



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Manoj Sandhu: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**March 2025**

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

**Teacher:** Mr Manoj Sandhu

**TRA reference:** 19761

**Date of determination:** 21 March 2025

**Former employer:** Ferrers School, Northamptonshire

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened between 17 and 21 March 2025 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT, to consider the case of Mr Manoj Sandhu.

The panel members were Ms Hannah Fellows (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Victoria Miller (teacher panellist) and Mrs Beverley Montgomery (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Tom Walker of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Sarah Vince.

The teacher was present but was not represented.

The hearing took place in public save that portions of the hearing were heard in private and was recorded.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 11 December 2024.

It was alleged that Mr Sandhu was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute and/or having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

Whilst employed at the Ferrers School ('the School') as a Teacher of Law between September 2017 and September 2020;

1. He engaged in unprofessional behaviour and/or failed to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils, by:
  - a. making one or more inappropriate comments to and/or in the presence of one or more pupils, by:
    - i. stating "it is every woman's fantasy to be raped" or using words to that effect;
    - ii. stating a pupil 'likes to give it up the bum' or using words to that effect to another pupil;
    - iii. asking a pupil whether they would cope better with rape or their father;
    - iv. stating he cheated on his [REDACTED];
    - v. stating his [REDACTED] had stabbed and/or cut him;
    - vi. stating that he previously took drugs.
  - b. instructing and/or encouraging a pupil to call another pupil a 'fagot';
  - c. encouraging a pupil to place their hand on the bottom of another pupil;
2. His conduct as may be found proven at;
  - a. allegation 1 demonstrated a lack of insight into concerns raised by the school in or around March 2018;
  - b. allegation 1ai and/or 1aii and/or 1aiii and/or 1aiv and/or 1c above was sexually motivated.

He has been convicted, at any time, of a relevant offence in that;

3. He was convicted at the Northampton Magistrates' Court on or around 25 May 2023 for the offence of having with him an offensive weapon without lawful or reasonable excuse.

The allegations were not admitted.

## Preliminary applications

The panel noted the decision and directions of the Case Management Hearing dated 6 March 2025. At the start of the hearing, the Presenting Officer provided a written response from the School to the directions of the panel at the Case Management Hearing. In the response, the School confirmed that it did not have the resources within the timescales to confirm whether any of the material sought still existed, or provide any detailed information in relation to this. The panel noted that it had before it a large bundle of documents from the School comprising many relevant records relating to the disciplinary procedures. In the absence of a substantive response from the School, the panel took the view that Mr Sandhu would be in a position to make submissions about any disclosure issues or the non-availability of any documents.

Mr Sandhu also made reference to health-related documents. Upon enquiry, the TRA confirmed that the bulk of the documents referred to by Mr Sandhu were already within the bundle. The panel took the view that there was sufficient evidence within the bundle of health-related matters, and that Mr Sandhu was able to make submissions about his [REDACTED] and their nexus with the allegations. The panel noted that it was accepted that Mr Sandhu was suffering from a range of [REDACTED] issues at the time of the allegations.

On the first day of the hearing, 17 March 2025, an application was made on behalf of the TRA for case management directions as follows:

- *Application under Paragraph 5.66 of the Teacher Misconduct Disciplinary Procedures (the Procedures) for directions that Pupil C be permitted to give evidence by video link (Microsoft Teams).*

Pupil C is a former pupil of the School and has provided a witness statement for these proceedings. The Presenting Officer intended to call Pupil C to give evidence at the hearing on Monday 17 March 2025.

Pupil C requested that she give her evidence by video link due to her location and the logistical difficulties she would face travelling and the disruption to her work. Some concern was also expressed about seeing Mr Sandhu in person. Mr Sandhu made no objection to but did raise concerns about the lateness of the application.

The panel agrees that oral evidence from Pupil C is to be preferred to hearsay evidence and that video link would allow the opportunity to test Pupil C's evidence and there would be no prejudice to Mr Sandhu. The panel agrees that the proposed measures will assist in the just and efficient management of the case pursuant to paragraph 5.59 of the Procedures.

The panel makes the following order:

- *Pupil C be permitted to give evidence by video link (Microsoft Teams).*

Mr Sandhu made an application for the admission of late papers, namely an emailed statement by a former colleague of his dated 16 March 2025. The Presenting Officer made no objection. The panel agreed that the statement was relevant and its admission would cause no unfairness.

Prior to the conclusion of the case for the TRA, the Presenting Officer made an application for the admission of hearsay evidence in relation to the written accounts of Pupil B, Pupil I, Witness B and Witness C. Pupil I had been due to attend but informed the TRA that he was unable to attend due to family circumstances. Mr Sandhu did not object to the admission of the written statements.

The panel took the view that the evidence in question was relevant to the allegations and that there was no unfairness in the evidence being admitted. Mr Sandhu has been able to test the allegations and in questions to witnesses who did attend (as set out below), and has not been constrained in his ability to make submissions.

However, the panel also took the view that such hearsay evidence needs to be carefully assessed to determine what if any weight can be attached to it given the fact that the evidence of such witnesses cannot be tested in cross-examination, and in the case of Pupil I, the statement and the interview record submitted had not been signed.

## Summary of evidence

### Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 14 to 15

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 17 to 24

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 27 to 123

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 126 to 342

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 345 to 1685

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following documents which were presented by Mr Sandhu:

- Emailed statement of a former colleague, (Witness D, dated 16 March 2025)
- Extracts from the OCR A level law textbook
- Additional medical documents and submissions regarding [REDACTED]

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 document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020, (the “Procedures”).

## **Witnesses**

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by the presenting officer:

- Pupil F (former pupil of the School)
- Pupil C (former pupil of the School)
- Pupil E (former pupil of the School)
- Witness A

Mr Sandhu also gave oral evidence.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Sandhu was employed as a teacher of law at the Ferrer’s School (“the School”) between September 2017 and September 2020. This case relates to allegations that Mr Sandhu behaved in an unprofessional manner and failed to maintain professional boundaries. It is said that, on various occasions, Mr Sandhu made inappropriate comments and/or engaged in conversations with pupils of a sexualised nature to an extent not justified by the subject matter he was delivering. It is alleged that such conduct was sexually motivated. It is further alleged that he shared inappropriate details of his personal life with pupils.

It is also alleged that subsequently, and on a separate occasion, in circumstances with no connection to the School, Mr Sandhu was convicted of a relevant offence. The conviction was on or around 25 May 2023 and related to his possession of an offensive weapon in a public place with no lawful excuse.

## Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation(s) against you proved, for these reasons:

**You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst employed at the Ferrers School ('the School') as a Teacher of Law between September 2017 and September 2020;**

- 1. You engaged in unprofessional behaviour and/or failed to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils, by;**
  - a. making one or more inappropriate comments to and/or in the presence of one or more pupils, by;**
  - ii. stating a pupil 'likes to give it up the bum' or using words to that effect to another pupil;**
  - iv. stating you cheated on your [REDACTED];**
  - v. stating your [REDACTED] had stabbed and/or cut you;**

As part of his role, Mr Sandhu was tasked with teaching criminal law elements of an AS/A level syllabus to sixth form students. It is common ground that the syllabus required consideration of challenging topics. For example, the topics included issues of physical and sexual harm and violence, and how they were dealt with by the criminal law. In particular, students were required to learn and apply principles set out in caselaw which related to issues of consent to sexual activity and assault. Students were also required to consider issues such as provocation and loss of control in the context of jealousy and sexual infidelity as potential defences to assault and murder. A number of the cases referred to unusual or extreme sexual activity. The details of such cases were distressing.

The panel was presented with numerous materials from the syllabus which confirmed that such topics were expressly referred to in course materials. The School also had provision and guidance for the delivery of such topics. The School had a Code of Conduct (September 2019) which refers to the challenges posed by teachers delivering sexually explicit aspects of the curriculum as follows:

*Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with pupils to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan*



*should highlight areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. drama*

*The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.*

This Code of Conduct was not in force at the time that Mr Sandhu was teaching. However, the panel heard evidence from Witness A that this Code reflected a previous variant. In any event, the panel takes the view that a central element of teaching practice is the need to take care when delivering sensitive topics, and the Code represents an illustration of expected professional care.

The panel heard oral evidence from Pupils F, C and E which was relevant to this allegation. These pupils attended two different classes and represented two of the three schools who could access the law course. There were common themes to the evidence they gave. For example, each of them accepted that the course required assessment of case law dealing with sexual themes and issues of consent and violence. However, each of them stated that Mr Sandhu dealt with the topics in an inappropriate way by regularly giving examples of his private life to illustrate themes and thus blurring professional boundaries. The pupils referred to Mr Sandhu using students as examples to illustrate themes in ways which they felt were unnecessary and made them feel uncomfortable.

Mr Sandhu accepted allegation 1 a.v. on a factual basis but denied the other particulars. Mr Sandhu gave oral evidence at great length referring to the topics and the case law and the circumstances in which he dealt with challenging topics. Mr Sandhu stated that the pupils had misinterpreted what he had said and/or conflated comments made by students with comments made by him. Mr Sandhu's position was that the complaints were prompted by the students receiving significantly lower grades than expected in their 2019 summer mock examination. Mr Sandhu was not involved in the marking of these mock exams and challenged the veracity of them, further adding that he asked to view these exams and was denied access to them.

Mr Sandhu also stated that during this period he was suffering with [REDACTED] which did have an impact on his behaviour and conduct and his style of delivery. Mr Sandhu stated that, prior to employment at the School, he had felt that he was [REDACTED]. He referred to a number of challenging life experiences in his recent past which he felt that he had coped with. However, he stated that [REDACTED] deteriorated as a result of a combination of issues. Mr Sandhu referred to the pressures he faced at the School and his experience of racism combined with his perception that this was not being dealt with effectively by the School. In addition to this, Mr Sandhu experienced a very distressing and [REDACTED] which significantly impacted his day-to-day quality of life and outlook.

The evidence of Mr Sandhu in relation to [REDACTED] were substantiated by reports in the Bundle and were not disputed.

The panel was left in no doubt that the Pupils that gave evidence had genuine concerns about the style and manner of Mr Sandhu's teaching. Given the similar nature and the number of the concerns, the panel was persuaded that Mr Sandhu failed to deliver the lessons in question in an appropriate manner at all times. However, the panel was tasked with assessing the particular allegations before it.

#### Allegation 1 a.ii.

As regards allegation 1 a.ii., the direct evidence in relation to this allegation came from Pupil F who gave oral evidence. Mr Sandhu vehemently denies this allegation and states that it was pupils who were using this term and he challenged them.

Pupil F stated that Mr Sandhu made this comment in the context of using two boys, to give an example in order to elaborate on a principle in the criminal law. The panel found this evidence to be convincing and indeed, Mr Sandhu accepted in general terms that he used pupils as examples.

Pupil F also accepted that these comments were also initiated by one pupil about another. When questioned, Pupil F accepted that Mr Sandhu intervened when one pupil said this to another and may have repeated the words used when challenging that pupil. Mr Sandhu also stated that he reported this to the School by email, hence why he had sought disclosure of his emails. Mr Sandhu further agrees that this would be a bizarre thing for an experienced teacher to say.

The panel takes the view that it is more likely than not that Mr Sandhu repeated the words alleged, or words to that effect. However, the panel is not satisfied that the words were used in the sense that Mr Sandhu was commenting on a pupil's sexual proclivities. However, the panel does take the view that repeating such words (as per the evidence of Pupil F and Mr Sandhu), or using such expressions in a casual sense to give examples (as per the evidence of Pupil F) was unprofessional and unnecessary. The panel thus finds this allegation proved.

#### Allegation 1 a. iv.

As regards allegation 1. a. iv, the panel heard evidence from Pupil C and E to the effect that he had told them and other pupils that he had cheated on his previous partners. Mr Sandhu denied this and stated that the pupils were lying. Mr Sandhu stated that he had referred to the topic of sexual infidelity as part of the law syllabus as an issue once relevant to the defence of provocation. However, the Pupils were clear in their accounts that Mr Sandhu had expressly referred to cheating on his ex-partners.

The panel also noted the evidence relevant to particular 1. a. v and noted that Mr Sandhu accepted showing pupils his scars and explaining they had been inflicted by a jealous ex-partner. This evidence is supportive of this particular, in that Mr Sandhu referred to an assault as part of a discussion about justifications for an assault. This contextual evidence corroborates the very clear evidence of Pupil C and E and the panel finds this allegation proved.

#### Allegation 1 a. v.

As regards allegation 1. a. v), the panel heard evidence from Pupil C and E that Mr Sandhu had shown pupils scars on his arm and explained that they had been inflicted by his ex-partner, and had done this in the context of explaining an assault motivated by jealousy. This is relevant to the finding in relation to a iv. in as far as Mr Sandhu effectively accepts that he introduced the concepts of his infidelity as a justification for the assault.

Mr Sandhu stated that when he was labouring under [REDACTED] he had unthinkingly shown his scar and wound when discussing GBH and wounding in the context of criminal law. He stated that this was wrong and he regretted doing this. The panel takes the view that it was likely that this discussion and the showing of his scars to pupils was in the context of a discussion about wounding with intent and the motivation for such action, be it perceived sexual infidelity or Othello jealousy. The panel accepts the evidence of Mr Sandhu and finds this allegation proved.

### **3. You were convicted at the Northampton Magistrates' Court on or around 25 May 2023 for the offence of having with you an offensive weapon without lawful or reasonable excuse.**

The panel were presented with a memorandum of conviction confirming that Mr Sandhu pleaded guilty to an offence of possession of an offensive weapon in a public place without lawful excuse contrary to Prevention of Offences Act 1953. Mr Sandhu received a community order with a [REDACTED] required. The offence was committed in October 2021 and the conviction is recorded as May 2023.

The panel were presented with an audio recording of the police interview of Mr Sandhu which sets out the relevant circumstances. Mr Sandhu was with [REDACTED] at the material time of the offence. Whilst parking his car, an argument developed with a local resident about parking. It is accepted that the dispute became heated and both parties became engaged in abuse. Mr Sandhu gave an account to the police in which he stated that he felt threatened by the local resident and feared violence which resulted in him brandishing a hockey stick which was in his car and making a threat. The hockey stick was placed back in the car and the argument ended without any violence. Mr Sandhu pleaded guilty to the possession of the hockey stick in a public place without lawful excuse. He was not convicted of any public order or violent offences.

The panel finds this allegation proved on the basis of the memorandum of conviction.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation(s) against you not proved, for these reasons:

**You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst employed at the Ferrers School ('the School') as a Teacher of Law between September 2017 and September 2020;**

- 1. You engaged in unprofessional behaviour and/or failed to maintain professional boundaries with one or more pupils, by;**
  - a. making one or more inappropriate comments to and/or in the presence of one or more pupils, by;**
    - i. stating "it is every woman's fantasy to be raped" or using words to that effect;**
    - iii. asking a pupil whether they would cope better with rape or their father;**
    - vi. stating that you previously took drugs.**

**Allegation 1 a. i.**

As regards allegation 1 a. i, Pupil E gave oral evidence that Mr Sandhu had stated that he had read an article online which referred to rape being a common fantasy of women. Pupil E said that she thought this would be distressing for some and inappropriate, and it seemed to have no relationship to the lesson.

Mr Sandhu stated that the only time he had referred to online articles was in the context of other topics such as how coloured paper assisted the memory. Mr Sandhu accepted that he had referred to the issue of rape fantasies, but had done so in relation to teaching the issue of consent and assault to explain that, even if a woman had a rape fantasy, it may not amount to consent to certain forms of extreme sexual activity. The example Mr Sandhu gave was odd, and would have been easily capable of misinterpretation and would be likely to cause some distress to students without careful explanation. The panel finds the account of both Pupil E and Mr Sandhu to be plausible. However, even on the evidence of Pupil E, this was not an occasion of Mr Sandhu stating his view, but rather quoting from an article.

The panel is thus not satisfied that Mr Sandhu stated that "it is every woman's fantasy to be raped" or words to that effect, and gave this as his view. The panel takes the view that

referring to rape fantasies, even in the context of teaching criminal law, is a topic that should have been given greater care, and Mr Sandhu accepts this.

However, the panel was not satisfied to the appropriate standard that the words were used in the way alleged, and finds this particular not proved.

#### Allegation 1 a. iii.

As regards allegation 1. A. iii., the panel heard evidence that Mr Sandhu created a discussion with pupils about the topic of loss of control and provocation in the face of dealing with extreme events. Mr Sandhu stated that he did not personalise this with reference to a particular pupil but used 'you' in the general sense and stressed that this was in the context of the criminal syllabus. The panel is satisfied that the factual particular is made out but in the context is not satisfied that this represents unprofessional behaviour or a failure to maintain boundaries and thus finds this particular not proved.

#### Allegation 1 a. vi.

As regards allegation 1. a. vi, the panel heard no clear direct evidence that Mr Sandhu stated to pupils that he took drugs. Pupil F in her evidence accepted that Mr Sandhu cautioned pupils against taking drugs because the dangers they posed. Mr Sandhu denied this but did state that pupils had taunted him in one lesson and stated that he 'must have taken drugs' due to his knowledge of them. The panel accepted the evidence of Mr Sandhu. The panel finds this allegation not proved.

#### **b. instructing and/or encouraging a pupil to call another pupil a 'faggot';**

This particular alleges what could only be described as a very unusual act to participate in, namely encouraging one pupil to abuse another. The direct evidence for this comes from Pupil I who did not attend to give evidence. The statement and interview record were unsigned and the panel could give these no weight in the circumstances.

Pupil E reported that she had been told that these comments had been made but did not witness them herself. Pupil F also stated that Mr Sandhu was faced with pupils using homophobic slurs against each other in lessons and challenged them. This is inconsistent with the notion of Mr Sandhu himself using or encouraging the use of such language. Mr Sandhu denies this allegation. The panel finds this allegation not proved.

#### **c. encouraging a pupil to place their hand on the bottom of another pupil;**

The panel heard evidence from Pupil F in relation to this allegation, but in oral evidence she could not recall this incident. Pupil B gave a written statement in which this action was referred to. Mr Sandhu denied encouraging a pupil to do this, but stated that he did give a demonstration which involved asking two boys to volunteer to stand up and then

demonstrated the concept of transferred malice by taking the hand of one boy and pushing that on to the back of the other boy. The panel regarded this account to be plausible in the circumstances. Conversely, the evidence that Mr Sandhu had actually encouraged a pupil to put their hand on the bottom of another pupil was neither clear nor convincing. The panel notes that there was no evidence at all from the two boys themselves, and no attempt had been made by the School to interview them. The panel found this allegation not proved.

## **2. Your conduct as may be found proven at;**

### **a. allegation 1 demonstrated a lack of insight into concerns raised by the school in or around March 2018;**

The case for the TRA on this particular is based on a letter dated 21 March 2018 said to have been sent to Mr Sandhu following meetings on 15 and 16 March 2018. It is said that Mr Sandhu had been accused of swearing at a student and having unprofessional discussions with students.

The letter states as follows:

*“During the meeting I explained that, having concluded the investigation and fully considered the evidence, it was felt that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegations and, there will be no further action taken on this matter.*

*As discussed during the meeting on 16 March 2018, it is clear, however, that there has been some breakdown in relationships in particular classes. You should take special care when discussing controversial topics - especially when selecting students as examples, and consider how you present differentiated work in [REDACTED] as the perception is that you have given up on their chances of success.”*

The letter was authored by Witness C, who has written a statement confirming that he has no recollection of the events in question beyond those recorded in the letter. The panel thus were presented with no detailed evidence about the precise nature of the allegations or why they were found to be unsubstantiated. There is no evidence relating to practical support or guidance given to Mr Sandhu as a documented plan as a specific result of these incidents.

Mr Sandhu accepts that a conversation took place with Witness C about the issues described but states that the allegations were not substantiated. Mr Sandhu states that he never received the March 2018 letter, nor was he provided with any relevant minutes or made aware that any formal process was underway at the time. Mr Sandhu has produced an email from (Witness D) in which she states that she attended meetings with Mr Sandhu in connection with this issue, and stated that there was no finding or warning given.

Mr Sandhu states that he only became aware of the letter when he made a civil claim against the School following his dismissal in September 2020. Mr Sandhu states that, had he received this letter, he would have challenged it. There is no evidence of any correspondence between Mr Sandhu and the School in relation to this letter.

The panel accepts that a conversation about behaviour with pupils took place but in the absence of detailed and direct evidence from the School as to the background it is difficult to determine what the concerns were or how they were brought to Mr Sandhu's attention. Furthermore there is no written record of any formal meetings or subsequent support actions. There is also no reference to the 2018 letter or warning in the subsequent School disciplinary process between 2019 and 2020.

The panel is not satisfied that Mr Sandhu was provided with a copy of the letter, or had it drawn to his attention. The panel takes the view, that if he had had sight of it, this would have featured in his correspondence and litigation with the School, and there is no evidence he did.

The panel does accept that a meeting did take place in which Mr Sandhu had concerns about his behaviour drawn to his attention. However, in the absence of detail it is difficult to regard this letter, even if it had been received, or the meetings, as representing a clear warning in which clear standards were brought to the attention of Mr Sandhu. There was also no evidence of support or guidance given. In these circumstances, it is difficult to determine that there was a clear event against which any conduct of Mr Sandhu can be assessed such as to warrant a determination of his insight. On this basis the panel find the allegation not proved.

**b. allegation 1a. i. and/or 1 a ii and/or 1aiii and/or 1aiv and/or 1c above was sexually motivated.**

The panel found the following particulars proved: a ii.; a iv.; and a.v. and restricted its consideration to just these particulars.

The panel has approached this particular on the basis that a sexual motive means that the conduct was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a future sexual relationship.

There is no evidence of any inappropriate behaviour towards pupils in terms of attempting to develop relationships, or of inappropriate reference to sexualised topics beyond those that formed part of the criminal law course. The panel takes the view that those comments which were made were made as a result of poor recognition of professional boundaries. The panel takes the view that there was no evidence that any of the misconduct found proved was sexually motivated. The panel has found the allegation not proved.

## **Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute and/or conviction of a relevant offence**

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 and /or whether the conviction was for a relevant offence. The panel found the following allegations proved: 1a ii.; 1a iv.; and 1 a.v. and 3 and restricted its consideration to just these particulars.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice” (2018).

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Sandhu, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Sandhu was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
  - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils’ vulnerability ...
- 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Sandhu, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”).

The panel considered that Mr Sandhu was in breach of the following provisions:

- All practitioners must consider what is in the best interests of the child;
- All staff should have an awareness of issues which can place pupils at risk of harm



The panel also considered whether Mr Sandhu's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 10 and 11 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 none of these offences was relevant.

The panel has found that Mr Sandhu has been responsible for unprofessional behaviour and a failure to maintain professional boundaries in a manner which caused some alarm and distress to some pupils. The misconduct took place in the context of poorly judged examples of challenging topics which formed part of the criminal law syllabus. However, none of the pupils reported suffering any harm. A number of pupils also stated that they enjoyed the lessons of Mr Sandhu and his teaching. Whilst the misconduct found proved was serious, it did not amount to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Sandhu was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Sandhu'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.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Sandhu's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Sandhu was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel did not consider the findings of misconduct to be so serious as to have a negative impact on the Mr Sandhu's status as a teacher or the teaching profession more generally.

For these reasons, the panel did not find that Mr Sandhu's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

As regards the conviction, the panel noted that Mr Sandhu's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. Mr Sandhu engaged

in a heated argument with a member of the public involving abuse and the threat of the use of a weapon. Mr Sandhu did this during the day in a residential area shortly after dropping [REDACTED] off at school.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of members of the public.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Sandhu's behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Sandhu's behaviour did not lead to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative that the offence was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum. Indeed, it is worth noting that the disposal in this case was a [REDACTED] requirement.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 10 and 11 of the Advice.

This was a case concerning an offence involving possession of a weapon which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel took into account Mr Sandhu's [REDACTED]. The panel also took into consideration Mr Sandhu's account of the emotional difficulties he described that he was suffering at the relevant time as a result of [REDACTED] and the impact that the disciplinary process at the School and the ongoing litigation had had on him.

Mr Sandhu described the treatment he was undertaking to develop strategies to help him cope with challenges in his personal life. The panel also accepted Mr Sandhu's evidence that he committed the offence under extreme pressure and he was in fear of violence. Mr Sandhu also stated that he reported the incident to the police initially and this was not disputed. It is also worth highlighting that Mr Sandhu himself disclosed this conviction to the TRA.

Although the panel accepted that Mr Sandhu was committed to teaching, the panel also found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Sandhu's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

Given the panel's findings in respect of conviction of a relevant offence, 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 protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession, and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Sandhu, which involved the possession of an offensive weapon in a public place, there was a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Sandhu was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

However, whilst the offence was serious, it was not at the most serious end of the scale. The panel also took the view that this was an isolated incident which arose out of a unique confluence of personal distress and pressure, and this was recognised by the Court to the extent that the matter was disposed of by [REDACTED] requirement.

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 Sandhu in the profession. Mr Sandhu had taught for approximately 20 years and demonstrated a clear commitment to the teaching profession.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times.

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 Sandhu.

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:

- possession of ... weapons.

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

In the light of the panel's findings, Mr Sandhu was acting under extreme duress and pressure at the time and had a previously good record.

There was no evidence that Mr Sandhu had acted with deliberation, and he was acting in response to an argument which he had not initiated.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character. Indeed, Mr Sandhu was previously of good character, and there were a number of positive references to his commitment to teaching.

Mr Sandhu has also demonstrated remorse and regret in relation to the conviction and its circumstances. He has also shown insight into [REDACTED] which created the conditions in which he behaved as he did. The panel is confident that Mr Sandhu is developing insight into the circumstances which may trigger [REDACTED], and is confident that he has the ability to seek the support he needs should he find himself under pressure, professional or otherwise, in the future. The panel regards the fact that Mr Sandhu reported the incident to the police initially, and disclosed the conviction to the TRA as significant mitigation and it is indicative of Mr Sandhu's integrity.

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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour surrounding the conviction was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, 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 elements of those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

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

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of a relevant conviction should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
  - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability ...
- 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 findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher receiving a conviction for being in possession of an offensive weapon without a lawful or reasonable excuse.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing 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 a relevant conviction, 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 Sandhu, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has recorded the following:

“The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of members of the public.”

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which it sets out as follows:

“Mr Sandhu has also demonstrated remorse and regret in relation to the conviction and its circumstances. He has also shown insight into [REDACTED] which created the conditions in which he behaved as he did. The panel is confident that Mr Sandhu is developing insight into the circumstances which may trigger [REDACTED], and is confident that he has the ability to seek the support he needs should he find himself under pressure, professional or otherwise, in the future. The panel regards the fact that Mr Sandhu reported the incident to the police initially, and disclosed the conviction to the TRA as significant mitigation and it is indicative of Mr Sandhu’s integrity.”

In my judgement, the degree of insight and remorse exhibited by Mr Sandhu indicates that the risk of repetition is limited. I have therefore given this element 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 makes the following observation:

“The panel considered that Mr Sandhu’s behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of in this case of a teacher receiving a conviction for possessing an offensive weapon without valid cause and the negative impact that such a finding may have 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 a relevant conviction, 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 Sandhu himself. The panel notes that “Mr Sandhu had taught for approximately 20 years and demonstrated a

clear commitment to the teaching profession.” It goes on to record that “The panel accepted that the incident was out of character. Indeed, Mr Sandhu was previously of good character, and there were a number of positive references to his commitment to teaching.”

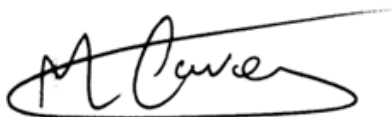
A prohibition order would prevent Mr Sandhu from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of his contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

I have considered the panel’s concluding remarks:

“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 surrounding the conviction was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, 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.”

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the degree of insight or remorse that Mr Sandhu has demonstrated, as well as the mitigating factors it has identified and its positive observations regarding the contribution he has made to the profession.

For these reasons, I agree with the panel 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 dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a simple oval border.

**Decision maker: Marc Cavey**

**Date: 25 March 2025**

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