



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr David Edmonds: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

May 2025

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

Teacher: Mr David Edmonds

Teacher ref number: 0839752

Teacher date of birth: 2 November 1982

TRA reference: 21861

Date of determination: 21 May 2025

Former employer: Ridgeway Academy, Welwyn Garden City

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 19 to 21 May 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr David Edmonds.

The panel members were Mr Francis Murphy (teacher panellist – in the chair), Dr Louise Wallace (lay panellist) and Mrs Karen Graham (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Ben Schofield of Blake Morgan LLP.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Lee Bridges of Kingsley Napley LLP.

Mr Edmonds was not present and 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 3 February 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Edmonds was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst working as Head of Performing Arts at Ridgeway Academy ("the School"):

1. Between November 2022 and January 2023, he acted in an inappropriate and/or sexual manner towards Colleague A, in that he:

- a) sat on Colleague A's back while she lay on the floor.
- b) said he would be willing to help Colleague A get changed in the prop cupboard;
- c) asked Colleague A to walk towards him and then walk away whilst watching her;
- d) sent Colleague A a text message stating "For you... whatever you need (wink face emoji)";
- e) made a comment(s) about Colleague A's personal life;
- f) hugged Colleague A;
- g) touched Colleague A on and/or near the waist and/or back.

2. On or around 27 June 2022, he submitted an application form to the School indicating that his last place of employment was Ashcroft High School, when this was not the case.

3. In or around September 2022, during the recruitment process he did not inform the School that:

- a) he had been dismissed from a previous employer,
- b) he had been subject to disciplinary action at your previous employer.

4. His conduct at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated and/or sexual.

5. His conduct at paragraphs 2 and/or 3;

- a) was dishonest;
- b) lacked integrity.

Summary of evidence

Documents

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 5 to 8

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 9 to 16

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 17 to 30

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 31 to 259

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 260 to 271

In addition, the panel also considered:

- ‘Proceeding in absence’ bundle of 19 pages
- A timeline of events and evidential matrix prepared by the presenting officer of 4 and 3 pages, respectively
- A bundle of correspondence with Colleague A of 37 pages
- Page 125 of the main bundle in further partially unredacted format

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

Witnesses

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

- Colleague B – [REDACTED]
- Colleague C – [REDACTED]
- Colleague D – [REDACTED]

No witnesses were called on behalf of the teacher.

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 Edmonds was employed as the Head of Performing Arts by Ridgeway Academy, part of Albans Academy Trust (the “School”), from September 2022.

In January 2023, two members of teaching staff raised concerns about Mr Edmonds' behaviour towards them to a member of the School's senior leadership team. Following this an internal investigation commenced. During the course of the investigation, following checks on Mr Edmonds' school record, a further concern arose around the information provided by him during the process of his recruitment.

Following the School's internal investigation and disciplinary processes, a referral was made to the TRA by the School on 24 April 2023. The further investigation by the TRA has resulted in this hearing.

Colleague A [REDACTED] in the drama department (part of the Performing Arts faculty) at the School during the material time. Colleague A did not appear as a witness at this hearing. The panel therefore had no direct evidence of her account at this hearing relating to the allegations. There was direct evidence available to the panel from another witness who was present during the alleged facts in sub-allegation 1(a) and 1(e). The remaining evidence of Colleague A's account was recorded in the School's internal investigation, which the TRA were seeking to rely on as proving the various sub-allegations.

This meant that the TRA were seeking to rely on hearsay evidence to prove a number of sub-allegations in allegation 1. The panel therefore firstly considered whether this hearsay evidence ought to be admissible as evidence in these proceedings. The panel recognised that the admission of hearsay evidence in regulatory proceedings was not a routine process, and careful consideration as to the fairness of admitting the evidence in the first place was given. The panel followed the guidance of its legal advisor in deciding on the admissibility of this evidence.

Whilst recognising that much of Colleague A's hearsay account would be both the sole and decisive evidence, the panel noted that much of the underlying factual actions alleged to have taken place were not actually in dispute between the parties. Accordingly, the panel considered that where there was no dispute as to the underlying facts, Colleague A's hearsay evidence could be considered as demonstrably reliable and no undue prejudice to Mr Edmonds would arise by its admission. Accordingly, the panel admitted Colleague A's hearsay evidence where it was not disputed.

This meant that Colleague A's hearsay evidence was considered in all sub-allegations (of allegation 1), save for sub-allegation 1(c). In this sub-allegation, there was a clear conflict of evidence between the parties. The panel considered that in the absence of any other evidence relating to this sub-allegation, Colleague A's hearsay accounts could not be said to be demonstrably reliable, nor could it be tested against any other evidence. On that basis, the panel considered it would be unfair to admit Colleague A's hearsay account for that sub-allegation.

Although Mr Edmonds did not attend this hearing, the panel did take account of a written statement he had provided the TRA, in which he essentially adopted the account he had previously given in the School's internal investigation. The panel did not draw any adverse inference from Mr Edmonds' failure to give oral evidence in these proceedings.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. Between November 2022 and January 2023, you acted in an inappropriate and/or sexual manner towards Colleague A, in that you:

a) sat on Colleague A's back while she lay on the floor;

In approaching this allegation, the panel firstly determined whether the underlying facts alleged in each sub allegation was proved on the balance of probabilities, then considered if those proven facts were inappropriate and/or of a sexual manner. Owing to similar reasoning in regards to appropriateness and sexual manner, those reasons are dealt with at the end of this allegation.

The panel heard evidence from Colleague D, who at the material time was an [REDACTED] as Mr Edmonds in September 2022. Mr Edmonds was [REDACTED] Colleague D described an event which took place in around October 2022. She described it happened in the drama studio just after the first rehearsal for one of the School's drama productions. She said that she had stayed behind after the rehearsal finished along with Mr Edmonds and Colleague A. Colleague D described that Colleague A pretended to 'faint' onto the floor, in a joking manner, to highlight the difficulties in getting through the production rehearsal. Whilst Colleague A was lying on her front on the floor, Colleague D said that she saw Mr Edmonds go over and sit on Colleague A's back. She described Mr Edmonds facing forward in the same direction as Colleague A, with his legs straddled either side of Colleague A's body and started to massage her shoulders with his hands and this lasted for around five to ten seconds. Colleague D said that Colleague A did not appear to make any reaction during this time, albeit Colleague D said she felt a little uncomfortable by what she saw.

Colleague D said that some point later in time, whilst talking together, Colleague A asked her what she thought of Mr Edmonds, as she said a 'few things had happened'. Colleague D asked if she meant things like the 'massage thing', to which Colleague A confirmed was one of them. Colleague D asked what she should do and Colleague D responded that if it were her, she would report it.

Before the panel was an email from Colleague A to a member of the School's senior leadership team on 19 January 2023, in which she set out that she had felt uncomfortable in a number of interactions with Mr Edmonds. She had not previously raised them as she worked so closely with him and did not want to create any animosity.

The panel heard evidence from Colleague C, [REDACTED] at the School. She explained to the panel that on 19 January 2023, she was appointed by the School's Headteacher to investigate concerns raised regarding Colleague A. She met with Colleague A on 24 January 2023 to discuss the email and expand on it. Although this event was not mentioned in the first email, Colleague C's contemporaneous notes of the meeting indicated that Colleague A told her that in sometime around October 2022, following a rehearsal, she had collapsed on the floor in 'mock exhaustion' and that Mr Edmonds had stepped over her and sat on her back.

Colleague C said she met with Mr Edmonds on 25 January 2023 to get his version of the events regarding the concerns raised. In her contemporaneous meeting notes, Mr Edmonds is noted as saying that he had a vague recollection of the event and that he did jokingly sit on top of her. He said he didn't do it for very long and did not recall massaging her shoulders. He further commented that he did not recall Colleague A's reaction and he thought he did it as 'banter' between faculty team members. He further stated that he recalled another member of staff was present which may have been Colleague D or another staff member.

Colleague C also produced the notes from the disciplinary hearing which took place on 24 February 2023. In these notes, Mr Edmonds is recorded as saying he did it without thinking and was done in a playful manner.

In light of the agreed evidential position between the parties, the panel found the underlying facts provable in this sub-allegation.

b) said you would be willing to help Colleague A get changed in the prop cupboard;

In the 19 January 2023 email, Colleague A states that:

"At the talent show before Christmas, I had also said about getting changed in the props cupboard to get ready for the evening and [Mr Edmonds] offered to "give me a hand if I need it"."

In the investigatory meeting on 25 January 2023, Mr Edmonds is noted as saying that he recalled making this remark and was wondering if this remark was the reason for the investigation being undertaken. He said he didn't know why he said it, but was made as a joke as Colleague A had previously made a joke with a sexual connotation in the past.

In light of the agreed evidential position between the parties, the panel found the underlying facts provable in this sub-allegation.

c) asked Colleague A to walk towards you and then walk away whilst watching her;

In his statement to the TRA, Mr Edmonds denied making these remarks. Furthermore, Mr Edmonds did not accept making those remarks in the School's investigation.

As set out above, the panel considered the various hearsay accounts of Colleague A were not admissible regarding this sub-allegation. In the absence of this hearsay evidence, there was no other evidence advanced by the TRA.

Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation could not be found proved on the facts.

d) sent Colleague A a text message stating “For you... whatever you need (wink face emoji)”;

In Colleague C's investigation she obtained a screen shot which showed the following exchange between Mr Edmonds and Colleague A:

Timestamp: “Monday, 14 Nov – 16:46”

Colleague A: “Hey. Just a quick one; are you happy to go through no day but today with the life support group tomorrow lunchtime? I'll come up too?”

Colleague A: “Just so I can put up a notice on the GC.”

Mr Edmonds: “For you... whatever you need 😊”

There were no other messages sent on that day.

In the 25 January 2023 meeting with Colleague C, it was noted that Mr Edmonds accepted sending the message and explained that it was a way of communicating with colleagues in an informal way to help let them know that he 'had their back'.

In light of the agreed evidential position between the parties, the panel found the underlying facts provable in this sub-allegation.

e) made a comment(s) about Colleague A's personal life;

The panel had some initial concern around the potential vagueness of this sub-allegation. However, it was clear from both the presenting officer and the response from Mr Edmonds, that they were dealing with the same event in advancing their respective cases. Accordingly, the panel was satisfied no undue prejudice to Mr Edmonds had arisen from the drafting the sub-allegation.

In her evidence to the panel Colleague D explained that Mr Edmonds, Colleague A, another teacher and herself were at the school undertaking a rehearsal [REDACTED]. Nobody else was present at this time. While sat at a table together, Colleague A remarked that she was finding things difficult as [REDACTED]. Colleague D said in

response to this, Mr Edmonds stood up and put his arm around Colleague A and said words to the effect of 'if you need someone to come home with you I can fill that void'. Colleague D described Colleague A as appearing passive during this interaction.

In her 19 January 2023 email, Colleague A described the event as:

"When we came back after Christmas, [Mr Edmonds] asked how my Christmas was to which I said it was lovely, but I hadn't slept the past two nights properly since returning back to the flat I rent by myself. He asked why this was and I explained it is because it's tricky [REDACTED] He replied that "if I needed someone to fill the void, then let me know."

When asked about this interaction in the School's investigation on 25 January 2023, Mr Edmonds is noted as responding that he *"didn't recall it exactly, but in light of other things he felt like it could have been something he said"*.

In light of the agreed evidential position between the parties, the panel found the underlying facts provable in this sub-allegation.

f) hugged Colleague A;

g) touched Colleague A on and/or near the waist and/or back.

In her 19 January email, Colleague A stated:

"There have been times where I have been extremely upset about personal situations... and [Mr Edmonds] has always offered to give me a hug, which I would accept (as I feel rude otherwise and I am crying and hugs usually help) and it always feels like he is stroking my waist, making it feel uncomfortable.

There has also been a couple of times where I have not expected him to be behind me and he has put his arm around my waist and asked if I'm okay. But again, I have felt too uncomfortable to say anything."

When asked about other physical contact with Colleague A in the 25 January interview, Mr Edmonds described putting his arm around her side trying to make her feel better. He went on to further say that 'everyone gets hugs in the team but no-one has ever mentioned not wanting one'.

In his statement to the TRA, Mr Edmonds stated:

"I did give her a hug. She was ok with this as I was giving her a comfort hug after the [REDACTED], and I did put my hand on her back... but only as I was standing next to her and asking how she was feeling (she had had a bad day!)."

In light of the agreed evidential position between the parties, the panel found the underlying facts provable in this sub-allegation.

Having considered whether the underlying facts were provable, the panel went on to consider whether the provable sub-allegations were of an inappropriate and/or sexual manner.

In regard to the sub-allegations dealing with physical contact (1(a), 1(f) and 1(g)) and the sub-allegations dealing with the verbal comments made (1(b) and 1(e)), the panel was satisfied that such actions were inappropriate. It demonstrated a significantly over-familiar approach to working with professional colleagues. This was particularly compounded by the power dynamic between Mr Edmonds, a head of faculty and Colleague A, [REDACTED].

In regard to sub-allegation 1(d), the panel noted that no other messages were sent that day and that any surrounding messages available in the screenshot were purely work related. When taken in isolation, the panel considered the message was open to a number of interpretations and there was no other wider context in which to understand the nature of the message. Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied the message on its own would be considered inappropriate.

In regard to the potentially sexualised manner of the conduct, the panel firstly considered that the above actions would not be considered by a reasonable person to be of an inherently sexual nature without further consideration of the circumstances and purpose of them arising. In considering the circumstances and purpose of these actions, the panel was not satisfied it was more likely than not of a sexual nature. Whilst recognising the intimate and over familiar nature of these actions, the panel considered there were potentially wider interpretations to Mr Edmonds actions which had not been ruled out by the TRA's evidence. Accordingly, the panel did not find Mr Edmonds' actions to be of a sexual nature.

For completeness, the panel's finding for this allegation can therefore be summarised as:

- 1(a) proved on the basis of inappropriateness;
- 1(b) proved on the basis of inappropriateness;
- 1(c) not proved on the factual basis;
- 1(d) not proved on the basis of inappropriateness;
- 1(e) proved on the basis of inappropriateness;
- 1(f) proved on the basis of inappropriateness;
- 1(g) proved on the basis of inappropriateness;

2. On or around 27 June 2022, you submitted an application form to the School indicating that your last place of employment was Ashcroft High School, when this was not the case.

As the investigation regarding Mr Edmonds' conduct toward colleagues was underway, Colleague C undertook a review of Mr Edmonds' personal records and noted some discrepancies in the recruitment process, which she further investigated.

Although not expressly set out in the allegation drafting, this allegation referred to Mr Edmonds last educational employment, rather than his last employer per se, as Mr Edmonds had not been working in education for a number of years prior to his application to the School. The panel was satisfied that no undue prejudice would arise on Mr Edmonds as his responses in the School's investigation and response to the TRA focused on the issue regarding his former schools. Furthermore, the panel was satisfied that the wider public would still understand the gravamen of this allegation without any amendments being required and have proceeded on that basis.

As the investigation regarding Mr Edmonds conduct toward colleagues was underway, Colleague C undertook a review of Mr Edmonds personal records and noted some discrepancies in the recruitment process, which she further investigated.

A copy of Mr Edmonds application form for his position at the School, the relevant parts of the form which ask about previous educational employment were completed by Mr Edmonds in the following fashion:

From	To	School	Post and Scale	Reason for leaving
09/11	06/15	Ashcroft High School	Teacher of Music and Drama (M1-M2)	Career Progression
09/09	08/11	Putteridge High School	Head of Music (M3 – M6 + TLR)	[left blank]

The above table was factually incorrect in so far as the dates for Mr Edmonds' time at the respective schools were the wrong way round (ie his last educational employer was actually Putteridge High School from 2011 to 2015). The TRA's case was that Mr Edmonds had misrepresented his employment history by indicating Ashcroft was his last educational employer.

Throughout the School's investigation and in response to the TRA, Mr Edmonds has asserted that the dates being the wrong way round was a simple mistake on his part and not intended to misrepresent his employment history. He further pointed to the fact that

he had included the correct pay scales which would be incompatible with the dates provided and he would not have provided that information had he sought to misrepresent his employment history.

The panel considered Mr Edmonds' explanation to be credible on this point. The panel considered that when read with the pay scales, job titles and reasons for leaving (which were correct and provided a logical consistency) it would be readily apparent to a reader that the date column was simply the wrong way round.

Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied that, it was more likely than not, that Mr Edmonds had sought to indicate that Ashcroft was his last place of educational employment and therefore found this allegation not proved.

3. In or around September 2022, during the recruitment process you did not inform the School that:

a) you had been dismissed from a previous employer,

b) you had been subject to disciplinary action at your previous employer.

There was no dispute between the parties that Mr Edmonds' teaching post at Putteridge was terminated by way of dismissal following that school's disciplinary process relating to allegations about Mr Edmonds' conduct towards pupils, although Mr Edmonds has maintained that the underlying reasons for the disciplinary were ill-founded.

As can be seen above, Mr Edmonds did not enter any response to the 'reason for leaving' question in the School's application form. In the School's investigation, Mr Edmonds explained this was a purposeful act on his part, as he knew if he revealed the truth (namely that he had been dismissed) he would not have been offered the position.

He further explained that he was expecting to be asked about this in his interview, which he would have answered honestly and which would have given him an opportunity to explain his view on why he did not consider a dismissal was warranted.

During the recruitment interview, Mr Edmonds says he was not asked about this, which he stated in his investigation interview this was something he was relieved about. When further asked by Colleague C why he did not raise it during questions about safeguarding, Mr Edmonds' response was that he did not consider it a safeguarding issue.

In light of this agreed factual position, the panel found this allegation proved.

4. Your conduct at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated and/or sexual.

Having already dealt with the issue of whether Mr Edmonds' conduct was of a sexual manner in allegation 1, the panel further considered here if Mr Edmonds' conduct was sexually motivated.

The panel took into account the legal guidance regarding the definition of sexual motivation. Namely that it was conduct either in pursuit of sexual gratification or a future sexual relationship. Similarly for the reasons set out above regarding the sexual manner of these actions, the panel was not satisfied it was more likely than not that Mr Edmonds' motivation for these actions was for either of these two possibilities.

Accordingly, the panel found this allegation not proved.

5. Your conduct at paragraphs 2 and/or 3;

a) was dishonest;

The panel firstly considered Mr Edmonds' state of mind regarding these circumstances. This evidence was clear, on Mr Edmonds' own account, that his actions regarding withholding information about his dismissal were purposeful as he understood what the consequences would be had he revealed this information.

Mr Edmonds has advanced that he had no obligation to be openly forthcoming with this information and that safeguarding procedures, such as those under Safer Recruitment and Keeping Children Safe in Education placed the obligation on the School to obtain this information and not him. It could be said that is correct on a very narrow reading of those procedures. However, the panel considered it was clear from those procedures, and the general safeguarding culture present throughout the profession, that there is a duty on teachers to advance the spirit of those procedures. Mr Edmonds would have been expected to have provided this information, even in the absence of an express question on the point, which must have been apparent to him.

The panel further considered that the ordinary decent person would consider a person withholding information, which they were expected to provide, knowing it would be detrimental to their employment application, would be acting dishonestly.

Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved.

b) lacked integrity.

Having found dishonesty present in Mr Edmonds' actions, the panel recognised that dishonest conduct is a part of acting with a lack of integrity and therefore also found this sub-allegation proved. The panel recognised it did not increase the seriousness of the conduct which was inherently present in dishonesty finding (ie it will not 'double count' these findings at the next stage).

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

Inappropriate conduct towards Colleague A (allegation 1)

The panel took into account that Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards are mainly framed with conduct towards pupils. However, the panel considered that similar principles applied to conduct towards colleagues and that was well understood throughout the profession notwithstanding it is not expressly set out in Part 2.

The panel considered these were not actions that could be described as *‘building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position’*.

The panel considered that although far from the top end of the spectrum in terms of possible misconduct, the repetitive nature (when taking account of paragraph 26 of the Advice) and power dynamic between Mr Edmonds and Colleague A, made this conduct sufficiently serious and significantly falling below the expected behaviour of a teacher, in that it could properly be considered as unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Edmonds’ actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils’ lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave. The panel considered such actions risked undermining the appearance of professional relationships between staff members, which in turn would then undermine the role model image professionals are required to uphold. The panel was therefore also satisfied that Mr Edmonds’ actions were capable of bringing the profession into disrepute.

Non-disclosure in recruitment (allegation 3 and 5)

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Edmonds, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Edmonds 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
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Having found dishonesty present, the panel noted this was an inherently serious level of misconduct. This was further compounded by its relation to Mr Edmonds' actions in attempting to frustrate the purposes of safeguarding procedures.

The panel also considered whether Mr Edmonds' 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 "fraud or serious dishonesty" was relevant to this assessment.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Edmonds amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Edmonds' conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice, and came to a similar conclusion regarding the 'fraud or serious dishonesty' offence.

The panel took into account that the proper application of safeguarding processes are a fundamental aspect of any teacher's practice. Any failure to adhere to those duties would quickly lead to loss of trust the community places in the profession to protect children.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Edmonds' actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely,

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct;

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Edmonds which involved repeated inappropriate conduct towards a colleague and taking steps to undermine the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public. Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Edmonds 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 Edmonds was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

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 a high 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 Edmonds.

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...

- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions... especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences...;

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. The panel did not consider any of the factors set out at paragraph 43 of the Advice were present in this case.

As a result of Mr Edmonds' limited engagement with these proceedings, he did not take up the opportunity to present any mitigating evidence, such as character references or examples of how he has otherwise contributed to the profession.

In his response to the TRA, Mr Edmonds said:

"In closing, I feel that personally, the outcome here is irrelevant to me. I have now been dismissed from my last two teaching posts. My teaching career is over! As unfair as I feel both of the dismissals were, no school is going to take the time to hear me out or give me a chance when I have 2 dismissals on paper..."

I am so very disappointed that in a climate where teachers are in demand, that there are more required every day, where I love the job and would love to remain in it, that my career in this sector is over regardless of the outcome of your investigation. I just hope that lessons will be learned, and that someday, I will be able to find peace of mind in another career I love doing!"

The panel noted that in a similar vein to the above remarks, Mr Edmonds sought to shift his blameworthiness to others for not correcting his behaviour (towards Colleague A) in the first instance. Likewise, he sought to shift blame for his failure to disclose onto the School. This has been a position that Mr Edmonds has continually maintained throughout the School's investigation and the TRA proceedings. There is no evidence before the panel that Mr Edmonds had paused to reflect on his own conduct and responsibilities throughout these proceedings.

This suggested to the panel that Mr Edmonds' insight into his own misconduct was extremely limited and therefore the corresponding risk of similar misconduct reoccurring was heightened in this case. This finding appeared supported by the very nature of the misconduct which was shown to have been repeated and sustained over a period of time.

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

Had the case been decided on just allegation 1, the panel would have considered that publication alone of a misconduct finding would have been an appropriate and proportionate recommendation. It considered that the misconduct in that allegation was at a level below where the public interest factors would have called for a prohibition.

The panel considered however that the misconduct at allegation 3 and 5 did call for a prohibition order to be recommended. 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 Edmonds 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 Edmonds. The seriousness of a teacher dishonestly frustrating the safeguarding processes, which resulted in a school not being able to properly assess an application through the prism of safeguarding, was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are certain 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. One of these include “fraud or serious dishonesty”.

The panel further considered the issue of insight and potential remediation at this point. The panel was concerned that Mr Edmonds’ poor insight into the issues present in this case were of a somewhat entrenched nature which suggested it was highly unlikely that they would or could be remediated.

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

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Edmonds 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
 - ...building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of conduct that was dishonest and lacking in integrity.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered

therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Edmonds, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "In light of the panel's findings against Mr Edmonds, which involved repeated inappropriate conduct towards a colleague and taking steps to undermine the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel has set out as follows:

"The panel noted that in a similar vein to the above remarks, Mr Edmonds sought to shift his blameworthiness to others for not correcting his behaviour (towards Colleague A) in the first instance. Likewise, he sought to shift blame for his failure to disclose onto the School. This has been a position that Mr Edmonds has continually maintained throughout the School's investigation and the TRA proceedings. There is no evidence before the panel that Mr Edmonds had paused to reflect on his own conduct and responsibilities throughout these proceedings.

"This suggested to the panel that Mr Edmonds' insight into his own misconduct was extremely limited and therefore the corresponding risk of similar misconduct reoccurring was heightened in this case. This finding appeared supported by the very nature of the misconduct which was shown to have been repeated and sustained over a period of time."

In my judgement, the lack of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed, "Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Edmonds were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession." I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to

consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Edmonds himself. The panel has commented, “As a result of Mr Edmonds’ limited engagement with these proceedings, he did not take up the opportunity to present any mitigating evidence, such as character references or examples of how he has otherwise contributed to the profession.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Edmonds 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 that whilst the misconduct at allegation 1 was below the level at which a prohibition order would be appropriate, the misconduct at allegations 3 and 5 did justify a prohibition order. The panel has said, “The seriousness of a teacher dishonestly frustrating the safeguarding processes, which resulted in a school not being able to properly assess an application through the prism of safeguarding, was a significant factor in forming that opinion.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that Mr Edmonds’ insight into his misconduct was extremely limited and that this increased the risk of the misconduct being repeated.

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

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

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

“The Advice 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. One of these include “fraud or serious dishonesty”.

“The panel further considered the issue of insight and potential remediation at this point. The panel was concerned that Mr Edmonds’ poor insight into the issues present in this case were of a somewhat entrenched nature which suggested it was highly unlikely that they would or could be remediated.”

I agree with the panel that the dishonesty and lack of integrity found proved in this case is serious misconduct, especially as it involved attempting to frustrate safeguarding procedures. I also agree with the panel that there is a risk of repetition because of the limited insight demonstrated by Mr Edmonds. However, in my judgement, it would be disproportionate to make no provision for a review period. I have taken the view that Mr Edmonds should be given the opportunity to develop full insight into his misconduct, and to demonstrate that he has a full understanding of safeguarding obligations and has taken steps to avoid a repetition of the behaviour.

I have therefore concluded that a review period of 5 years is proportionate in this case. This is consistent with the Advice which states that, in cases of serious dishonesty, the public interest will usually weigh in favour a longer review period. After 5 years, Mr Edmonds will remain prohibited unless he is able to demonstrate to a panel that he has remedied his lack of insight and understanding of safeguarding obligations, and that he has minimised the risk of repeating the misconduct.

I consider therefore that a 5-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.

This means that Mr David Edmonds 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 29 May 2030, 5 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 Edmonds remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Edmonds 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 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 23 May 2025

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