



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Anton Harder: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

December 2025

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

Teacher: Mr Anton Harder

Teacher ref number: 1062753

Teacher date of birth: 9 April 1988

TRA reference: 21802

Date of determination: 12 December 2025

Former employer: Wayland Academy, Thetford.

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 12 December 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Anton Harder.

The panel members were Mr Tom Snowdon (teacher panellist – in the chair), Dr Sian Evans (lay panellist) and Mrs Victoria Kelly (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Luisa Gibbons of Eversheds Sutherland (International) 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 Harder that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Harder provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Jordan Wilford or Mr Harder.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 26 September 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Harder was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that on 5 April 2023, he was convicted at Norwich Crown Court of:

1. 4 counts of sexual activity with a female aged 13 – 17, offender does not believe victim is over 18, abuse of position of trust, contrary to section 16(1)(e)(i) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Mr Harder admitted the allegation and that he was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of proceedings – pages 3 to 4

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 5 to 91

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 Harder on 16 May 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Harder for the allegation 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.

Mr Harder was employed as a lead professional [REDACTED] at Wayland Academy (“the Academy”) from 1 September 2011.

The principal of the Academy was informed on 21 September 2021, that Norfolk Police had received a complaint regarding an alleged sexual relationship between Mr Harder and a former student from the Academy. Mr Harder was arrested on 23 September 2021.

Mr Harder was referred to the TRA on 11 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:

On 5 April 2023, you were convicted at Norwich Crown Court of:

- 1. 4 counts of sexual activity with a female aged 13 – 17, offender does not believe victim is over 18, abuse of position of trust, contrary to section 16(1)(e)(i) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.**

In Mr Harder’s response to the notice of hearing dated 17 April 2025, he admitted this allegation. He also admitted this allegation in a statement of agreed facts signed by him on 16 May 2025.

The panel was provided with the certificate of conviction which confirmed that he was convicted on 1 February 2023 at Norwich Crown Court of the offences as set out above and sentenced on 5 April 2023 to 16 months’ imprisonment. He was required to register with the police for ten years, and a sexual harm prevention order was made also for ten years. He was ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £149. The panel noted that Mr Harder had pleaded guilty to the offences.

The panel noted that a PNC record corroborated the above details, save for referring to a date of conviction of 5 April 2023, rather than 1 February 2023.

The panel noted that there was a discrepancy between the certificate of conviction and the PNC record as to the date of conviction but considered that this was immaterial to the substance of the allegation.

The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction.

The panel received a police summary report. This stated that a report had been received on 20 September 2021 from a former pupil of the Academy that she had been having a sexual relationship with her [REDACTED] teacher, Mr Harder [REDACTED]. The report summarised that the victim had said that whilst attending the Academy, she had been [REDACTED] and was referred to the safeguarding team and specifically Mr Harder. She stated that he instigated the swapping of personal email addresses and private communications started between them, with Mr Harder emailing her first. When she was 16 years old, she stated that she performed oral sex on Mr Harder [REDACTED] and had sexual intercourse with him [REDACTED]. She alleged that this progressed to them having sexual intercourse on a regular basis with one another at his family home and on one occasion, at her family home.

The panel was not provided with the sentencing remarks so could not see the precise matters that were referred to in each count. However, the panel noted that there was a general correlation between the description of the offences and the allegations made to the police by the former pupil.

The panel found this allegation proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proved allegation amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence.

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 Harder in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Harder 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

- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including... the rule of law...and mutual respect...
- 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 noted that the individual's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting since he engaged in a sexual relationship with a pupil both inside and outside the school environment.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of the pupil with whom he engaged in a sexual relationship.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Harder's behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Harder's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

This was a case concerning an offence involving sexual activity which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel considered the offences committed by Mr Harder to be extremely serious.

The panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Harder's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession. The panel decided that the facts of the proved allegation amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, 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, safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given that Mr Harder had engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a pupil.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Harder 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 Harder was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Harder in the profession. There was no evidence provided of Mr Harder's teaching ability. In any event, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Harder in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he exploited his position of trust. According to the police report of the complaint made by the pupil, [REDACTED] and specifically to Mr Harder. The panel noted that Mr Harder attended designated safeguarding lead training [REDACTED].

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 Harder.

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;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- 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;
- ... or other deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues; and
- actions or behaviours that ...undermine... the rule of law...and mutual respect

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

There was evidence that Mr Harder's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Harder was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. The panel noted that the pupil had referred in her complaint to the police that Mr Harder had talked to her about [REDACTED].

However, there was no evidence before the panel of the impact of any health issues on Mr Harder's conduct.

There was no evidence provided that Mr Harder had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel saw evidence that showed Mr Harder was previously investigated following an alleged incident on 15 May 2019 whereby it was alleged that a student had witnessed him hugging a pupil. It was found that this was a minor lapse from acceptable standards of conduct and Mr Harder was issued with written advice as to what he should have done, and what he should do in those circumstances in the future. It was noted that the incident did not meet the threshold for a referral to the local authority designated officer ("LADO") or for a "standards setting" letter.

Mr Harder did not produce any testimonial statements attesting to his character or ability as a teacher.

The panel noted that Mr Harder pleaded guilty in the criminal proceedings and admitted the allegation in these professional conduct proceedings. He wrote to the TRA stating that he considered a prohibition order to be appropriate. There was no other evidence of any expression of remorse or insight before the panel.

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 Harder 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 Harder, given the seriousness of the offences in this case. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

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;

Mr Harder had been convicted of offences relating to such matters.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate. None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

There was insufficient evidence before the panel of insight or remorse that would indicate Mr Harder was sufficiently rehabilitated such that he would not pose a risk of repeating the conduct.

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 provision 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 a relevant conviction.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Harder 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
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including... the rule of law...and mutual respect...
- 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 Harder involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a teacher being convicted of offences which involved repeated sexual activity with a vulnerable pupil resulting in a custodial sentence.

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 a relevant conviction, 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 Harder, 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 offers the following observation:

"There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given that Mr Harder had engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a pupil."

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 noted that Mr Harder pleaded guilty in the criminal proceedings and admitted the allegation in these professional conduct proceedings. He wrote to the TRA stating that he considered a prohibition order to be appropriate. There was no other evidence of any expression of remorse or insight before the panel."

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

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

"The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Harder's behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher abusing his position of trust to pursue a sexual relationship with a pupil in this case and the very negative impact that such a finding is likely to have on the reputation of the profession.

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

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of a relevant conviction, 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 Harder himself. The panel notes that "Mr Harder did not produce any testimonial statements attesting to his character or ability as a teacher."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Harder 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 very serious nature of the misconduct found, the absence of evidence of full insight and/or remorse, the risk of repetition and the likely damage to the standing of the profession.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Harder 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, 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.

In doing so, it has referenced the Advice as follows:

“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;

Mr Harder had been convicted of offences relating to such matters.”

I have considered the panel’s concluding comments:

“There was insufficient evidence before the panel of insight or remorse that would indicate Mr Harder was sufficiently rehabilitated such that he would not pose a risk of repeating the conduct.

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 provision for a review period.”

In this case, factors mean that I agree with the panel that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These

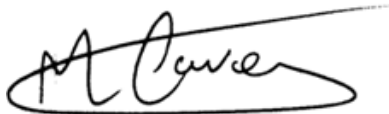
elements are the very serious nature of the misconduct found and the risk of repetition and harm to pupils in the future.

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

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

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 15 December 2025

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