



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Vincent Collister: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome**

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

**June 2025**

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

**Teacher:** Mr Vincent Collister

**Teacher ref number:** 1749079

**Teacher date of birth:** 20 November 1981

**TRA reference:** 22680

**Date of determination:** 19 June 2025

**Former employer:** Ovingham Middle School, Ovingham

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 17 to 19 June 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Collister.

The panel members were Dr Louise Wallace (lay panellist – in the chair), Miss Louisa Munton (teacher panellist) and Mr Nick Watkiss (teacher panellist).

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

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Howard Tobias of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Collister was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 12 March 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Collister was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that while employed as a teacher at Ovingham Middle School (“the School”):

1. On or about 3 June 2023, he:
  - a. behaved inappropriately towards Person A in that he:
    - i. stroked Person A’s beard;
    - ii. said to Person A words to the effect of “that makes you hard doesn’t it”;
    - iii. grabbed and/or touched Person A’s crotch.
  - b. touched Person B’s breast and/or nipple bar;
2. His conduct at particular 1a and/or 1b was sexually motivated.

Mr Collister made no admission of fact.

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised person list and list of key people – pages 3 to 5

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 6 to 29

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 30 to 171

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 172 to 188

Section 5: Teacher documents – page 189

Service bundle of 26 pages

Separate anonymised witness list of one page

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession May 2020, (the “Procedures”).

## **Witnesses**

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

Person A, [REDACTED]

Person B, [REDACTED]

Witness C, [REDACTED]

## **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 Collister had been employed at the School from September 2022 as a classroom teacher, year six form tutor, and Geography Curriculum lead.

A staff night out took place in June 2023, following which the allegations of Mr Collister’s inappropriate behaviour were raised by Person A and Person B to the headteacher of the School.

Mr Collister was suspended, and an investigation was carried out, following which a disciplinary hearing took place.

A referral was made to the TRA on 24 October 2023.

## **Findings of fact**

The findings of fact are as follows:

**You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, while employed as a teacher at Ovingham Middle School (“the School”):**

**1. On or about 3 June 2023, you:**

**a. behaved inappropriately towards Person A in that you:**

**i. stroked Person A’s beard;**

Mr Collister made no admission of fact in relation to this allegation.

The panel noted that Mr Collister had admitted to having done this during the School's investigation report and that he was extremely sorry if touching Person A's beard had caused offence.

The panel also noted that there was hearsay evidence in the bundle which corroborated that Mr Collister had stroked Person A's beard. However, the panel considered the appropriate amount of weight to attach to this evidence and the fact that this hearsay evidence was unable to be tested by way of live witness testimony.

The panel heard oral evidence from Witness C, who conducted investigation interviews at the time with the relevant parties.

In relation to allegation 1(a)(i), she stated that *"Mr Collister confirmed that he remembered touching Person A's beard but that it was in a jokey way and that he and Person A had a jokey relationship. This was later refuted by Person A."*

The panel heard oral evidence from Person A, who recalled the incidents above with the following comments:

*"Mr Collister placed his hand under my beard and pulled down, not tightly but like a stroke."*

In his oral evidence, Person A recalled in detail that Mr Collister had reached across Person B with his left hand and stroked his beard. He recalled having frowned at him and *"pulled his head back"* because he was *"not fond of anyone touching [his] beard"*.

The panel found Person A to be a credible witness in his detailed recollection of the incident, in particular Person A was able to visibly demonstrate to the panel how the incident regarding Mr Collister stroking his beard had taken place. Further, the panel found Person A to be very clear and coherent in his oral evidence when describing the incident and to his reaction at the time of the incident.

The panel found that Person A had been consistent in his evidence over time regarding the incident, from the evidence given to the investigator at the time of the School's investigation, to the TRA and in live evidence at the hearing.

The panel found that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Collister was more likely than not to have stroked Person A's beard on 3 June 2023 and that, in doing so, he behaved inappropriately to Person A.

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

**ii. said to Person A words to the effect of “that makes you hard doesn’t it”;**

Mr Collister made no admission of fact in relation to this allegation.

The panel heard oral evidence from Witness C, who conducted the School investigation interviews at the time with the relevant parties.

In relation to allegation 1(a)(ii), she asked Mr Collister if he had made this comment and Mr Collister said “no”. The panel noted from the School’s investigation report that no one else had witnessed this comment having been made, either because they were too far away, or because they were unable to recall the comment.

The panel heard oral evidence from Person A, who recalled the incidents above with the following comments:

*“I frowned at him after he did it and he said something like ‘that makes you hard doesn’t it’.”* The panel noted that Person A recalled responding to his comment by saying “no.” The panel also noted that Person A stated that he was “*taken aback and shocked*” by the comment and by the actions of Mr Collister.

The panel found Person A to be a credible witness in his detailed recollection of the incident. In particular, Person A was able to describe the layout of where everyone was positioned at the time that the comment was made, and that many other people were further away from him and therefore may not have heard the comment.

The panel considered that, on the balance of probabilities, the comment to Person A “*that makes you hard doesn’t it*” was more likely than not to have been made on 3 June 2023 by Mr Collister and that, in doing so, he had behaved inappropriately to Person A.

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

**iii. grabbed and/or touched Person A’s crotch.**

Mr Collister made no admission of fact in relation to this allegation.

The panel heard oral evidence from Witness C, who conducted investigation interviews as part of the School’s investigation with the relevant parties.

She stated that “*Mr Collister confirmed he did not recall grabbing Person A’s crotch.*”

The panel heard oral evidence from Person A, who recalled the incidents above and made the following comment:

*Mr Collister then reached over Person B again, and with his right hand cupped my crotch.”*

In his oral evidence, Person A could not recall if Mr Collister said anything when he “cupped [his] crotch” but that Mr Collister had seemed to think it would be a “*funny thing to do*”. Person A recalled being shocked especially that he had done this in front of everyone present and that this was “*not what you would expect from a work colleague*”. Person A was able to recall having immediately got up and gone to the toilet at which point he became more annoyed by what had happened and repeatedly stated that he was “*shocked*” by the incident. The panel noted that Person A had said that no-one else at work had ever touched his beard and that this was “*not a normal thing for someone to do*” and that his relationship with Mr Collister was no different from his relationship with any other colleague. Person A could not recall ever having touched Mr Collister’s beard or to having ever been “*tactile*” with Mr Collister.

The panel found Person A to be a credible witness in his detailed recollection of the incident, in particular Person A commented that Mr Collister cupping his crotch was only for a second or two and that there was “*no squeezing*”. The panel noted Person A’s oral evidence was that his understanding of the rationale for Mr Collister cupping his crotch was to see if Mr Collister’s comment regarding this making Person A “*hard*” in allegation 1(a)(ii) was true or not.

In relation to allegation 1(a)(iii), Person B attested to the same in their witness statement, saying “*Mr Collister leant over me to reach Person A and grabbed his crotch. I recall it being more of a grab than just a touch*”.

The panel noted that there was hearsay evidence in the bundle which corroborated that Mr Collister had touched Person A’s crotch. The panel considered the appropriate amount of weight to attach to this evidence and the fact that this evidence was unable to be tested by way of live witness testimony. However, the panel noted that this evidence was consistent with the oral evidence of Person A and Person B.

Although the panel noted that Person A and Person B had differing recollections of the timing of the incidents in allegation 1, the panel did not find that this gave reason to disbelieve the consistency of their accounts that the incidents took place.

The panel found that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Collister was more likely than not to have grabbed and/or touched Person A’s crotch on 3 June 2023 and that, in doing so, he behaved inappropriately to Person A.

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

The panel found allegations 1(a)(i), (ii) and (iii) proven.

**b. touched Person B’s breast and/or nipple bar;**

Mr Collister made no admission of fact in relation to this allegation.

The panel noted Witness C's evidence, in which she stated – *"Mr Collister confirmed that he did not recall ...grabbing Person B's breast."*

The panel heard oral evidence from Person B who stated that *"Before I could respond, he then just reached out and touched it"* meaning her nipple bar.

The panel found Person B to be a credible witness in her detailed recollection of the incident, in particular Person B confirmed that Mr Collister had reached and touched her nipple bar for a couple of seconds which made her feel *"awkward and embarrassed"* and she *"didn't know what to do"*. The panel also noted that Person B recalled Mr Collister having responded to being challenged by Person A about this conduct, by saying *"I just had to"*.

Person A attested to the same in their witness statement, saying *"Mr Collister almost immediately reached out and felt the piercing,"* and that his *"hand was on Person B's nipple for about two to three seconds."* The panel noted that, in their oral evidence, Person A recalled having been about two feet away when he saw Mr Collister *"grab and twist"* Person B's nipple piercing. The panel noted that, Person A was *"shocked"* by this conduct because he *"never expected someone to do this in such a careless way in front of him"* and that *"no one could believe it had happened"*. Also, the panel noted that Person A had stated that he was probably more shocked by this incident than the incident involving Person A's crotch having been cupped by Mr Collister, and that this was probably because it was *"a gender thing"* and that *"you just can't do that"*.

The panel noted that, in his oral evidence, Person A was *"shocked"* by Mr Collister's actions and this is why he recalled having said *"what the fuck are you doing?"* to which Mr Collister responded *"I just had to"*.

The panel found that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Collister was more likely than not to have grabbed and/or touched Person B's breast and/or nipple bar on 3 June 2023 and that, in doing so, he behaved inappropriately to Person B.

The panel found allegation 1(b) proven.

## **2. Your conduct at Particular 1a and/or 1b was sexually motivated**

Mr Collister made no admission of fact in relation to this allegation.

The panel received legal advice on the meaning of *"sexually motivated"*.

The panel noted that in *Basson v General Medical Council [2018] EWHC 505 (Admin)* it was stated that *"A sexual motive means that the conduct was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship"*.

The panel further noted that in *General Medical Council v Haris [2021] EWCA Civ 763*, it was stated that, *"In the absence of a plausible innocent explanation for what he did, the*

*facts spoke for themselves. A sexual motive was plainly more likely than not; I would go so far as to say that that inference was overwhelming."*

The panel considered whether there was a plausible innocent explanation for the conduct which it had found proven at allegations 1(a) and 1(b).

The panel noted the investigation interview held in June 2023 with Person A (exhibit AW/4) in which Person A said that, at first he *"thought potentially [Mr Collister] was just being a bit 'laddy', but the more he thought about it, the more Person A thought it was inappropriate behaviour"*.

The panel also referred to the interview with Person D who *"felt the incident was inappropriate"* and confirmed that Mr Collister *"constantly [rang Person B] to see where she was."* The panel considered that this was hearsay evidence and therefore considered the appropriate amount of weight to attach to this evidence, and the fact that this hearsay evidence was unable to be tested by way of live witness testimony.

The panel noted Person B's written statement in which Person B stated that Mr Collister had said to Person B – *"if I had a beautiful woman like you at home, I would want to have sex with you all the time"*.

The panel also noted Person B's witness statement which stated that *"as soon as it happened"* Person B had felt *"uncomfortable"* and that *"I felt really uncomfortable being around him and in a small group."* Further, Person B stated that she felt *"worried about seeing him again."*

Similarly, the panel noted the following from Person A's evidence which attested to similar indications that Mr Collister's behaviour was inappropriate.

*"I found it very weird and creepy."*

*"I also told Individual D about what happened to Person B. Individual D is a police officer, and he said that he thought I should report it as he thought it was sexual assault."*

Person B also said that she had received messages from Mr Collister that night as well. Further, the panel noted that there was other evidence in the bundle which suggested that Mr Collister had repeatedly messaged and called Person B that evening. Mr Collister also suggested that she join him in his pre-booked hotel that evening. The panel also noted that Mr Collister had referenced this during the School's investigation. The panel considered the appropriate amount of weight to attach to this evidence from both Mr Collister and other statements and the fact that this evidence was unable to be tested by way of live witness testimony.

The panel concluded that the allegations were supported by evidence it had seen and heard during the hearing.

The panel considered that Mr Collister had provided no plausible innocent explanation as part of the TRA hearing for his conduct found proved at allegations 1(a) and 1(b). Notwithstanding this, the panel considered that, in relation to allegation 1(a), Mr Collister's actions towards Person A could have been motivated by a "jokey" intention rather than having been sexually motivated, which was supported by Person A's understanding at the time of the incident and oral evidence during the hearing.

The panel did not find that allegation 1(a) was sexually motivated.

The panel considered all the evidence in the bundle and that it had heard during the hearing, and found that the conduct in allegation 1(b) was not only proved to have occurred, but likely took place in a context which could be interpreted as sexually motivated. The panel noted that the context of this was, by way of example: repeated messages and calls to Person B late into the night; making it clear to Person B that Mr Collister had [REDACTED]; and the offer to Person B of joining Mr Collister at his pre-booked hotel after the evening's events. The panel therefore concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Collister's conduct was more likely than not to have been sexually motivated in respect of allegation 1(b).

The panel assessed the weight and reliability of the hearsay evidence alongside the oral evidence during the hearing, and on the balance of probabilities, it believed that the allegations of Mr Collister's behaviour on the staff night out, in particular allegation 1(b) was more likely than not to have been sexually motivated.

The panel found that Mr Collister's conduct as found proven at allegation 1(b) was, on the balance of probabilities, sexual and therefore sexually motivated. The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Collister was sexual. The panel noted, in particular, the oral evidence of Person B who stated that she felt "*uncomfortable about it being just me and him*" in response to Mr Collister having suggested that they stay out and go dancing and an offer to stay at his hotel, which she refused.

The panel therefore found allegation 2 proved.

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

Having found all 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 Collister, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Collister 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
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others; and
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards...

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Collister, in relation to the facts found proved, did not involve breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”) as there were no allegations in relation to children.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Collister, in relation to the facts found proved, did not involve breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children as there were no allegations in relation to children.

The panel also considered whether Mr Collister’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 none of these offences were relevant.

The panel noted the disciplinary interview in July 2023 (Exhibit AW/18). Individual E, union representative was present.

[REDACTED].

The panel noted the above considerations regarding Mr Collister’s [REDACTED], and that it may have affected Mr Collister’s behaviour at the time of the incidents.

The panel noted that the allegations took place outside the education setting. However, the panel noted that the context was a staff night out and that the allegations of inappropriate behaviour were towards other staff members. This was a context in which the standard of behaviour expected of Mr Collister remained high and within the realms of his employment. The panel noted the investigation report where Witness C commented that *“this event would legally be regarded as an extension of the workplace and therefore, the usual employment policies, procedures and expectations of staff conduct would apply”*. Also, as part of the School’s investigation, the panel noted that Mr Collister accepted that he was aware of the School’s Code of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures and that this extended to conduct in private life as well as in the School setting.

Although the panel found Mr Collister's conduct was serious, it did not find that the conduct was sufficiently serious to meet the threshold of the definition of unacceptable professional conduct.

For these reasons, the panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Collister amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

In relation to whether Mr Collister'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 Collister'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 Collister was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were 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 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. The panel considered the pattern of behaviour displayed by Mr Collister, and although it noted that there was more than one incident of misconduct, these incidents all took place on one evening.

Nevertheless, the panel considered that Mr Collister's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher. The panel considered that, whilst there was no evidence to suggest that pupils or parents of the School were present or aware of the situation, this would inevitably have the potential to damage the public's perception of teachers due to the nature of the conduct found proven and the fact that this was proved as being sexually motivated towards a colleague.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Collister's 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 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 within the teaching profession; that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Collister, which involved inappropriate behaviour towards other members of staff during a staff night whilst Mr Collister was employed as a teacher at the School, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Collister was 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 Collister was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Collister in the profession. The panel decided that a case had not been made to demonstrate that there was a particular public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, although no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator. Therefore, the panel was unable to assess whether Mr Collister would be able to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel noted that there was no evidence provided by Mr Collister as to his abilities as a teacher either by way of his own evidence or character references despite Mr Collister having been given numerous opportunities to do so in advance of the hearing.

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

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Collister.

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; and
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust...

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.

Although the panel considered that Mr Collister's actions were stated by colleagues as being out of character and that there were [REDACTED] which may have influenced his behaviour, the panel noted that there was no medical evidence provided in support of Mr Collister's statement regarding any [REDACTED] in relation to this.

In light of the panel's findings, there was no evidence that Mr Collister's actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Collister was acting under extreme duress.

Although the panel accepted that the conduct of Mr Collister which was found proven was reported to be out of character, the panel found that Mr Collister had demonstrated very limited insight into his behaviour and the adverse effect that it had had on members of staff. The panel noted the live witness evidence of Person A and Person B who reported the ongoing adverse impact that Mr Collister's behaviour had had on them. The panel considered that, based on the evidence before the panel, Mr Collister also showed very limited remorse for his conduct. For these reasons, the panel did not have sufficient evidence to be satisfied that Mr Collister would not repeat this behaviour in the future.

The panel noted that no evidence of good character was provided, nor any references from colleagues that could attest to Mr Collister's abilities as a teacher. However, the panel did note the investigation report (AW/1) which stated that Individual F and Person B found Mr Collister's behaviour to be "*surprising*" and suggested that it was out of character for him. The panel also noted that there was evidence in the bundle where Mr Collister had shown some remorse in the investigation interview with the School when responding to the allegations which he could not recall having taken place. Witness C

stated that “*he was really sorry*” and that she believed “*this to be sincere when I interviewed him*”. The panel also noted the disciplinary investigation interview held in June 2023 where Mr Collister said that if “*he has caused anyone offence he was really sorry*”. The panel also noted that Mr Collister restated this sentiment in his statement that he provided for the disciplinary hearing in July 2023 which he did not attend. However, the panel did not find that this apology was sufficient to have demonstrated his understanding of the impact that his behaviour had had specifically on those involved and that this amounted to very limited insight. No other evidence was provided to the panel by Mr Collister by way of insight and remorse.

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 potential severity of the consequences for Mr Collister of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate in the circumstances. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Collister. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons.

The panel noted that the allegations found proven against Mr Collister involved serious sexual misconduct which did harm the affected persons. The panel noted Person B’s comments that they felt uncomfortable “*as soon as it happened*” and that she remained uncomfortable at the prospect of having any interactions with Mr Collister. The panel also

considered the impact that Mr Collister's inappropriate conduct towards Person A had had and continued to have on Person A.

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 considered that although it had insufficient evidence to find that there was no risk of repetition of Mr Collister's conduct, it did consider that the pattern of behaviour relevant to these allegations was limited to a pattern of behaviour in one evening. As such, the panel found the risk of repetition was relatively low based on the evidence considered, and that the conduct, albeit serious, was at the lower end of the scale of severity. The panel found that this made it more appropriate for a review period to be considered and that a review period should not be excessive.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a 2-year 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 2-year review period.

## **Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State**

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

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

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Vincent Collister should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of 2 years

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Collister 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
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others; and
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards...

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of sexually motivated inappropriate behaviour towards another member of school staff.

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 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 Collister, 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 noted that the allegations took place outside of the education setting on a staff night out and that the inappropriate behaviour was towards other members of staff. The panel did not raise any issues regarding the protection of children or safeguarding of pupils.

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

"Although the panel accepted that the conduct of Mr Collister which was found proven was reported to be out of character, the panel found that Mr Collister had demonstrated very limited insight into his behaviour and the adverse effect that it had had on members of staff. The panel noted the live witness evidence of Person A and Person B who reported the ongoing adverse impact that Mr Collister's behaviour had had on them. The panel considered that, based on the evidence before the panel, Mr Collister also showed very limited remorse for his conduct. For these reasons, the panel did not have sufficient evidence to be satisfied that Mr Collister would not repeat this behaviour in the future."

"The panel also noted that there was evidence in the bundle where Mr Collister had shown some remorse in the investigation interview with the School when responding to the allegations which he could not recall having taken place. Witness C stated that *"he was really sorry"* and that she believed *"this to be sincere when I interviewed him"*. The panel also noted the disciplinary investigation interview held in June 2023 where Mr Collister said that if *"he has caused anyone offence he was really sorry"*. The panel also noted that Mr Collister restated this sentiment in his statement that he provided for the disciplinary hearing in July 2023 which he did not attend. However, the panel did not find that this apology was sufficient to have demonstrated his understanding of the impact that his behaviour had had specifically on those involved and that this amounted to very limited insight. No other evidence was provided to the panel by Mr Collister by way of insight and remorse."

In my judgement, the lack of full insight and remorse 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 that “whilst there was no evidence to suggest that pupils or parents of the School were present or aware of the situation, this would inevitably have the potential to damage the public’s perception of teachers due to the nature of the conduct found proven and the fact that this was proved as being sexually motivated towards a colleague.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct towards another staff member 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 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 Collister himself. The panel has commented:

“The panel decided that a case had not been made to demonstrate that there was a particular public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, although no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator. Therefore, the panel was unable to assess whether Mr Collister would be able to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel noted that there was no evidence provided by Mr Collister as to his abilities as a teacher either by way of his own evidence or character references despite Mr Collister having been given numerous opportunities to do so in advance of the hearing.”

“The panel noted that no evidence of good character was provided, nor any references from colleagues that could attest to Mr Collister’s abilities as a teacher. However, the panel did note the investigation report (AW/1) which stated that Individual F and Person B found Mr Collister’s behaviour to be “*surprising*” and suggested that it was out of character for him.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Collister 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 "public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Collister was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession" and that "Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the potential severity of the consequences for Mr Collister of prohibition."

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel's findings that Mr Collister had demonstrated very limited insight and remorse.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Collister 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 and remorse, 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 2-year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments:

"The panel noted that the allegations found proven against Mr Collister involved serious sexual misconduct which did harm the affected persons. The panel noted Person B's comments that they felt uncomfortable "*as soon as it happened*" and that she remained uncomfortable at the prospect of having any interactions with Mr Collister. The panel also considered the impact that Mr Collister's inappropriate conduct towards Person A had had and continued to have on Person A."

"The panel considered that although it had insufficient evidence to find that there was no risk of repetition of Mr Collister's conduct, it did consider that the pattern of behaviour relevant to these allegations was limited to a pattern of behaviour in one evening. As such, the panel found the risk of repetition was relatively low based on the evidence considered, and that the conduct, albeit serious, was at the lower end of the scale of severity. The panel found that this made it more appropriate for a review period to be considered and that a review period should not be excessive."

I have considered whether a 2-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 2-year review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the misconduct and the lack of full insight and remorse.

I have decided, therefore, that a 2-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 Vincent Collister 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 2027, 2 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 Collister remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Mr Vincent Collister 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: 25 June 2025**

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