



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Richard Murphy: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

July 2025

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

Teacher:	Mr Richard Murphy
Teacher ref number:	3647284
Teacher date of birth:	31 March 1990
TRA reference:	20091
Date of determination:	25 July 2025
Former employer:	St Bernadette Catholic Secondary School, Bristol

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 25 July 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Richard Murphy.

The panel members were Mr John Martin (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Aruna Sharma (teacher panellist) and Mrs Emma Hendry (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lara Small of Birketts LLP Solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Murphy that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Murphy provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Mr Alexander Barnfield of Capsticks Solicitors, Mr Murphy or any representative for Mr Murphy.

The meeting took place in private by way of a virtual meeting.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 21 May 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Murphy was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst working as a teacher at St Bernadette Catholic Secondary School, Fossedale Avenue, Bristol BS14 9LS (“the School”):

1. Between 26 June 2015 and 9 January 2021 in relation to Pupil A, on one or more occasions, he:

- a) engaged in the exchange of sexually explicit messages with Pupil A; and/or
- b) engaged in kissing with Pupil A; and/or
- c) engaged in oral sex with Pupil A; and/or
- d) engaged in penetrative sex with Pupil A.

Mr Murphy admitted the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1 (c), and 1(d). In respect of the allegations admitted, Mr Murphy also accepted that they amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, as set out in the statement of agreed facts signed by Mr Murphy’s representative on behalf of Mr Murphy on 29 April 2025.

Preliminary applications

There were no preliminary applications.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 5 to 7

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 8 to 35

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 36 to 42

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 43 to 381

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 382 to 384

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, 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 2020, (the “Procedures”).

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Murphy’s representative on behalf of Mr Murphy on 29 April 2025 and subsequently signed by the presenting officer on 30 April 2025.

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Murphy for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

Decision and reasons

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

Mr Murphy was employed as a religious education teacher by the School between January 2013 to August 2015, and then again from January 2016 until June 2021.

After attending a [REDACTED] organised by the School on [REDACTED], Mr Murphy was contacted by Pupil A on social media and allegedly had sex with Pupil A at his house the next day, on [REDACTED]. At the time, Pupil A was [REDACTED] years old and Mr Murphy was 25 years old. Mr Murphy and Pupil A then entered into a sexual relationship lasting approximately [REDACTED].

An anonymous report to the School in November 2020 led to an internal investigation by the School and referrals were made to the LADO and the police.

Pupil A made a police report in January 2021. Following a further investigation meeting and disciplinary hearing, Mr Murphy was dismissed from his employment at the School in June 2021 and a referral to the TRA was made.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you proved, for these reasons:

The panel noted that Mr Murphy admitted the facts of allegations 1(a) to 1(d), as set out in the response to the notice of referral signed and dated by Mr Murphy on 1 September 2024, and in the statement of agreed facts signed by Mr Murphy's representative on 29 April 2025 on Mr Murphy's behalf. Notwithstanding these admissions, the panel made its own determination in respect of the allegations.

1. Between 26 June 2015 and 9 January 2021 in relation to Pupil A, on one or more occasions, you:

a) engaged in the exchange of sexually explicit messages with Pupil A; and/or

In addition to Mr Murphy's admissions in the notice of referral and statement of agreed facts, the Panel noted Pupil A's witness statement which described how Mr Murphy conversed with her on Facebook messenger and told her he had slept with someone, but that *"he wished he was with (Pupil A)"*.

Pupil A also stated in her witness statement: *"When [REDACTED] and (Mr Murphy) returned back to England from Ireland to work again, he used to send me explicit pictures of himself in the staff bathrooms."*

The panel also noted the police report which confirmed the exchange of sexually explicit messages from Mr Murphy to Pupil A, such as *"BJ"* and that he will *"go and wash his balls"*.

When questioned by the police about messages he had exchanged with Pupil A, Mr Murphy admitted that *"they got sexual pretty quickly"* and that there were *"quite a few messages into the Saturday morning"* after the [REDACTED]. In police questioning, Mr Murphy admitted that in these messages he had *"invited (Pupil A) to (his) house for sex of some sort."*

The panel found allegation 1(a) proven.

b) engaged in kissing with Pupil A; and/or

In addition to Mr Murphy's admissions in the notice of referral and statement of agreed facts, the panel noted Pupil A's witness statement which stated that Pupil A and Mr Murphy *"started kissing and then he took me upstairs"* when Pupil A went to Mr Murphy's house.

The panel found allegation 1(b) proven.

c) engaged in oral sex with Pupil A; and/or

In addition to Mr Murphy's admissions in the notice of referral and statement of agreed facts, the panel noted the police interview with Mr Murphy in which he said *"I invited her over to my house for sex of some sort.... There was oral sex, her and me"* on [REDACTED].

In the police interview Mr Murphy further admitted that, on that day, *“oral sex had taken place”*.

The panel noted Pupil A stated in her witness statement that Mr Murphy had *“turned up at [REDACTED] where (Pupil A) worked and begged (her) to leave with him in his car to perform sexual acts upon him. Once that was over he dropped (Pupil A) back to work like nothing happened.”*

The panel found allegation 1(c) proven.

d) engaged in penetrative sex with Pupil A.

The panel noted Mr Murphy’s admissions in the notice of referral and statement of agreed facts, in which he stated that his relationship with Pupil A *“lasted approximately [REDACTED] and involved sexual activity, including... penetrative sex on numerous occasions during their relationship.”*

The panel noted that Mr Murphy admitted in his police interview on 23 March 2021 that he had a sexual relationship with Pupil A which he stated started on [REDACTED] and ended in [REDACTED]. Mr Murphy further admitted in this police interview that *“the last time they had full sex was in September [REDACTED].”*

The panel noted comments suggestive of allegation 1(d) in Pupil A’s witness statement, for example *“begged me to leave with him in his car to perform sexual acts upon him”,* and he *“wanted to have sexual activity in the School, which we ended up doing”*.

The panel noted Pupil A’s description in her witness statement that she went to Mr Murphy’s house on [REDACTED] and they *“started kissing and then he took me upstairs”,* and *“from this day, my relationship with (Mr Murphy) was sexual in nature”*.

The panel found allegation 1(d) proven.

The allegations were all admitted and were supported by evidence presented to the panel. The panel found all allegations proven.

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 noted that Mr Murphy accepted in the Statement of Agreed Facts that allegations 1(a) – 1(d) amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

Firstly, the panel gave due consideration to Mr Murphy's statement in which he contended that he never began or had a sexual relationship with a pupil at the School because Pupil A came off the school's register on [REDACTED] and their sexual relationship began the next day on [REDACTED]. The panel recognised that this may be technically correct, but it was not persuaded by this argument. The panel noted that Mr Murphy admitted in the statement of agreed facts that he and Pupil A knew each other, and their relationship was entirely founded on their time as teacher and pupil at the School. The panel concluded that for all intents and purposes, and certainly in Pupil A's eyes, the relationship between Mr Murphy and Pupil A was one of teacher and pupil and, therefore, one with a power imbalance. In particular, the fact that the sexual relationship began less than 24 hours after Pupil A was a pupil at the School was a significant factor in the panel forming this opinion.

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Murphy, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Murphy was in breach of the following Teachers' Standards:

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Murphy in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE"). In particular, the panel noted that under Part 1, section 23 of the 2014 version of KCSIE it defines sexual abuse as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, and it defines a 'child' as anyone under the age of 18 years.

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

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

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

The panel noted that the allegations took place outside the education setting, being at a time when Pupil A was technically a former pupil of the School. However, as explained above, the relationship between Mr Murphy and Pupil A was entirely founded on their time when they were known to each other as pupil and teacher. Mr Murphy had told Pupil A that he was sexually aroused by the idea that they were formerly teacher and pupil, and he admitted to this in the statement of agreed facts. The panel found this disturbing.

The panel noted that Mr Murphy admitted in the statement of agreed facts that at the time their sexual relationship began, [REDACTED]. The panel concluded that Mr Murphy was, therefore, aware that Pupil A was vulnerable at the time their sexual relationship started.

The panel also noted comments from Individual A witness statement where she highlighted that the Bristol Local Agreement states there is an expectation by an authority to obtain oversight of a pupil until the end of July. Therefore, at the time of the relationship commencing, there was still an expectation that the School (and therefore teachers) would have a duty of care and responsibility towards Pupil A. During the investigation meeting, the Governors also stated that Mr Murphy was *"still in a position of trust"*.

The panel also noted an instance described in Pupil A's witness statement in or around 2015/16 where Mr Murphy and Pupil A had engaged in sexual activity in the staff toilets at the School, [REDACTED]. Pupil A's witness statement indicated that this was in very close proximity to children and another member of staff.

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

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Murphy was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Murphy'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 Murphy'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 Murphy was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offences of sexual activity and sexual communication with a child were relevant.

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 that Mr Murphy's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Murphy'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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

The panel considered that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of an inappropriate sexual relationship with a young person, founded on Mr Murphy's teacher-pupil relationship with Pupil A. In particular, the panel was concerned by the lack of insight shown by Mr Murphy and the lack of understanding of how his behaviour had affected Pupil A. Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if

conduct such as that found against Mr Murphy 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 Murphy was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated. The panel was particularly concerned by Mr Murphy's admission in the statement of agreed facts that he told Pupil A he was sexually aroused by the idea that they were formerly teacher and pupil.

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 Murphy in the profession. Whilst there was evidence through the references from 2016 attesting to Mr Murphy's ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Murphy in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standards of conduct expected of a teacher, and he sought to exploit his position of trust.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;

- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- violation of the rights of pupils.

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

In the light of the panel's findings there was evidence that Mr Murphy's actions were deliberate. There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Murphy was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

The panel could see no evidence before it that Mr Murphy had demonstrated high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel also noted that Mr Murphy claimed he was experiencing [REDACTED] at the time of the relationship starting. He stated that subsequent to the events he has engaged in [REDACTED], although the panel saw no evidence of this.

The panel noted a reference from 2016 from a headteacher, Individual B, recommending Mr Murphy for a permanent position at the School with his professional skills largely falling into the category of 'excellent' and a statement that he is a '*strong and effective practitioner*'. Similarly, a reference from Individual C in 2016 attested to the same and that he has '*very positive relationships with his pupils*' and is '*highly thought of and well respected*'. However, the panel noted that no recent character references had been submitted that could attest to Mr Murphy's abilities or contributions as an educator.

Throughout the various investigations undertaken, Mr Murphy showed some remorse and regret that the relationship with Pupil A had occurred. In a statement submitted to the TRA, he stated "*Not a day passes by, where I don't wish I could go back and change things. I am sorry to all my former students and my ex-colleagues. I let both myself and all of them down through my actions. There is not a day that goes by where I don't wish I could go back and change things.*" However, the panel considered that Mr Murphy showed remorse for his actions based on the consequences and impact upon himself, and saw no evidence that Mr Murphy had reflected on the impact his behaviours had on Pupil A.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Murphy 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 Murphy. Mr Murphy's abuse of power from his position as a teacher, in order to form a sexual relationship with a vulnerable pupil less than 24 hours after she was officially no longer a pupil at the School, was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Mr Murphy acknowledged that the relationship was inappropriate and contrary to the Teachers' Standards. 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; and any sexual misconduct involving a child.

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 weight 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 noted the presence of mitigating circumstances, including some remorse shown by Mr Murphy throughout internal and external investigations. However, the panel also noted that Mr Murphy continued to maintain in his statement and reiterated that "*I never had a relationship with any pupil*". This indicated to the panel that Mr Murphy denied wrongdoing and attempted to justify his actions on the basis of a technicality (i.e. that he started the sexual relationship 1 day after Pupil A was no longer officially a pupil at the School). The panel was concerned by this and noted that it indicated a lack of insight and a strong risk of repetition in the future. The panel was not persuaded that there was no risk of repetition.

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

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

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

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Murphy involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of engaging in sexual activity with Pupil A.

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 Murphy, 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 that “there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of an inappropriate sexual relationship with a young person, founded on Mr Murphy’s teacher-pupil relationship with Pupil A.” 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. The panel has said that it “was concerned by the lack of insight shown by Mr Murphy and the lack of understanding of how his behaviour had affected Pupil A.” Although the panel has said that “Mr Murphy showed some remorse and regret that the relationship with Pupil A had occurred”, it also “considered that Mr Murphy showed remorse for his actions based on the consequences and impact upon himself, and saw no evidence that Mr Murphy had reflected on the impact his behaviours had on Pupil A.” In my judgement, the lack of insight and full 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 “public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Murphy were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual activity with a pupil 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 Murphy himself. The panel has commented that it “could see no evidence before it that Mr Murphy had demonstrated high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Murphy 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, “The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Murphy. Mr Murphy’s abuse of power from his position as a teacher, in order to form a sexual relationship with a vulnerable pupil less than 24 hours after she was officially no longer a pupil at the School, was a significant factor in forming that opinion.” I have also taken account of the panel’s comment that “the conduct found against Mr Murphy was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s findings concerning the lack of insight and full remorse on the part of Mr Murphy and the risk of repetition.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Murphy 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 insight and full 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 that no provision should be made for a review period.

The Advice indicates that in cases involving serious sexual misconduct, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person, the public interest will weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

I have considered the panel's comments, "The panel noted the presence of mitigating circumstances, including some remorse shown by Mr Murphy throughout internal and external investigations. However, the panel also noted that Mr Murphy continued to maintain in his statement and reiterated that *"I never had a relationship with any pupil"*. This indicated to the panel that Mr Murphy denied wrongdoing and attempted to justify his actions on the basis of a technicality (i.e. that he started the sexual relationship 1 day after Pupil A was no longer officially a pupil at the School). The panel was concerned by this and noted that it indicated a lack of insight and a strong risk of repetition in the future. The panel was not persuaded that there was no risk of repetition."

I have considered whether not allowing a 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 allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the misconduct found proven, the lack of insight and full remorse, and the risk of repetition.

I consider therefore that allowing for no review period is necessary to maintain public confidence and is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

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

Mr Murphy has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.



Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 30 July 2025

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