly reported numerous safeguarding risks, these were largely procedural failures and the panel did not have evidence before it that there was actual harm suffered as there was no resulting serious risk to pupils which was left unaddressed. The panel noted that this was also recognised by [REDACTED]”

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel has set out as follows, “In the circumstances, the panel considered that Mr Wring had demonstrated clear insight and remorse into his actions and did not consider there to be a risk of repetition. Mr Wring demonstrated a real awareness of the impact that his actions had had on all involved and of how best to approach any safeguarding situations in the future.” I agree with the panel’s assessment on the risk of repetition. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed, “The findings of misconduct are 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.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of engaging in inappropriate relationships with pupils 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 and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Wring himself. The panel has commented, “There was evidence that Mr Wring demonstrated high standards in both personal and professional conduct and had contributed significantly to the education sector.” The panel has noted that it considered a number of character references that attested to the ability of Mr Wring as a teacher.

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

The misconduct found proven in this case is serious and is likely to bring the profession into disrepute. However, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's findings that Mr Wring had shown clear insight and remorse, and that there was no risk of repetition.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that "Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, in particular that Mr Wring was trying to do the right thing by supporting the family and pupils, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case."

I have, therefore, concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 16 September 2024

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