



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Paul Thompson: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**September 2025**

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

**Teacher:** Mr Paul Thompson

**TRA reference:** 21364

**Date of determination:** 20 October 2025

**Former employer:** St Bernard's High School, Essex

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 17 September 2025, 18 September 2025, 24 September until 26 September 2025 and 20 October 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Paul Thompson.

The panel members were Ms Mona Sood (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Olayinka Oshoko (teacher panellist) and Ms Lynsey Draycott (teacher panellist).

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

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Callum Heywood of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mr Thompson was present and was represented by Mr Matthew Fulton-McAlister of NASUWT.

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 22 May 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Thompson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as a teacher of mathematics at St Bernard's High School between 1 September 2015 and 21 April 2023:

1. He engaged in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils, including by:
  - a. Touching Pupil A's chest area and/or breast on or around 17 November 2022;
  - b. Touching Pupil B's chest area and/or breast on or around 17 November 2022;
  - c. Touching Pupil C's bottom and/or squeezing Pupil C's bottom in or around May 2022;
  - d. Touching Pupil D's chest area and/or breast in or around 2022;
2. His conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1 above was:
  - a. Conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated;
  - b. Demonstrated a lack of insight into the management guidance issued to him on or around 18 January 2019.

During the course of the hearing allegation 1a. was discontinued and allegation 1d. was amended as set out below.

Mr Thompson denied that conduct described in 1b. and 1d. on the basis that if any touching had occurred it would have been accidental.

Mr Thompson denied allegation 1c., 2a. and 2b.

Mr Thompson denied unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## Summary of evidence

### Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of hearing – pages 10 to 24

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 25 to 177

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 178 to 580

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 581 to 641.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing. Following the preliminary applications, the panel was provided with a redacted bundle agreed by both parties, and used that for the purpose of the remainder 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”).

## **Witnesses**

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

Witness A – [REDACTED], designated safeguarding lead at St Barnard’s High School (“the School”);

Pupil B;

Pupil C;

Pupil D;

Witness E – [REDACTED], volunteer on the [REDACTED] award scheme at the School.

Mr Thompson also gave oral evidence.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Thompson was employed at the School as a teacher of mathematics from 1 September 2015. Mr Thompson was suspended from the School on 20 December 2022 following a period of leave from 21 November 2022 and limited duties from 5 December 2022. Following a disciplinary hearing, Mr Thompson was dismissed on 21 April 2023.

## 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:

### **Whilst employed as a teacher of mathematics at St Bernard's High School between 1 September 2015 and 21 April 2023:**

#### **1. You engaged in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils, including by:**

##### **b. Touching Pupil B's chest area and/or breast on or around 17 November 2022;**

On 17 November 2022, Pupil B completed a student incident statement form arising out of an incident which had occurred the previous evening whilst she attended a training session for the [REDACTED] award scheme in the course of the students learning to apply bandages as high slings. She stated that she was in a group of three with two other students and were taking it in turns to apply the sling. She stated that one of the students was putting the sling on her and Mr Thompson said that she was doing it incorrectly, so came over to demonstrate the correct technique. She stated that, in the past, when the sling had been put on by Witness E she asked the pupil to move their arm because "she can't touch us there (where our boobs are)." She referred to all of the other teachers being "very careful and considerate" of where they were touching the pupils. She stated that when Mr Thompson was adjusting the sling he "put one of his hands on my boob and moved his hand in an up and down motion while moving to the side", and that he had done this twice. She discussed what had happened with her friends as to what they had seen.

Pupil B sent her mother a text message on her way to school the following day referring to Mr Thompson having touched her "boobs" when they were putting on slings, and stating that she was going to report it.

The panel was provided with a number of staff incident statement forms offering contemporaneous evidence of how this incident was reported. One staff member stated three pupils had approached her in Student Services and that Pupil B told her that "last night at DOE (sic) Mr Thompson had touched her breast while he was adjusting her arm sling and she felt very uncomfortable." Another pupil stated that she had felt uncomfortable as she had seen it. The staff member stated that she had told the pupils to write out a statement and left them in student services with another staff member. That staff member confirmed in their statement that another staff member had come into the room and sent the pupils back to class, telling them that they could complete their statements later. The staff member who had said this provided a statement documenting

that she had asked the pupils what they were writing up. She told them that they needed to be “really sure and confident” in what they were writing and if they were worried about rushing they needed to take the statement sheets with them and return them. Pupil B had already finished and handed in her statement. The other pupils handed their statements to this staff member at lunch time and at the end of the day respectively.

These incident forms were provided to Witness A who made contact with Pupil B’s parent who then contacted the police regarding the allegations. Witness A stated that this led to the police conducting an interview with Pupil B for which Witness A was present. She stated that Pupil B described that Mr Thompson had touched her across both her breasts, that he used an “up and down motion” across her breast and that he had done so twice. She stated that Pupil B explained to the police officer that she did not think that teachers were allowed to demonstrate on pupils; that she had been told this by Witness E and that her friend had also seen what happened.

Pupil B provided a witness statement for the present professional misconduct proceedings. She stated that on the evening of 17 November 2022, she was taking part in first aid training. She stated that she had been in a group of five or six and that each group was moving around a circuit of stations to receive training on specific techniques and methods, with each station about three or four metres apart. She stated that Mr Thompson was the adult at the station covering slings, and they were being taught the high sling. She stated that Mr Thompson began by demonstrating the high sling and that he had done this either on himself or on one of the year 11 pupil helpers. She stated that they then paired off to practice on each other. Her partner placed the high sling on her, and Mr Thompson stated that it had been done wrong by her partner. She stated that she had thought that it was fine, and so did her partner, but Mr Thompson said that it needed to be corrected. She stated that Mr Thompson approached her, and her arm was up in the sling with her hand on her left shoulder. She stated that Mr Thompson placed his hand under the sling (fabric) and the palm of his hand on her breast. She stated that he cupped her breast and remained there for two to three seconds. She stated that he then moved to the other breast and repeated the action. She stated that Mr Thompson was trying to make it look like he was tucking the sling but his hands remained on her breasts for too long and he did not touch the tops or the sides of the sling, only her chest area. She stated that whilst Mr Thompson did this he was not saying anything except that they had to tuck the sling in.

Pupil B stated that she was frozen still and looked at her friend as if to silently communicate “what is going on here”. Pupil B stated that she interpreted her friend’s look to mean she had seen what was going on and thought it was strange. Pupil B stated that once Mr Thompson had moved away, she spoke with her friend who confirmed that she had seen what had happened and thought “it was a bit off”. She stated that she then spoke with others about what had happened to see if they thought that it was strange.

Pupil B stated that she did not speak to any staff members about the incident that night, nor her parents, but that she had been kept up that night worrying what had happened and whether she needed to report it.

The panel noted that Pupil B had not been taught by Mr Thompson previously and that any contact prior to this incident had been incidental. There was no apparent reason for Pupil B to have fabricated the allegation.

Nevertheless, the panel was concerned as to the possibility of conversations Pupil B had with other students immediately after the incident, and the following day having potentially affected her perception of what had taken place. The panel noted that Pupil B spoke with Pupil A, Pupil E and Pupil F and explored with them their perception of the incident.

Another pupil completed a student incident statement form as part of the School's investigation. Whilst to be treated with caution as it was hearsay, the panel noted that it contained some corroboration for the incident having occurred describing the touch as being clearly accidental, and "just a tap".

Mr Thompson's representative pointed to two pieces of evidence to suggest that Pupil B may have been prone to exaggeration. The first was a text message from Pupil B's mother before Pupil B reported the incident stating "OK. Just say what happened, don't exaggerated [sic] at all." The second was a statement from another pupil who stated that she had not seen Mr Thompson touch Pupil B but that in her opinion "they are being a little bit over dramatic." The panel did not consider that either pieces of evidence demonstrated Pupil B being prone to exaggeration. The panel considered that Pupil B's mother's text message was sensible advice to give a child who was making a report of a serious incident, given the severity of the consequences that could flow from the situation. The panel did not consider that Pupil B's mother would have reported the matter to the police if she had been concerned that Pupil B was exaggerating. The fellow pupil had not seen the incident to know whether it was exaggerated or not.

Mr Thompson's representative also questioned the credibility of Pupil B's account and how it was that others were unable to see that had happened. Pupil B explained that everyone was focussed on the task they were doing. She stated that if someone was up close and watching carefully, they would have seen that there was an issue. However, if someone was scanning over the room, the contact probably would not have caught their eye. The panel considered that this was a reasonable explanation, when others were engaged in their own demonstrations, and would have expected fellow pupils and teachers to be doing the same.

Mr Thompson accepted that there was no ulterior motive he was aware of that would have led to Pupil B making the allegations.



In Mr Thompson's evidence, he could not recall this incident. He denied this allegation on the basis that if any contact had occurred it would have been accidental. He accepted that when applying a high sling, one side of the pupil's chest would have been clear, and he could not understand how he could have touched that side of Pupil B's chest.

Mr Thompson referred to the time pressures of the first aid sessions. He stated that he wished he could say that he did the same thing during every demonstration using a step by step process, but that he had not, as he had been responding to the context and the feedback received from the pupil. He stated that in a number of scenarios, it had been most expeditious to show them, as talking through what was required was time consuming and not particularly effective.

The panel noted that:

- Pupil B was sufficiently concerned to have reported this incident the following day;
- Pupil B appeared to have no reason to fabricate the allegations;
- Pupil B had largely been consistent in her account;
- Pupil B swore under oath as to the truth of her evidence;
- there was some corroboration for Mr Thompson having touched Pupil B's chest, albeit in hearsay evidence from a fellow pupil;
- Mr Thompson had accepted the possibility of having touched Pupil B's chest, albeit accidentally; and
- Mr Thompson had no step by step process that he followed in each demonstration.

In light of the above, the panel considered that it was more likely than not that Mr Thompson had touched Pupil B's chest area and/or breast in or around 17 November 2022.

The panel went on to consider whether Mr Thompson had engaged in inappropriate physical contact with Pupil B.

Witness A signed a document to confirm that Mr Thompson had attended safeguarding training on 2 September 2022 and agreed to comply with the school's policy on safeguarding. Mr Thompson also signed to confirm that he had read and understood Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE") September 2022.

The panel had available to it the child protection policy for the school dated 10 January 2023. Mr Thompson confirmed that he had seen a document very similar to it, however the panel was not clear as to whether this was before the allegations were said to have taken place or as part of the School's disciplinary bundle. The panel noted that paragraph 12 of the policy recognised that there were occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children which may include for curricular reasons, for example in P.E., music, drama etc.

Witness E, who had previously worked at the School and was involved in the School's [REDACTED] award scheme provision stated that, during first aid training, there would be a whole group demonstration and students would then break into smaller groups with each session being operated by a member of staff or young leader. She stated that, when she was leading a session, her ordinary methodology was to ask for volunteers from the group of students and explain the process before asking one volunteer to carry out the procedure on the other. She stated that where she was required to intervene to show the technique properly she would do so, but that she would seek permission from the student first. She stated that she would provide advice to the student regarding the application of the sling and would ask that the subject of the sling application lifts their arm to allow the side to be tucked under the elbow, to make this easier and to limit contact with the subject's chest.

In oral evidence, Witness E stated that demonstrations on students usually occur when a particular procedure was difficult to describe. She confirmed that there was no rule that a student could not be touched in the course of a demonstration, but that contact should be minimised. She stated that for example, if she was to tuck in a sling, she would ask the student to raise their arm with only the back of her hand touching the student's body in order to minimise contact. This was consistent with the safeguarding policy of 10 January 2023 which stated that "reasonable force" means using no more force than is needed. Whilst this was not a situation in which force was required, it was reasonable to expect that general physical contact should be limited in a similar way.

Mr Thompson stated that when demonstrating the sling, he did not ask pupils to raise their arm and that this carried a risk of touching the breast and/or chest area. He accepted that with hindsight this was not appropriate.

The panel noted that adjusting the sling would bring a teacher into close proximity with a pupil's chest area. Given that this is an intimate area, with sexual connotations, additional caution was required. The panel noted that Pupil B made no reference to Mr Thompson having asked her before he touched her, or that he had asked her to raise her arm. Mr Thompson failed to take any steps to mitigate the impact on Pupil B of his actions or to minimise the risk to himself of his actions being misconstrued. Whilst appreciating the limited time in which Mr Thompson had to demonstrate the procedure, the panel did not consider this to be sufficient reason for not taking proper precautions when adjusting Pupil B's sling. The panel considered that this was inappropriate physical contact.

The panel found this allegation proven.

#### **d. Touching Pupil D's chest area and/or breast in or around 2021;**

On 16 December 2022, Witness A was approached by the school counsellor who informed her that a student had disclosed to her that her friend had been inappropriately touched by Mr Thompson. Witness A completed a staff incident statement form that

recorded that she had spoken with the student. The student said that her friend, during the [REDACTED] award scheme, had told her that when they were putting on the high sling, Mr Thompson had touched her breast area and that it had made her feel very uncomfortable. [REDACTED]. No witness statement was therefore taken from Pupil D as part of the School's investigation.

The panel noted that Pupil D explained in her witness statement for the present professional misconduct proceedings that "As he was applying the sling he was tucking the bandage in under my arm and against my breast area. I recall that it was the palm of his hand that was touching my breast and that he was doing so for around 30 seconds to a minute. I am unable to recall whether his hand remained still or moved. I don't know whether the contact was intentional or accidental as part of tucking in the sling but I felt uncomfortable."

Pupil D explained that Mr Thompson had taught her in year 7, that she had done well in his class. Pupil D did not appear to have any motivation for fabricating her account of what had happened. Indeed, the panel noted that Pupil D had not come forward with any complaint at all against Mr Thompson. Instead, a friend had disclosed concerns to a school councillor who raised the matter with the School. The panel noted that in Pupil D's witness statement she accepted the possibility that the contact by Mr Thompson had been accidental, but that it had made her feel uncomfortable.

Mr Thompson confirmed that he did not really have any recollection of teaching Pupil D and that he did not really have any awareness of Pupil D until these allegations were made. He stated that he knew of no ulterior motive that he would ascribe to Pupil D.

In oral evidence, Pupil D provided a physical demonstration of what had occurred. During the demonstration, she held her arm in a low sling position. She stated that Mr Thompson was giving step by step instructions as he was putting the sling on her, and her concern was regarding the amount of time it took. Pupil D stated that at the time she had thought that what had happened was "weird" and that it should not have happened, but she did not think about it further, other than making the occasional joke about it with her friends. She confirmed that she only spoke with a limited number of friends about what had happened. Later in oral evidence, Pupil D stated that she could not remember if Mr Thompson had talked her through the application of the sling as he was adjusting it.

Mr Thompson's representative also questioned the credibility of Pupil D's account and how it was that others were unable to see that had happened. Pupil D explained that everyone was "doing their own thing", they were all "trying to figure out their own slings." She stated that the pupils were spread out all around "quite a big hall". Mr Thompson was the teacher allocated to their group, so there would not have been another teacher there; the other teachers would have been helping the pupils in their own groups. The panel considered that this was a reasonable explanation, when others were engaged in

their own demonstrations, and would have expected fellow pupils and teachers to be doing the same.

In Mr Thompson's evidence, he could not recall this incident. He denied this allegation on the basis that if any contact had occurred it would have been accidental. He commented upon the demonstration given by Pupil D during her evidence. He stated that he had no explanation of why his hand would need to be in the position demonstrated by Pupil D for the length of time she gave. He stated that he would not have used the palm of his hand, he would have used the back of his hand. The panel noted that Mr Thompson would have seen Witness E's statement which referred to using the back of her hand.

As referred to above, Mr Thompson indicated there were time pressures during the first aid sessions. He stated that he wished he could say that he did the same thing during every demonstration using a step by step process but that he had not as he had been responding to the context and the feedback received from the pupil. He stated that in a number of scenarios, it had been most expeditious to show them, as talking through what was required was time consuming and not particularly effective.

The panel noted that:

- Pupil D appeared to have no reason to fabricate the allegations;
- Pupil D's oral evidence was largely consistent with the witness statement she gave for this professional misconduct panel hearing, although there was no contemporaneous account within the School's investigation;
- Pupil D swore under oath as to the truth of her evidence;
- Pupil D reflected upon what she could and could not remember;
- Pupil D did not seek to exaggerate her evidence and accepted the possibility of the touching having been accidental, although acknowledged that it made her feel uncomfortable;
- Mr Thompson had accepted the possibility of having touched Pupil D's chest, albeit accidentally; and
- Mr Thompson had no step by step process that he followed in each demonstration.

In light of the above, the panel considered that it was more likely than not that Mr Thompson had touched Pupil B's chest area and/or breast in or around 17 November 2022.

For the same reasons as referred to in allegation 1b above, the panel considered that additional caution was required given the possibility of coming into contact with an intimate area of Pupil D's body. Pupil D did not remember Mr Thompson asking if he could adjust the sling. Mr Thompson failed to take any steps to mitigate the impact on Pupil D of his actions or to minimise the risk to himself of his actions being misconstrued. Whilst appreciating the limited time in which Mr Thompson had to demonstrate the

procedure, the panel did not consider this to be sufficient reason for not taking proper precautions when adjusting Pupil D's sling. The panel considered that it was inappropriate physical contact.

The panel found this allegation proven.

## **2. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1 above was:**

### **b. Demonstrated a lack of insight into the management guidance issued to you on or around 18 January 2019.**

Witness A gave evidence that, on or around 18 January 2019, she had had cause to provide professional guidance to Mr Thompson. She explained that the guidance she had given "centred upon Mr Thompson being more conscious of pupil's [sic] personal space." She stated that Mr Thompson is a tall man, and that she had suggested that it would be advisable for him to aim where possible to create some space between himself and pupils when discussing matters one to one. She stated that she gave an example of not sitting next to a student at a desk and instead to sit opposite them in order to be "mindful of a student's personal space and to avoid the risk of inadvertently causing discomfort". Witness A stated that Mr Thompson had said that he was grateful for the advice and she believed it to have been well-received.

In oral evidence, Witness A explained that she had spoken with Mr Thompson to deliver this advice on a Friday, as she had wanted to speak with him to reassure him before the weekend that the matter leading to the advice being given was not being taken further. She confirmed that she had made a note of the conversation but that Mr Thompson did not receive anything in writing.

The panel noted that this approach differed from that taken previously. On 29 June 2018, following a discussion with Mr Thompson, a letter was sent to him entitled "Letter of Professional Guidance" which was said to have been written "to provide advice and support, in relation to your management of students in the classroom".

The panel has seen Witness A's note of this conversation which recorded that the meeting took place on 18 January 2019 at 5:00pm and the matters discussed accorded with Witness A's description of the meeting.

In oral evidence, Mr Thompson stated that since the advice had been framed around his conduct in the classroom; he had not considered its application to his involvement in the [REDACTED] award scheme. Mr Thompson further stated that he would like to say that following the management advice he made changes to his conduct outside of the classroom, but that he had not done so. He stated that he was more conscious of his behaviour in the classroom to maintain distances with the pupils. It was apparent that Mr Thompson had distinguished his behaviour in the [REDACTED] award scheme sessions,

as he perceived it as being more akin to physical education or dance, rather than a classroom setting. He accepted that, in that context, he had not taken sufficient steps to protect either the pupils or himself during the [REDACTED] award scheme. Mr Thompson stated that he had not taken advice from Witness A regarding that setting as it had not occurred to him to do so. He stated that he now accepted that it would have been appropriate to seek that advice.

In light of the management advice given, the panel considered that Mr Thompson ought to have given consideration as to how such advice could be translated into his conduct outside of the classroom. The panel considered that Mr Thompson's conduct found proven at allegation 1b and 1d above demonstrated a lack of insight into the management advice given to him on or around 18 January 2019.

The panel found this allegation proven.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you not proved, for these reasons:

**Whilst employed as a teacher of mathematics at St Bernard's High School between 1 September 2015 and 21 April 2023:**

- 1. You engaged in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils, including by:**
  - c. touching Pupil C's bottom and/or squeezing Pupil C's bottom in or around May 2022;**

The allegations made by Pupil C against Mr Thompson came to light when a supply teacher overheard Pupil C say "it happened to me too at DofE and he touched me". After the lesson, the supply teacher subsequently reported this to Witness A on 9 December 2022.

Witness A spoke with Pupil C the following day. Witness A's note of this meeting states: "[Pupil C] informed me that during the DofE expedition last academic year, she was walking and had to stop as her shoe lace was undone. Mr Thompson stopped with her whilst she tied her shoe lace. [Pupil C] said the zip on the side of her bag was opened and she asked sir to zip it back up for her. She said Mr Thompson zipped the pocket up on the side of her bag, but then squeezed her bottom. I asked if she could show me what she meant by a squeeze and she showed this to me with her hand and where on her bottom. She was very clear that her bottom was squeezed. I asked her what then happened and she said Mr Thompson smiled at her."

The note also records that Witness A asked Pupil C had told anyone else, and Pupil C said that she had not, other than her mother. It also noted that Pupil C explained that she had not reported it [REDACTED].

Witness A contacted the police and made a note of a meeting she attended with Pupil C and a police officer. This note recorded that Pupil C told the police officer “during the DofE expedition last academic year, she was walking and had to stop as her shoe lace was undone. Mr Thompson stopped with her whilst she tied her shoe lace. [Pupil C] said the zip on the side of her bag was opened and she asked Sir to zip it back up for her. She said Mr Thompson zipped the pocket up on the side of her bag, but then squeezed her bottom.” The note records that Pupil C was asked where the pocket was for her water bottle, and Pupil D pointed towards the hip area. Pupil C confirmed that she had not told anyone at the time, but that she had since told her mother.

The note records that Pupil C then provided some additional information that Mr Thompson used to come over and sit next to her and look at her work and that other pupils had noticed Mr Thompson dropping pens in front of her, and that he would bend down to get them. She explained that this made her feel uncomfortable. The panel observed that it appeared some errors had been made in typing up this statement as it recorded that Pupil C said that some students use to say in Maths that he was “her favourite”, but went on to provide details that would have corresponded with Pupil C having said that she was Mr Thompson’s favourite.

Pupil C provided a witness statement for the present misconduct proceedings. She stated that Mr Thompson [REDACTED], and that she also interacted with him during the [REDACTED] award scheme which he supervised and in which she participated. Pupil C stated that she found Mr Thompson to be “creepy” and it was said by other members of her class that he “had a weird vibe”. She stated that he was often overly friendly and made comments which she found to be weird. She stated that he would stare at her skirt and tell her that it was short at the back, whereas, normally comments about skirt length would be made by female members of staff. She stated that, in class, she thought he touched people unnecessarily, placing his hand on arms and backs and being very close when he talked with people. She also described that [REDACTED], Mr Thompson would often touch her thighs during her maths lessons. She stated that he would kneel beside her desk and place her hands on his upper thigh and she would move her legs to push him away. She also described Mr Thompson dropping pencils in front of her table so they would go under her desk, and stand very close to her so that she was positioned near to his groin.

In contrast to Pupil C’s earlier statements, Pupil C provided a description of a further incident in or around [REDACTED]. She stated that she had been undertaking first aid training in advance of the [REDACTED] expedition. She stated that they had been learning how to apply slings, and that Mr Thompson had chosen to demonstrate on her despite having said “no” when he asked her.

She stated that during the demonstration, Mr Thompson placed his hand on her breast and cupped it with the palm of his hand. She stated that he had been “sneaky” about it

and she didn't think it had been seen by many people. Pupil C stated that she did not tell anyone at the time, as she felt "so uncomfortable but didn't know if I was overreacting."

In relation to the alleged incident referred to in allegation 1c Pupil C stated that this had occurred during their practice expedition on either the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022. She stated that Mr Thompson had chosen to be the group leader for her group and that they had been on a forest trail. She stated that she had stopped to do up her shoelace whilst the rest of the class went ahead. She stated that Mr Thompson remained behind with her and that they were the only people in the immediate area. She stated that as she was knelt down, Mr Thompson stood over her, very close. She stated that as she stood up, she tried to reach her water bottle, but could not as her bag was so bulky. She stated that she asked Mr Thompson to help her and he agreed. She stated that Mr Thompson reached for the water bottle but then felt him grab her bottom and squeezed it. She described it as "more than a brush" and that it did not feel "like it had been accidental". She explained that the water bottle was in a pouch towards the top of her bag near her shoulder and was not in proximity to her bottom.

Pupil C stated that it was only after Mr Thompson had been suspended in the November of 2022, that she had felt able to discuss what had happened with her new maths teacher.

Witness A confirmed that Pupil C remained in Mr Thompson's class following the alleged incidents until November 2022. Pupil C stated that she had not asked to be removed from Mr Thompson's class earlier as she had not been ready to speak about what had happened.

The panel noted that there were some changes to Pupil C's account over time. The panel understood that the human memory can be fallible. Pupil C was asked why she had not mentioned the incident regarding the application of the sling during either the School's investigation or on the occasion she met with the police as recorded by Witness A. She stated that was because those discussions had been about the incident that occurred during the practice expedition. The panel noted that Pupil C had, however, made comments regarding Mr Thompson's behaviour in class, so had felt able to talk about matters that had concerned her outside of the practice expedition.

In oral evidence, having been shown a photograph of a similar rucksack to the one Pupil C would have been wearing for the practice expedition, Pupil C confirmed that her water bottle had been in a pocket on the side of the bag, with the opening at the top for the water bottle to be lifted out. The panel noted that the pocket would not have been in the proximity of Pupil C's hip or bottom.

Mr Thompson gave evidence that he had, on one occasion, commented on the length of Pupil C's skirt, but that the way Pupil C had characterised that comment was "unfair".



Mr Thompson stated that he did not believe that Pupil C could have fallen significantly behind the rest of the group. He stated that would have been a safety issue and he did not remember asking the rest of the group to wait. He accepted that Pupil C may have decided to tie her shoe laces in a section of the route that twisted, but if he had noticed the group dispersing he would have intervened. He could not recall retrieving the water bottle from Pupil C's bag but accepted that it was possible he had done so if she had asked, as it was important to be well hydrated. He stated that if he had helped Pupil C with her water bottle, his hands would not have needed to have been anywhere near Pupil C's bottom, and that there was no inadvertent reason that a "grab" could have happened accidentally.

The panel noted that there had been some discussions in Pupil B's peer group after she had reported the incident and that Pupil B had stated that word had spread around the School and that what had happened was quite known to everyone particularly since Mr Thompson was no longer coming into the School. In those circumstances, the panel had to exercise caution.

The panel appreciated that a pupil ought to be able to rely upon a teacher to assist them with their water bottle without fear of being inappropriately touched. Nevertheless, on Pupil C's account she already had concerns regarding the propriety of Mr Thompson's behaviour towards her, and in those circumstances the panel considered that it would have been more likely that she would have asked a friend to assist with her water bottle. The panel noted that no interviews were conducted with any of the other members of the group that Pupil C was in for the practice expedition. They may have been able to confirm if Pupil C had become separated from the group at any time, if there had been the opportunity for the incident to have occurred; and of Pupil C's demeanour during and after the walk.

The panel noted that no interview was conducted with the teaching assistant who would have been present in the classroom from the time of the practice expedition until November 2022. They could have provided evidence of the interactions between Pupil C and Mr Thompson.

Similarly no statements were taken from fellow class members who could have commented regarding Mr Thompson's behaviour towards Pupil C in class. For example, on the occasion that Mr Thompson referred to having commented on the length of Pupil C's skirts, he stated that Pupil C had stayed behind with another member of the class who had been talking with another member of staff about improving her grade. Pupil C had been twirling around, asking how she looked. During this incident, on Mr Thompson's account there was another pupil and another member of staff present who could have been asked what had happened. Pupil C specifically stated that pupils in her class had noticed Mr Thompson's behaviour towards her, yet they were not asked to provide a statement, which would have enabled the panel to assess the extent to which Pupil C's evidence was corroborated.

On balance, the panel did not consider that sufficient evidence had been presented for it to find that it was more probable than not that the incident referred to in this allegation had occurred.

The panel found this allegation not proven.

**2. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1 above was:**

**a. Conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated;**

The panel considered whether Mr Thompson's conduct found proven at allegation 1b and 1d was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

The panel did not consider that the touching of Pupil B and Pupil D's chest area and/or breast was inherently sexual in the context of a demonstration of the application of a sling. The panel considered that a reasonable person would consider that because of the nature of the area being touched, the touching may be sexual. The panel therefore went on to consider whether it was sexual because of the circumstances of the touching or the purpose of it.

Pupil B's evidence was that Mr Thompson had placed his hand under the sling and placed the palm of his hand on her breast, that he had cupped her breast and that his hand remained there for 2 – 3 seconds before moving to her other breast and repeating the action. She stated that Mr Thompson was trying to make it look like he was tucking the sling but his hands remained on her breasts for too long.

The panel noted that Pupil B had not been taught by Mr Thompson previously and any interaction between them prior to this incident would have been incidental and there was no reason for Pupil B to have fabricated the allegation.

Nevertheless, the panel was concerned as to the possibility of conversations Pupil B had with other students immediately after the incident, and the following day having affected her perception of what had taken place. The panel noted that Pupil B spoke with Pupil A, Pupil E and Pupil F and explored with them their perception of the incident prior to reporting it.

The panel noted from Pupil B's student incident statement form completed the day after the incident, she referred to Witness E having asked her to move her arm when demonstrating the sling "because she can't touch us there (where our boobs are)", and noticed that Pupil B had a clear awareness that was an area not to be touched by a teacher.

The panel also noted that during the School's investigation an incident form was completed by another student, identified by the School as Student K who said she had been standing nearby, watching Mr Thompson demonstrate how to apply the sling to Pupil B and having "accidentally touched" her breasts. This student stated that "it was

clear that it was an accident and as well as that I don't think that he realised what he had done and no one said anything to him at the time about it". This student stated "ever since they were talking about it non-stop" and that what she saw was "just a tap". The student also stated that they had had Mr Thompson as a teacher before, and that "it's not something he would do." The panel was cautious as to the weight it placed upon this statement since it was hearsay and the panel had not had the opportunity to test the student's evidence.

With respect to the incident involving Pupil D, the panel noted that Pupil D explained in her witness statement that "As he was applying the sling he was tucking the bandage in under my arm and against my breast area. I recall that it was the palm of his hand that was touching my breast and that he was doing so for around 30 seconds to a minute. I am unable to recall whether his hand remained still or moved. I don't know whether the contact was intentional or accidental as part of tucking in the sling but I felt uncomfortable."

The panel noted that Pupil D had not come forward with any complaint against Mr Thompson. Instead, a friend disclosed concerns to a school councillor who raised the matter with the School.

In oral evidence, Pupil D provided a physical demonstration of what had occurred. During the demonstration, she held her arm in a low sling position. She stated that Mr Thompson was giving step by step instructions as he was putting the sling on her, and her concern was regarding the amount of time it took. Pupil D stated that at the time she had thought that what had happened was "weird" and that it should not have happened, but she did not think about it further other than making the occasional joke about it with her friends.

As referred to above, the panel was concerned that discussions between Pupil B and her friends had affected perceptions of what had taken place. A student present at the time of the incident involving Pupil B perceived the touch as accidental. Pupil D was not sufficiently certain whether the touch had been accidental or intentional to raise a concern at the time, nor did she do so at any point until her friend raised a concern and Pupil D was asked what had happened. Her friend's concern was raised after rumours had circulated within the School following the incident with Pupil B.

The panel was conscious that both Pupil B and Pupil D indicated that the touching went on for longer than momentarily. The panel considered that their perception of time may have been influenced by the discomfort they felt at the time of the incident, and because by the very nature of a demonstration, it would take longer than the application of a sling in an emergency situation.

There was no evidence of any build up to the incidents with Pupil B or Pupil D as might have been expected if Mr Thompson had been seeking to pursue a future sexual relationship. There was no evidence at all that Mr Thompson had obtained any sexual

gratification from either incident. The panel considered that it was more likely than not that the touch to both Pupil B and Pupil D had been incidental to the application of the slings in both cases. The panel did not dispute that Pupil B and Pupil D felt uncomfortable in this situation.

In the circumstances, the panel did not consider that there was sufficient evidence that it was more probable than not that Mr Thompson's purpose had been sexual for this allegation to be found proven. The panel did not find that Mr Thompson's conduct was of a sexual nature, nor that it was sexually motivated.

The panel found this allegation not proven.

### **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".

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Thompson was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- 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 Thompson in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

The panel considered that Mr Thompson was in breach of the obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

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

The panel also considered whether Mr Thompson'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 none of these offences were relevant.

The panel noted that there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be unacceptable professional misconduct. The panel considered that Mr Thompson ought to have been alive to the risks of inadvertently touching Pupil B and Pupil D's chest area. He ought to have realised that the management guidance issued to him was also applicable to his involvement in the School's [REDACTED] Award scheme provision. The panel considered that his disregard for these risks was serious.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Thompson 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 Thompson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Thompson'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 Thompson'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 Thompson 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 panel considered that the public's perception of a teacher could

potentially be damaged by Mr Thompson having engaged in physical contact with two students, disregarding the possibility of inadvertently touching their chest area and/or breast.

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Thompson'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.

There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given that Mr Thompson had acted inappropriately in failing to recognise the risk of inappropriate physical contact with Pupil B and Pupil D and failing to take steps to mitigate that risk.

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

The panel was of the view that a public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present.

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 Thompson in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and he

is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession. In the circumstances of this case, and particularly given that Mr Thompson's actions were not deliberate and there did not appear to be a risk of repetition, the panel considered that imposing a prohibition order would not strike the right balance between the rights of Mr Thompson and the public interest.

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. This was not a case in which Mr Thompson had sought to exploit his position of trust.

In view of the 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 Thompson.

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;
- 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); and
- violation of the rights of pupils.

The panel noted that Mr Thompson's behaviour had compromised the safeguarding of Pupil B and Pupil D and also recognised the uncomfortable impact on both pupils which led them to reflect upon and question Mr Thompson's motivation towards them. Given the panel's comments below, however, the panel did not consider there to be any continuing risk.

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 accepted Mr Thompson's evidence that his actions were not deliberate, but instead the inappropriate physical contact was accidental during his demonstration of applying the sling. The panel did not consider that Mr Thompson had deliberately failed to have regard to the management advice he had been given, but rather that he had

lacked the insight to extend that management advice to activities outside of the classroom. [REDACTED].

The panel noted that Mr Thompson had no awareness at the time of the impact of his actions or the discomfort he caused. The guidance he received in the context of delivering the [REDACTED] Award scheme was not directed towards addressing such risks.

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

There was no evidence that Mr Thompson had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector, save for his long service and his further commitment to the role by volunteering for the [REDACTED] Award scheme over a number of years.

The panel saw evidence that showed Mr Thompson had previously received management advice relating to his behaviour. He had received professional guidance on 29 June 2018 in relation to his management of students in the classroom and the management guidance issued on or around 18 January 2019 referred to in allegation 2.b. There was evidence that Mr Thompson had adhered to the professional guidance of 29 June 2018 as no further concerns were raised regarding his composure in the classroom. Similarly, Mr Thompson had adhered to the management guidance of 18 January 2019 in adjusting his conduct within the classroom. The issue was that he had failed to translate that guidance to guide his activities outside of the classroom.

Mr Thompson did not produce any statements attesting to his character or ability as a teacher. The panel was provided with two references from the time of Mr Thompson's application to the School, but did not place any weight on these since they were not recent and the referees had not had the opportunity to reflect on their references in light of the matters found proven.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Thompson had reflected carefully and at length as to what he could have done differently. He accepted that he had been blinkered in his approach to the management advice he received and focussed more on his conduct in the classroom than outside of the classroom. He explained that he should have been much more conscious of verbalising the demonstration and not taking for granted that the pupils would understand what he was doing. He recognised that he had been guilty of not taking the time to explain, and that important steps such as asking pupils for their permission had been missed. He also recognised that there were techniques that he ought to have adopted such as asking pupils to lift their arm to minimise the physical contact.



The panel noted that Mr Thompson had admitted to having made gross errors of judgement in his actions and that this had lead to a “great deal of distress in young and vulnerable lives”. He stated that he regretted that “none of the subsequent trauma can be undone, I believe that nothing I say at this point can mitigate the pain and anguish these students have undergone and hope only that they will, with time, be able to move on and any suffering will fade. The damage has been done, for which I am deeply sorry... I let down the students who had been placed in my trust and care...”

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the behaviour was inadvertent and the panel was satisfied there was no risk of repetition, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

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

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

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

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

In this case, the panel has also found some of the allegations not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Paul Thompson 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
- 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 Thompson involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher making inappropriate physical contact with pupils.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Thompson, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel makes this observation: "There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given that Mr Thompson had acted inappropriately in failing to recognise the risk of inappropriate physical contact with Pupil B and Pupil D and failing to take steps to mitigate that risk." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

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

"The panel was satisfied that Mr Thompson had reflected carefully and at length as to what he could have done differently. He accepted that he had been blinkered in his approach to the management advice he received and focussed more on his conduct in the classroom than outside of the classroom. He explained that he should have been much more conscious of verbalising the demonstration and not taking for granted that the pupils would understand what he was doing. He recognised that he had been guilty of not taking the time to explain, and that important steps such as asking pupils for their permission had been missed. He also recognised that there were techniques that he ought to have adopted such as asking pupils to lift their arm to minimise the physical contact.

The panel noted that Mr Thompson had admitted to having made gross errors of judgement in his actions and that this had lead to a "great deal of distress in young and vulnerable lives". He stated that he regretted that *"none of the subsequent trauma can be undone, I believe that nothing I say at this point can mitigate the pain and anguish these students have undergone and hope only that they will, with time, be able to move on and any suffering will fade. The damage has been done, for which I am deeply sorry... I let down the students who had been placed in my trust and care..."*

In my judgement, the insight and remorse demonstrated by Mr Thompson means that I agree with the panel's conclusion that there is a limited risk of the repetition of this behaviour. I have therefore given this element some weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observes that:

"The panel considered that the public's perception of a teacher could potentially be damaged by Mr Thompson having engaged in physical contact with two students, disregarding the possibility of inadvertently touching their chest area and/or breast."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher allowing himself to touch pupils inappropriately in this case, whatever the circumstances or intention, and the negative impact that such a finding may have on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an "ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen."

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of 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 Thompson himself. The panel records the following:

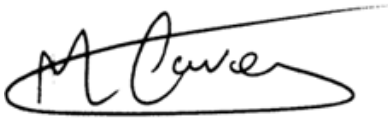
“There was no evidence that Mr Thompson had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector, save for his long service and his further commitment to the role by volunteering for the [REDACTED] Award scheme over a number of years.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the degree of insight and remorse demonstrated by Mr Thompson, and the evidence recorded of his appreciation of the harmful impact of his behaviour upon pupils. I have also leant heavily on the panel’s conclusions that the inappropriate physical contact was accidental and that Mr Thompson does not pose a continuing risk, as recorded here:

“The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the behaviour was inadvertent and the panel was satisfied there was no risk of repetition, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.”

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. While the misconduct found was undoubtedly serious, and all the more since Mr Thompson had previously received management guidance as to his behaviour, I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

**Decision maker: Marc Cavey**

**Date: 21 October 2025**

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