



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Robert Keith: Professional conduct panel hearing

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

January 2025

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Professional conduct panel decision on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education

Teacher: Mr Robert Keith
Teacher ref number: 1085795
Teacher date of birth: 17 August 1991
TRA reference: 15812
Date of determination: 22 January 2025
Former employer: All Saints Academy, Dunstable

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 21 – 22 January 2025 by way of a virtual hearing to consider the case of Mr Robert Keith.

The panel members were Ms Olivia Kong (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Karen Graham (teacher panellist) and Mrs Beverly Montgomery (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Clare Strickland of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Matilda Heselton of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Keith was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings 16 October 2024 .

It was alleged that Mr Keith was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst he was employed as a teacher at All Saints Academy between September 2013 and November 2016:

1. He engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A, by;
 - a. Communicating with Pupil A via Facebook;
 - b. Commenting to Pupil A;
 - i. 'If we had sex, what would you do?' or words to that effect;
 - ii. 'We could start with a cheeky finger' or words to that effect;
 - iii. 'Well, you could just open your legs' or words to that effect;
 - iv. 'So, I just wanna rip it off with my teeth' or words to that effect.
 - c. Inviting Pupil A to his home accommodation;
 - d. Allowing Pupil A inside his home accommodation;
 - e. Discussing him and Pupil A having sex;
 - f. Obtaining Pupil A's personal number and/or providing his personal number to Pupil A;
 - g. Arranging to meet with Pupil A and/or meeting with Pupil A outside of school premises;
 - h. Inviting Pupil A inside his car;
 - i. Touching Pupil A's thigh;
 - j. Touching Pupil A under her clothing;
 - k. Touching Pupil A's vagina and/or placing his fingers inside her vagina.
2. His conduct, as may be found proven at Allegation 1, was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

Mr Keith made no admissions of facts.

Mr Keith made no admission of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Preliminary applications

The panel considered an application from the presenting officer to proceed in the absence of Mr Keith. It was satisfied that the notice of proceedings had been sent to Mr Keith at least 8 weeks before the date of this hearing, as required by paragraph 4.11 of the Teacher Misconduct: Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession (the Procedures) April 2018.

Having decided that, the panel considered whether to exercise its discretion to proceed in Mr Keith's absence. It noted that he was aware of the TRA's proceedings and inferred from his response to the TRA in January 2024 that he did not intend to participate further. It considered that appropriate attempts had been made to ensure that Mr Keith was aware of the hearing and given the opportunity to attend, in particular, via the notice being posted to him at two different postal addresses and via email correspondence sent to an email address he provided to the TRA in January 2024. The panel noted that the allegations date back to 2016 and that Pupil A and another witness were in attendance to give evidence. Any further delay for no good reason would not be in their interests, or in the public interest. The panel concluded that there was no good reason to delay further, as it could be satisfied that an adjournment was unlikely to secure Mr Keith's attendance. The panel decided that Mr Keith had voluntarily waived his right to attend, and in these circumstances, it decided to exercise its discretion to proceed in his absence.

The panel also considered an application for Pupil A to be treated as a [REDACTED] and for her to have special measures, specifically, a witness supporter, should she require one. The panel was satisfied that Pupil A is a [REDACTED] under the Procedures, in that the allegation under consideration is sexual in nature, and she is the alleged victim. The panel agreed that if she required it, she should have support from a witness supporter, who could be present with her to provide moral support while she is giving evidence. The panel directed that the witness supporter should be visible at all times and should not influence Pupil A's evidence in any way.

The panel agreed to receive the name of the witness supporter in private session, to avoid identifying Pupil A.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Anonymised pupil list – page 5

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 36

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements and exhibits – pages 38 to 60

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 62 to 168

Section 5: Teacher documents – none

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- Supplementary bundle (relating to proceeding in absence)
- 2 postal receipts for the notices of proceedings sent to Mr Keith

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the Procedures.

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence called by the presenting officer from

- Pupil A (who decided to give evidence without a witness supporter)
- [REDACTED], All Saints Academy

Decision and reasons

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

Mr Keith was employed as an English teacher at All Saints Academy (“the School”) from September 2013. In the academic year of 2013 to 2014, Pupil A was in Mr Keith’s [REDACTED] group. She and [REDACTED], Pupil B, developed a bond with Mr Keith during the academic year. They made plans to meet up after Pupil A and Pupil B completed their [REDACTED] exams. There were social media and electronic communications between them, and in-person meetings in the summer of 2014. In December 2015, Pupil A told her mum that something had happened between her and Mr Keith, and her mum reported it to the School. There was a police investigation, [REDACTED].

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:

Whilst you were employed as a teacher at All Saints Academy between September 2013 and November 2016:

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

a. Communicating with Pupil A via Facebook;

Pupil A gave evidence to the panel about this, and the panel accepted her evidence. It was supported by screenshots of messages exchanged between Mr Keith and Pupils A and B in a Facebook Messenger group called "Convos with Keith". In Mr Keith's police interview, he admitted exchanging messages with Pupil A via Facebook. The panel was therefore satisfied that this allegation was proved.

b. Commenting to Pupil A;

- i. 'If we had sex, what would you do?' or words to that effect;**
- ii. 'We could start with a cheeky finger' or words to that effect;**
- iii. 'Well, you could just open your legs' or words to that effect;**
- iv. 'So, I just wanna rip it off with my teeth' or words to that effect.**

The hearing bundle contained screenshots of these messages. In her evidence to the panel, Pupil A confirmed that each of these messages was sent by Mr Keith to the Facebook Messenger group or directly to her. The panel accepted her evidence. In his police interview, Mr Keith accepted that there may have been some sexual comments in the group messages. The panel concluded that this allegation was proved.

c. Inviting Pupil A to your home accommodation;

In his police interview, Mr Keith accepted that he, Pupil A and Pupil B, made plans to watch TV together at his house. She described that at the end of July 2014, Mr Keith collected her and Pupil B from [REDACTED] car park and drove them to his house, where they spent the afternoon. The account she gave was detailed and consistent with her account in her police interview in 2016. The panel accepted her evidence and concluded that Mr Keith had invited her to his home accommodation.

d. Allowing Pupil A inside your home accommodation;

The panel accepted Pupil A's evidence about her visit to Mr Keith's home accommodation in late July 2014 and found this proved.

e. Discussing you and Pupil A having sex;

Pupil A gave evidence to the panel that shortly before 3 July 2014, she and Mr Keith spoke about having sex, and formed a plan to do so. Her account was supported by the screenshots of messages in the hearing bundle, which included Mr Keith sending a message asking "*If we had sex what would you do? To put it bluntly*". On the basis of this evidence, the panel concluded that this allegation was proved.

f. Obtaining Pupil A's personal number and/or providing your personal number to Pupil A;

The panel accepted Pupil A's evidence that she and Mr Keith exchanged personal phone numbers. This was supported by the fact that there were screenshots in the hearing bundle of direct messages between them, in addition to messages sent via Facebook. The panel was satisfied with the evidence received that they exchanged personal contact numbers.

g. Arranging to meet with Pupil A and/or meeting with Pupil A outside of school premises;

The panel accepted Pupil A's evidence about her meeting with Mr Keith to watch television at his house along with Pupil B. In addition, she gave evidence that she and Mr Keith planned a meeting in [REDACTED] car park, which took place on 3 July 2014. In his police interview, Mr Keith admitted that he made a plan to meet Pupil A at [REDACTED] car park and that this meeting took place. The panel therefore found this allegation proved.

h. Inviting Pupil A inside your car;

On the basis of Pupil A's evidence and Mr Keith's admissions in his police interview, the panel was satisfied that this allegation was proved.

i. Touching Pupil A's thigh;

Pupil A gave a detailed account of what happened in Mr Keith's car on 3 July 2014, which included that Mr Keith had touched her thigh. This was consistent with her description of events to the police in 2016. In his police interview in 2016, Mr Keith accepted that he may have put his hand on her thigh (but said that if this happened, it was intended to be a reassuring gesture). The panel was satisfied with the evidence that Mr Keith did touch Pupil A's thigh.

j. Touching Pupil A under her clothing;

Pupil A gave a detailed account of what happened in Mr Keith's car on 3 July 2014, which included that Mr Keith had touched her under her clothing. This was consistent with her description of events to the police in 2016.

Mr Keith denied this in his police interview. He suggested that his [REDACTED]. The panel considered his account, but preferred the evidence of Pupil A, who had been consistent and who gave her evidence on affirmation to the panel.

She had told the panel that in 2014, Mr Keith had discussed with her and Pupil B a recent sexual experience that he had with a woman. [REDACTED].

Further, the panel had regard to a message sent by Mr Keith to Pupil A in which he said:

"...to be honest, I don't know about you, but I have been thinking, and I do actually think that despite everything etc. that maybe we should just stay friends? I know that's a big decision, but I don't know if it'd be harder the more we got into stuff the worse it'd be if it all went wrong?.."

Pupil A said that Mr Keith sent this message to her after 3 July 2014. The panel concluded that this message was consistent with Pupil A's evidence that there had been sexual activity between her and Mr Keith on 3 July 2014.

The panel therefore found this allegation proved.

k. Touching Pupil A's vagina and/or placing your fingers inside her vagina.

In her evidence to the panel, and in her police interview in 2016, Pupil A gave evidence that Mr Keith touched her vagina. For the reasons set out at 1. j. above, the panel accepted her evidence and rejected Mr Keith's denial. It found this allegation proved.

Having found each of the sub-particulars of allegation 1 proved, the panel considered if this demonstrated that Mr Keith had engaged in and/or developed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A. The panel was satisfied that they did demonstrate this. Pupil A was a [REDACTED] girl who had been taught by Mr Keith throughout the academic year. She was still on the roll at the School and [REDACTED]. The panel accepted Witness B's [REDACTED] evidence about the expectations at the School around professional boundaries. The panel was satisfied that Mr Keith's relationship with Pupil A was a serious breach of those boundaries, and wholly inappropriate. It gradually escalated through inappropriate messaging (first in a group chat and then in private messages), to private conversations, then a personal meeting at which sexual touching took place.

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

The panel first considered whether the inappropriate relationship between Pupil A and Mr Keith was sexual in nature. It was satisfied that it was. It included conduct that was self-evidently sexual, including sexual touching, sexual conversation, and sexual messaging.

The panel then considered whether, in engaging in and/or developing that relationship, Mr Keith was sexually motivated. Again, the panel was satisfied that he was. It accepted Pupil A's descriptions of what happened and was satisfied that Mr Keith actively pursued a sexual relationship with her, and also, engaged in conduct (including sexual touching) with the intention of obtaining sexual gratification.

Mr Keith had suggested in his police interview that any sexual messages he sent to Pupil A were jokes. The panel rejected that suggestion. It was incompatible with the wording of the messages that were seen by the panel and the context of the conversation. Pupil A gave evidence that the comments made her feel nervous and anxious, and that they were not jokes because they were not funny. The panel considered that comments made were not jokes but were sexual in nature and sexually motivated.

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 Mr Keith's conduct involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Keith was in breach of the following standards:

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

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

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

The panel found that the offences involving sexual activity and sexual communication with a child were relevant.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Keith amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession. His conduct led to a pupil being exposed to or influenced by his behaviour in a harmful way.

In relation to whether Mr Keith's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It 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 Keith's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1 and 2 proved, the panel concluded that Mr Keith'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, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession, and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of an inappropriate, sexual, and sexually motivated relationship with a child. The panel was particularly concerned about the escalation in Mr Keith's behaviour, which, in the panel's view, was akin to grooming. Pupil A was [REDACTED] and Mr Keith was aware that [REDACTED]. The evidence demonstrated that he was aware of his safeguarding duties towards her and Pupil B, but he deliberately took action in breach of those duties. His misconduct developed over a period of time and was planned. It was not an isolated lapse of judgement.

The panel noted that Mr Keith did not engage effectively in the School's investigation, nor did he participate fully in the TRA's proceedings. To the police, he admitted those allegations which could not be denied because there was physical evidence to prove them but denied allegations where the main evidence was in Pupil A's account. At all times, he was entitled not to make any admissions and maintain his innocence, and the panel has not held this against him. However, it did conclude that it had not seen any evidence of insight or reflection that would give reassurance that Mr Keith was unlikely to repeat the behaviour found proved against him.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Keith was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. His conduct involved a serious and exploitative breach of trust of a child for sexual purposes. It did in fact cause significant and long-term harm [REDACTED]. Pupil A gave evidence about the impact of Mr Keith's behaviour on her [REDACTED]. She described her experience as [REDACTED] and said that it was a [REDACTED] on her. She had to repeat her account multiple times to different investigations over many years, and up to now, there has been no closure for her. Pupil A told the panel that [REDACTED], and that her experience has made her scared to trust any teachers [REDACTED].

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Keith in the profession. It had no evidence that he had made a particularly strong contribution to the profession during

his short time as a teacher, and he has not worked as a teacher for many years. The panel concluded that any public interest in retaining him in the profession was minimal.

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 Keith.

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 Keith. 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 safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an 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, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;

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

In this case, there was no evidence that Mr Keith's actions were not deliberate, nor that he was acting under duress. The evidence suggested that his actions were deliberate and calculated.

The panel heard no positive evidence of Mr Keith's previous character but proceeded on the basis that he had not been the subject of any previous formal findings against him.

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, to recommend no prohibition order would not be a proportionate and appropriate response.

Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Keith 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 Mr Keith. The seriousness of his conduct 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 for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. 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 their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

The panel was satisfied that Mr Keith's conduct was serious sexual misconduct towards a child, which had caused harm. It had no evidence of reflection or insight and was satisfied that a real risk of serious harm would be present if he is ever allowed to teach again. Further, given the seriousness of its findings, public confidence would be undermined unless there is a clear decision that he should never be allowed to teach again.

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 Mr Robert Keith should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Keith is in breach of the following standards:

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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include findings of an inappropriate, sexual, and sexually motivated relationship with a child.

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 or 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 Keith, 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/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of an inappropriate, sexual, and sexually motivated relationship with a child. The panel was particularly concerned about the escalation in Mr Keith’s behaviour, which, in the panel’s view, was akin to grooming. Pupil A was [REDACTED] and Mr Keith was aware that [REDACTED]. The evidence demonstrated that he was aware of his safeguarding duties towards her and Pupil B, but he deliberately took action in breach of those duties. His misconduct developed over a period of time and was planned. It was not an isolated lapse of judgement.” 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, “The panel noted that Mr Keith did not engage effectively in the School’s investigation, nor did he participate fully in the TRA’s proceedings. To the police, he admitted those allegations which could not be denied because there was physical evidence to prove them but denied allegations where the main evidence was in Pupil A’s account. At all times, he was entitled not to make any admissions and maintain his innocence, and the panel has not held this against him. However, it did conclude that it had not seen any evidence of insight or reflection that would give reassurance that Mr Keith was unlikely to repeat the behaviour found proved against him.” In my judgement, the lack of full insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour, and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Keith was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct involving a child 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 or 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 Keith himself and the panel comment “In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Keith in the profession. It had no evidence that he had made a particularly strong contribution to the profession during his short time as a teacher, and he has not worked as a teacher for many years. The panel concluded that any public interest in retaining him in the profession was minimal.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Keith from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of his 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, “In this case, there was no evidence that Mr Keith’s actions were not deliberate, nor that he was acting under duress. The evidence suggested that his actions were deliberate and calculated.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that “His conduct involved a serious and exploitative breach of trust of a child for sexual purposes. It did in fact cause significant and long-term harm [REDACTED]. Pupil A gave evidence about the impact of Mr Keith’s behaviour on her [REDACTED]. She described her experience as [REDACTED] and said that it was a [REDACTED] on her. She had to repeat her account multiple times to different investigations over many years, and up to now, there has been no closure for her. Pupil A told the panel that [REDACTED], and that her experience has made her scared to trust any teachers [REDACTED].”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Keith has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

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

I have considered the panel’s comments “The panel was satisfied that Mr Keith’s conduct was serious sexual misconduct towards a child, which had caused harm. It had no evidence of reflection or insight and was satisfied that a real risk of serious harm would be present if he is ever allowed to teach again. Further, given the seriousness of its findings, public confidence would be undermined unless there is a clear decision that he should never be allowed to teach again.”

In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the findings, the escalation of Mr Keith's behaviour over a period of time, which the panel said was akin to grooming and the lack of full insight, which indicates a strong risk of repetition.

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 Mr Robert Keith is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Keith shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

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

Mr Robert Keith has a right of appeal to the King's Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SABuxcey', with a horizontal line underneath.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 23 January 2025

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