



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr David Blight: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

April 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	5
Documents	5
Witnesses	5
Decision and reasons	6
Findings of fact	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	15
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	18

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

Teacher: Mr David Blight

Teacher ref number: 97/03286

Teacher date of birth: 12 March 1966

TRA reference: 20585

Date of determination: 11 April 2025

Former employer: Prudhoe Community High School, Moor Road, Prudhoe

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 11 to 14 February 2025 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT, to consider the case of Mr David Blight.

The panel members were Mr Dara Islam (lay panellist – in the chair), Miss Victoria Miller (teacher panellist) and Mr Robert Dowey (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Kim Findlow of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Mark Millin of Kingsley Napley solicitors. Mr Blight was present and was represented by Mr Richard Matkin [REDACTED]

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 13 September 2024.

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

He is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst working as a Teacher at Prudhoe Community High School ('the School'):

1. Between approximately August 2016 and June 2017 he had a sexual relationship with Former Pupil A and that relationship was inappropriate in that:
 - a) He had previously taught Former Pupil A; and/or
 - b) At the time the sexual relationship commenced he was or ought to have been aware that Former Pupil A was vulnerable.
2. Between approximately August 2016 and June 2017 he had sexual relations with Former Pupil A in public places.
3. Between approximately July 2016 and November 2017, he:
 - a) requested topless and/or naked photographs of Former Pupil A; and/or
 - b) requested that Former Pupil A send him videos of herself of a sexual nature; and/or
 - c) sent photographs of a sexual nature to Former Pupil A.
4. In or around August 2016, he offered Former Pupil A Morphine on one or more occasions.
5. In or around November 2016, he failed to disclose to his employer/the School that he was in a sexual relationship with Former Pupil A when he knew that Former Pupil A had applied for work experience at the School.
6. By reason of the conduct at paragraph 5 he:
 - a) Acted dishonestly, and/or
 - b) Failed to act with integrity

Mr Blight admitted allegations 3 a-c and 5. Mr Blight did not admit allegations 1a, 1b, 2, 4 and 6.

Mr Blight did not admit to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may

bring the profession into disrepute.

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 7 to 10

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 11 to 20

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 21 to 44

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 45 to 563

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 564 to 569

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- Email from Teacher's Representative to Kingsley Napley LLP re Additional Documents Witness Statement of the Teacher
- Medical Consultation Information Sheet Witness Statement of Person 1 - [REDACTED] Witness Statement of Person 2 – [REDACTED]
- Email from Kingsley Napley LLP to Teacher's Representative

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.

Witnesses

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

Witness 1 [REDACTED]

Witness 2 [REDACTED]

Witness 3 – Former Pupil A

The panel also heard oral evidence from Mr Blight.

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 Blight was employed by Prudhoe Community School (“the School”) from 1999 as a teacher of physics and during the period 2010 – 2011 was seconded to the role of assistant head teacher and became the appointed head of sixth form in 2011. Mr Blight taught former Pupil A during 2009 to 2011. In 2016, a GP made a report to the LADO that Mr Blight had engaged in sexual relationship with Former Pupil A after leaving school as this had been reported to the GP by Former Pupil A’s mother. This resulted in the LADO investigating this matter. Further the School carried out an internal investigation. Mr Blight was dismissed from the School in January 2022 and the matter was referred to the TRA on 15 February 2022.

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:

You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a Teacher at Prudhoe Community High School (‘the School’):

- 1. Between approximately August 2016 and June 2017 you had a sexual relationship with Former Pupil A and that relationship was inappropriate in that:**
 - b) At the time the sexual relationship commenced you were or ought to have been aware that Former Pupil A was vulnerable.**

The panel heard evidence that Former Pupil A should be regarded as vulnerable. This evidence consisted of oral evidence from Former Pupil A regarding [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The panel was provided with hearsay evidence admitted by Witness 1 pertaining to the

School’s investigation and disciplinary process. The panel considered the admissibility of this evidence prior to the hearing and agreed to admit the evidence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Even if he did not draw the conclusion that she was vulnerable with the information set out above, the panel consider he “ought to have known”.

Having found that Mr Blight knew or ought to have known that Pupil A was vulnerable, it turned its mind to whether this meant that the sexual relationship with Former Pupil A, that took place between August 2016 and June 2017 and that was admitted by both Mr Blight and Former Pupil A, was inappropriate.

There were differing versions of events in the run up to the start of the relationship. Former Pupil A gave evidence that Mr Blight had added her on twitter in 2016 and that she could not remember who messaged first but that a picture was shared by Former Pupil A with a school memory saying “...please say you remember this..”. The panel were shown evidence of this message but there was no date provided. Former Pupil A also gave evidence that during her third year of University in 2016 Mr Blight would drive past her jogging on a running track which was about 4 miles from the School and asked her to get into his car on more than one occasion. Former Pupil A stated that Mr Blight had placed his hand on her thigh and made references to her fancying “older men”. Former Pupil A’s evidence was that she felt Mr Blight was “testing the waters”.

Mr Blight denied this version of events and in oral evidence described that, after [REDACTED] and that he had joined social media due to being bored. Mr Blight described in oral evidence that the message exchanges were initiated by Former Pupil A and that Former Pupil A had sent a photograph of her outfit before a night out for his opinion and, at this point, an unsolicited topless photograph was shared. Therefore, Mr Blight’s version of events was that Former Pupil A initiated the contact.

Various sexually explicit messages between Former Pupil A and Mr Blight were provided to the panel but, without dates, these did not provide an accurate timeline of how the relationship began.

The panel considered that even on Mr Blight’s version of events it would have been clear to Mr Blight that Former Pupil A was demonstrating her vulnerabilities in the way she was behaving in sending a topless picture to a much older man who was a former teacher. [REDACTED].

The panel considered that entering a sexual relationship with a former pupil known to

have vulnerabilities was inappropriate in all of the circumstances of this particular case; despite it having been a considerable amount of time since Former Pupil A was at the School and since there was a teacher and pupil relationship. The panel considered that the sexual relationship was exploitative in that holding knowledge of the vulnerabilities would allow Mr Blight to use that to his advantage. [REDACTED].

The panel found this allegation proven.

2. Between approximately August 2016 and June 2017 you had sexual relations with Former Pupil A in public places.

Former Pupil A stated that they had sexual intercourse both in Mr Blight's car and in woodland. Mr Blight did not dispute having sex in the woodland and agreed that he did have sex in the car. The area in which the car was parked was agreed by both Mr Blight and Former Pupil A as being in a "passing place" or "lay by" which was on what was presumed to be farming land which may have been owned privately but that was unverified.

The location of the woodland was agreed to be remote and secluded and was again on land of unverified ownership.

Mr Blight's position was that these locations were not public as he understood these were privately owned. He did accept on questioning that he was able to gain access with his car and so other members of the public could do so as well, irrespective of who owned the land.

Former Pupil A's evidence was that they had previously been seen by a farmer using the land.

Taking all of the evidence into account, the panel found that given the locations were accessible to the public that this would amount to having sexual relations in a public place.

The panel found this allegation proven.

3. Between approximately July 2016 and November 2017, you:

- a) requested topless and/or naked photographs of Former Pupil A; and/or**
- b) requested that Former Pupil A send you videos of herself of a sexual nature; and/or**
- c) sent photographs of a sexual nature to Former Pupil A.**

Allegation 3 was admitted by Mr Blight and Former Pupil A provided detailed witness evidence on this and provided contemporaneous evidence of messages of a sexual nature. Mr Blight was clear that this evidence was not disputed.

The panel considered the advice provided on “sexual nature” and was satisfied that a reasonable person would consider that whatever its circumstances of any person’s purpose in relation to them, the videos and photographs referred to in allegation 3b and 3c were because of their nature inherently sexual.

The panel found allegations 3 a - c proven.

4. On or around August 2016, you offered Former Pupil A Morphine on one or more occasions.

Given the differing evidence, and since there was very little documentary evidence to resolve the differing accounts in respect of this allegation, the panel had to very carefully examine the credibility of Former Pupil A and Mr Blight by examining matters such as:

- whether their accounts remained consistent during the course of giving evidence;
- whether their accounts remained consistent with what they said on other occasions;
- how inherently probable their evidence was and;
- the extent to which the witness evidence was corroborated or contradicted by contemporaneous evidence to the limited extent the panel had this available to them.

Both witnesses gave oral evidence and their evidence was tested by both cross examination and questioning by the panel.

Pupil A’s evidence was that Mr Blight offered her morphine on three occasions at the start of their sexual relationship. Former Pupil A’s oral evidence was that the morphine was in a brown bottle and was in the cupholder of Mr Blight’s car. Former Pupil A described an occasion where she climbed across the car to sit on top of Mr Blight and her foot kicked a morphine bottle and this is when she first noticed it and asked what it was. Former Pupil A’s evidence was that Mr Blight then said to her in “a jokey” way “do you want some?” or “do you want a swig?” to which she declined.

[REDACTED]

He further stated that Former Pupil A had could have looked up what the bottle looked like online and that is why she was able to describe it to the panel. Mr Blight stated in oral evidence that he did not carry the morphine on his person and left it at home when he went out.

[REDACTED]

The panel also considered that Former Pupil A’s recollection was detailed yet also credible as she stated where there were areas of evidence and fact that she did not recall. Former Pupil A did not exaggerate her evidence, for example, she did not seek to say that this morphine was offered in anything other than a “jokey” way indicating to the

panel that this was a light and informal dialogue and found that, again, this was plausible. [REDACTED]. The panel considered that Mr Blight's evidence was less credible than Former Pupil A's on this basis.

For these reasons the panel found this allegation proven.

5. In or around November 2016, you failed to disclose to your employer/the School that you were in a sexual relationship with Former Pupil A when you knew that Former Pupil A had applied for work experience at the School.

This allegation was admitted by Mr Blight.

Witness 1's witness statement stated: *"There was an expectation that David Blight would disclose to his employer that he was in a relationship with Former Pupil A when she applied for work experience. This disclosure should have been made to the Headteacher. There is no evidence that David Blight ever did this"*. The panel heard this evidence being tested specifically around the reporting expectations within the School and were satisfied that Mr Blight had not made the School aware of the relationship with Former Pupil A. The School remained unaware until the LADO contacted the School.

The panel heard evidence from Witness 2 as to their recollection of the sequence of events of the work experience. The Panel heard that Former Pupil A had made contact with Person 1 [REDACTED] to enquire about work experience at school. Person 1 passed Witness 2's contact details to Former Pupil A. Former Pupil A then contacted Witness 2 to take this request further. Witness 2, who gave evidence by video link following an application, could not recall putting together a work experience program for Former Pupil A. Witness 2's evidence was that after making enquiries within the school about the work experience program, she was told by more senior staff members that she needed to cancel the arrangement for work experience. Witness 2 stated that she therefore sent an email to Former Pupil A to confirm this and also left them approximately two voicemail messages. Witness 2 confirmed she was able to locate the email in her sent items and resent it to Former Pupil A when Former Pupil A was present on school premises.

Mr Blight's representative referred to a message from within private message exchanges between Mr Blight and Former Pupil A which stated *"I'm going to email [REDACTED] at some point this week and cancel the work experience, I'll try and get some with another school. You have done nothing but put me off"*.

It was apparent from this message that Mr Blight had known that Former Pupil A had applied for work experience at the School.

In light of the above evidence and Mr Blight's admission, the panel found this allegation proven.

6. By reason of the conduct at paragraph 5 you:

b) Failed to act with integrity

The panel considered that, irrespective of the work experience request, Mr Blight should have considered whether disclosing his relationship with Former Pupil A to the School was required. Mr Blight accepted himself that it was an error of judgment not to inform his head teacher of his relationship.

Former Pupil A was still in the education system, connected to and lived, at some stages, in the local vicinity, she was clearly in contact with members of the school community and was a well-known former pupil of the School. Therefore, it was entirely feasible that the relationship could have become public knowledge and could have been damaging to the school's reputation.

The panel also considered the work experience discussions should have indicated to Mr Blight that it was an appropriate time to disclose this. Mr Blight confirmed in his evidence that he could have told his head teacher and that this head was approachable. Instead it appeared to the panel that since Mr Blight was having an extra marital relationship, he did not wish for this information to be revealed and that he put his own interest above that of the School. This undermined the trust that the School placed in him.

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

1. Between approximately August 2016 and June 2017 you had a sexual relationship with Former Pupil A and that relationship was inappropriate in that:

a) you had previously taught Former Pupil A; and/or

The Panel found that there was insufficient evidence as to why having a sexual relationship with a Former Pupil A would be inappropriate simply given the fact that they were a former pupil of the School. The panel considered that there was no school policy or procedure to govern this. Further, they are both clear that this was a consensual relationship between two adults.

The panel was provided with evidence by Former Pupil A that she met Mr Blight at a UCAS open day in 2012. Former Pupil A's evidence was that they had a private conversation with Mr Blight and that he made some comments that, in hindsight, made her feel uncomfortable. Mr Blight's version of events was that he was at that UCAS open day but was attending with a large number of pupils and that he did not see Former Pupil

A. The panel accepted that the staff to pupil ratio, timings and volume of people that would have been at such a large event made the likelihood that they had a conversation in a side tunnel improbable, and that even if they had seen each other this was not a significant event given that, at the time, Former Pupil A had not been concerned by the conversation.

Therefore, the panel found that Former Pupil A and Mr Blight had no or no significant

contact from 2011 when Former Pupil A left school and 2016 when they began messaging on social media (aside from an email that may have been sent in 2013 that was accepted to be about Former Pupil A gaining a place at university and did not go beyond this).

The panel considered that had there been an inappropriate element to the relationship at school, then this would have most likely continued after she left the School as opposed to a long period of no substantive or meaningful contact at all.

Therefore, on balance of probabilities the panel did not consider this allegation to be proven.

6. By reason of the conduct at paragraph 5 you:

a) Acted dishonestly, and/or

The panel considered the case law in relation to dishonesty and that it was necessary for it to ascertain (subjectively) the actual state of Mr Blight's knowledge or belief as to the facts.

As referred to above, Mr Blight's representative referred to a message from within private message exchanges between Mr Blight and Former Pupil A which stated "*I'm going to email Mel at some point this week and cancel the work experience, I'll try and get some with another school. You have done nothing but put me off*".

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence to show that Mr Blight would have then had knowledge that the work experience was still going ahead.

The panel find therefore that Mr Blight had a genuine and reasonable belief that the work experience was not taking place and was not dishonest in not disclosing the relationship to the School.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and 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 first considered whether the conduct of Mr Blight, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Blight 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
 - observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Whilst the panel acknowledge there was no school policy in place, the evidence from Witness 1 was clear and plausible that there would be an expectation that such a relationship should be reported in line with the ethos and practices of the school.

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Blight, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Blight in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel also considered whether Mr Blight'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 offence of sexual activity was relevant given the nature of allegation 2.

The panel also noted that the allegations 1b - 4 took place outside the education setting and as such, it would only amount to unacceptable professional conduct if it affected the way the person fulfils their teaching role or if it may lead to pupils being exposed to or influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way.

In relation to allegation 1b, the panel considered that there was no evidence to suggest that any sexual or inappropriate relationship was ongoing whilst Former Pupil A was at the School. There was unlikely to have been any pupils exposed to harm and that this seemed to be a single occasion of a relationship with a former pupil which was fully consensual.

In relation to allegation 2, the panel considered the fact Mr Blight was engaging in sexual activity on numerous occasions in a public place where the public including the school community could witness this. The panel find this behaviour could be significantly harmful if witnessed or could have led to influencing pupils in a harmful way.

In relation to allegation 3, the panel was not satisfied that these actions alone would affect the way Mr Blight fulfils his teaching role nor that it may lead to pupils being

exposed to or influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way. This is because the messages and videos were intended to be private and these would not have come to light but for the investigation processes.

In relation to allegation 4 the panel considered such behaviour unlikely to be harmful to pupils as this was not at school nor would offering morphine as a joke affect his ability to perform his teaching duties or his professional duties.

In relation to allegation 5 and 6b, the panel considered that this was a single event of withholding information. The panel believed that the reason he did not disclose his relationship was due to it being an extra-marital relationship. The panel considered that the failure to report would not harm pupils, rather it would be a reputational issue for the School. The panel therefore considered that it did not meet the threshold of falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Blight amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession and was satisfied that Mr Blight was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct in relation to allegation 2 but not in relation to allegations 1b, 3, 4, 5 and 6b.

In relation to whether Mr Blight'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 Blight'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 Blight was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that sexual activity was relevant.

The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute".

The panel considered that Mr Blight's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

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.

In relation to allegation 1b, the panel found that the public's perception of the teaching profession would be compromised given Mr Blight's actions in pursuing a sexual relationship with a vulnerable former pupil for his own sexual gratification.

In relation to allegation 2, the panel found that the actions of having sexual activity in public, which is an indecent and possibly illegal act, would damage the public's perception of the teaching profession and of Mr Blight. In particular the panel considered that teacher should lead the way in relation to how to behave and whilst they accept that teachers do not need to be paragons of virtue, having sexual intercourse in public created a risk of being seen by members of the public which might have included children.

In relation to allegation 3 the panel found that the act of sending and receiving sexual pictures and videos of adults between two consenting adults alone to not be of the nature that would bring the profession into disrepute. There was no suggestion that such activities alone are illegal or would cause members of the public to be unduly concerned with such private sexual activity.

In relation to allegation 4, even though the offering of morphine was accepted to have been in a jovial manner, the panel were seriously concerned of how such actions would reflect to the public. In particular, offering class A drugs, even in jest, was considered by the panel to be conduct of a serious nature and would likely lower the public's confidence in Mr Blight as a teacher.

In relation to allegation 5 and 6b, which were considered together by the panel given the findings of fact, the panel considered that the lack of integrity was a serious matter and would likely have a negative impact on the public's perception of Mr Blight as a teacher.

The panel considered that Mr Blight's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher. In particular the panel found that allegations 1b, 2, 4, 5 and 6b constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute but not allegation 3.

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 maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct; and the interest of retaining the teacher in the profession.

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

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 Blight was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated. In particular, Mr Blight did not acknowledge the vulnerabilities of a former pupil and act appropriately on this information, instead he used this to further develop a relationship which is extremely serious and harmful to the public's confidence in the profession.

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 Blight in the profession.

Whilst there is evidence that Mr Blight had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Blight in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standards of conduct expected of a teacher, and he developed a relationship in which he could use information he had acquired from his position of trust for his own advantage.

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.

The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on former pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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 Blight.

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;
- 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;
- ... lack of integrity, ...

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 evidence that Mr Blight's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Blight was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

Mr Blight did have a previously good history and appeared to be a good teacher but there was no evidence that Mr Blight had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct nor that he contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character and accepted evidence advanced to [REDACTED]

The panel was told on behalf of the TRA that Mr Blight was not previously subject to disciplinary proceedings/warnings.

The panel has considered the character statement provided by [REDACTED], noting that she was a friend of Mr Blight. Nonetheless this does describe Mr Blight as "*an excellent head of year*" and states "*He worked tirelessly to support all students in his care to achieve success, whether that be in securing apprenticeships or places at Oxbridge*".

The panel considered that Mr Blight lacked insight around Former Pupil A's vulnerabilities and the risks to both himself, Former Pupil A and the profession of having sexual intercourse in a public place.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Blight 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 Blight. The risk to the confidence in the profession was particularly pertinent in this case. 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.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The panel accepted that Mr Blight regretted his conduct and that he was remorseful on the impact to his family and his career. Further the panel noted that Mr Blight demonstrated that despite these proceedings, he held no ill will in relation to Former Pupil A.

However, the panel noted that Mr Blight seemed to show a lack of insight into the impact Former Pupil A's vulnerabilities had on her and how this made a sexual relationship with her inappropriate. Further, no remorse was expressed demonstrating an appreciation of the impact on Former Pupil A.

The panel considered the risk of repetition to be low given the salutary lessons of this case.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period after 2 years.

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 some of the allegations proven and found that a number of those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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 Mr David Blight should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Blight 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
 - observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher having sex in a public place with a vulnerable former pupil on more than one occasion and exhibiting behaviour that lacked integrity.

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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Blight, 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 makes the following observation:

“In relation to allegation 2, the panel considered the fact Mr Blight was engaging in sexual activity on numerous occasions in a public place where the public including the school community could witness this. The panel find this behaviour could be significantly harmful if witnessed or could have led to influencing pupils in a harmful way.”

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 it sets out as follows:

"The panel accepted that Mr Blight regretted his conduct and that he was remorseful on the impact to his family and his career. Further the panel noted that Mr Blight demonstrated that despite these proceedings, he held no ill will in relation to Former Pupil A.

However, the panel noted that Mr Blight seemed to show a lack of insight into the impact Former Pupil A's vulnerabilities had on her and how this made a sexual relationship with her inappropriate. Further, no remorse was expressed demonstrating an appreciation of the impact on Former Pupil A.

The panel considered the risk of repetition to be low given the salutary lessons of this case."

Elsewhere, the panel states that:

"The panel considered that Mr Blight lacked insight around Former Pupil A's vulnerabilities and the risks to both himself, Former Pupil A and the profession of having sexual intercourse in a public place."

In my judgement, and while noting the panel's comments, the lack of evidence that Mr Blight has developed full insight into and remorse for his actions means that there is still some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future well-being 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 observes that:

"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 Blight was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated. In particular, Mr Blight did not acknowledge the vulnerabilities of a former pupil and act appropriately on this information, instead he used this to further develop a relationship which is extremely serious and harmful to the public's confidence in the profession."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher abusing their position of trust in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to 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 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 Blight himself. The panel records the following:

“Mr Blight did have a previously good history and appeared to be a good teacher but there was no evidence that Mr Blight had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct nor that he contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character and accepted evidence advanced to [REDACTED].

The panel was told on behalf of the TRA that Mr Blight was not previously subject to disciplinary proceedings/warnings.

The panel has considered the character statement provided by [REDACTED], noting that she was a friend of Mr Blight. Nonetheless this does describe Mr Blight as “*an excellent head of year*” and states “*He worked tirelessly to support all students in his care to achieve success, whether that be in securing apprenticeships or places at Oxbridge*”.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Blight 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 concerning the lack of evidence that Mr Blight has attained full insight into his behaviour which in my judgment jeopardises the future well-being of pupils. I have also placed weight on the serious nature of the misconduct found by the panel and the injury it may cause to the standing of the profession.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Blight 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 remorse or 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 a two-year review period.

I have considered whether a two-year review period reflects the seriousness of the

findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that I agree with the panel that allowing a two-year review period is a sufficient and proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of misconduct found, the likely negative impact of his behaviour on public confidence in the profession, as well as the need for Mr Blight to have the necessary time to develop and exhibit full insight into and remorse for his behaviour and in doing so provide assurance that there is no risk of repetition.

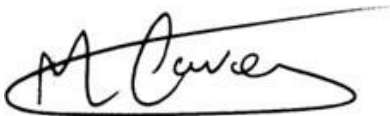
I consider therefore that a two-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr David Blight is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or

children's home in England. He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 16 April 2027, two years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Blight remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Blight has a right of appeal to 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 'M Cavey', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 16 April 2025

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