



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Ian Shilling: Professional conduct panel 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 Ian Edward Shilling

**Teacher ref number:** 06/35619

**Teacher date of birth:** 8 June 1984

**TRA reference:** 19384

**Date of determination:** 10 December 2025

**Former employer:** Newlands Girl's' School, Berkshire (the "School")

## **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 1 to 10 December 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Shilling.

The panel members were Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Shabana Robertson (lay panellist) and Mrs Alexandra Burton (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Elizabeth Gilbert of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mrs Kiera Riddy of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mr Shilling was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public, save for parts which were in private, and was recorded.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 1 September 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Shilling was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as the Head of Music at Newlands Girls' School between September 2012 and 31 October 2020:

1. Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils, by:
  - a) Having one to one interactions with Pupil A and/or walking Pupil A back to her room alone on one or more occasions whilst on a residential trip in or around July 2019;
  - b) Engaging in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils, in that:
    - i) On or around 22 July 2019, he put his hands on Pupil A's hips in the swimming pool;
    - ii) On or around July 2019 he was in physical contact with Pupil A on a coach;
    - iii) In or around 2019-2020, he put his hand on the bottom of Pupil C;
  - c) Engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text messaging and/or via email with one or more pupils and/or former pupils, by:
    - (i) Having conversations using sexual language and/or sexual remarks with Pupil A;
    - (ii) Describing Pupil C as having "the hottest, sexiest body in the world" or using words to that effect;
    - (iii) Stating to Pupil C that "it is clear why men are turned on and driven wild by your looks. This one included" or using words to that effect;
    - (iv) Discussing aspects of his personal and/or sexual life;
    - (v) Sending messages containing kisses;
    - (vi) Sending messages containing hearts;
    - (vii) Sending messages containing emojis
  - d) Sending inappropriate and/or sexual letters and/or cards to one or more pupils and/or former pupils

- e) Sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including:
  - (i) Sending imagery (“gifs”) and/or photos of a penis and/or depiction of a penis to one or more pupils;
  - (ii) Sending photos of himself showing his bottom and/or penis to one or more pupils;
  - (iii) Sending photos of himself showing his chest;
  - (iv) Sending photos of himself wearing only underwear and/ or holding a French baguette in front of his underwear;
  - (v) An image of his tongue poking out;
  - (vi) Images and/or pseudo-images of females in a state of undress;
  - (vii) Photograph and or pseudo-photograph of his leg and or legs
- f) Encouraging one or more pupils and/or former pupils to send him photos of themselves without clothing
- g) Screenshotting photographs of pupils on one or more occasions;
- h) Being alone in a vehicle with one or more pupils on one or more occasions;
- i) Having contact with one or more pupils;
  - (i) Outside of school hours;
  - (ii) via social media and/or text message;
- j) Giving gifts to one or more pupils and/or one or more former pupils including one or more gifts as detailed in Schedule A;
- k) Engaging in inappropriate behaviour by making and/or using sexual innuendos and/or sexual imagery in class and/or on a class worksheet.
- l) Instructing one or more pupils not to tell anyone and/or show anyone about the messages and or photos and/or gifts they were receiving from him;

2. Failed to follow a management warning and/ or instructions and/ or demonstrate insight into previous concerns reported in respect of his conduct towards pupils, in particular, his conduct at allegation 1.a to 1.l continued after:

- a) Concerns were raised by one or more staff members

- b) He was spoken to on or around 12 July 2019 and/or 22 July 2019 due to concerns with blurring of boundaries and/or physical contact and/or perception of others
- c) He was spoken to during the conversation in July 2019 above about use of mobile phones and having contact details for students

3. Mr Shilling's behaviour as may be found proven at allegation 1 above was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

4. Mr Shilling's conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1.1 was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

#### Schedule A

- i) Food
- ii) Chocolates
- iii) Coffee and/or tea
- iv) Placemats
- v) Spoon
- vi) Everlasting rose and/or glass rose
- vii) Flowers
- viii) Vase
- ix) Earrings
- x) Towel with words to the effect of "to dry you out of your usual wet state"
- xi) Bottle openers and/or penis shaped bottle openers and/or penis shaped wine stopper
- xii) Penis shaped pastas
- xiii) A thong and/or underwear with words to the effect of "kiss me under the mistletoe"
- xiv) Underwear
- xv) Photo frame with pictures of one or more pupil
- xvi) A ruler with words to the effect of "6 inches is [a pupil's] ideal length" and/or "to make sure those skirts aren't too long"

- xvii) Glow in the dark condoms and/or condoms
- xviii) Champagne
- xix) Wine
- xx) Personalised wine glass and/or wine glass
- xxi) Lord of the Ring's candle holder and/or a candle holder
- xxii) Lingerie and/or lingerie style nurse's outfit
- xxiii) Theatre tickets
- xxiv) Door sign with words to the effect of "do not enter, frantic fingering and talented tonguing in progress"
- xxv) Wooden recorder and/or wind instrument with words to the effect of "blow and tug gently"
- xxvi) Harry Potter bookmarks
- xxvii) Stationary
- xxviii) Tea towels
- xxix) T-shirts
- xxx) Puppets accompanied with a letter stating words to the effect of "some [Pupil A] puppets that can be regularly fingered at your leisure and convenience – 1 on the thumb and 1 on the fourth finger maybe"
- xxxi) Jewellery

Mr Shilling admitted allegations 1(d), 1(e), 1(g), 1(i), 1(j), 1(k), 1(l), 2 and 4 in full. Mr Shilling admitted allegations 1(a), 1(c), 1(h) and 3 in part. Mr Shilling denied allegations 1(b) and 1(f).

Mr Shilling accepted that his admitted conduct constituted unacceptable professional conduct and 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: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 7 to 44

Section 2: TRA witness statements – pages 46 to 207

Section 3: TRA documents – pages 210 to 495

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 497 to 539

The panel also received an updated anonymised pupil list, and copies of emails between Mr Shilling, the TRA and the presenting officer's firm which were relevant to the presenting officer's application to proceed in Mr Shilling's absence.

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").

## **Witnesses**

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

- Pupil A (former pupil at the School)
- Pupil C (former pupil at the School)
- Pupil D (former pupil at the School)
- Pupil E (former pupil at the School)
- Witness A [REDACTED]
- Witness B [REDACTED]
- Witness C [REDACTED]

The panel did not hear oral evidence from Mr Shilling as he was not in attendance.

## **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 Shilling was employed as the Head of Music at the School between 1 September 2012 and 31 October 2020.

Mr Shilling was referred to the TRA on 29 October 2020.

Mr Shilling signed a Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts on 11 November 2025.

## **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:

**1. You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils, by:**

**a) Having one to one interactions with Pupil A and/or walking Pupil A back to her room alone on one or more occasions whilst on a residential trip in or around July 2019;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to having one to one interactions with Pupil A and walking Pupil A back to her room alone on one or more occasions whilst on a residential trip in or around July 2019. Mr Shilling denied that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(a).

In a written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that during a School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019, he was “sitting with other staff members and sixth form students on the other side of the pool opposite the accommodation block” and “his presence had been requested by two other members of staff to go and support with two ongoing issues that night in two separate rooms”. Mr Shilling further stated that he “walked Pupil A back towards the accommodation block in full view of the staff and students talking to cheer her up” as she was “tearful [REDACTED]”

Pupil A stated in her written statement that, whilst on a School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019, Mr Shilling had “walked [her] back to [her] hotel room”. When questioned by the panel in oral evidence, Pupil A stated that she and Mr Shilling were not alone when he walked her back to her room one evening on the trip as another pupil was also present.

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that she and Mr Shilling were alone one morning during the School trip, as she had woken up early to “see the sunrise which was at about 5am” and Mr Shilling had joined her. Pupil A further stated in her oral evidence that she went into Mr Shilling’s room that morning, as Mr Shilling had a gift to give her. Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that she and Mr Shilling were alone in his room during this time for about “ten to fifteen minutes” when he gave her a gift, as it was early in the morning and “nobody was awake”. Pupil A further stated in her oral evidence that she felt “uncomfortable” during this time.

Witness A stated in his written statement and oral evidence that he attended a [REDACTED] with the School in July 2019, that Mr Shilling had organised. Witness A further stated in his written statement that during this trip, Mr Shilling would “sit with Pupil A, away from everyone else” and at the time, Witness A “thought [Mr Shilling] may have just been supporting her, as she could get quite emotional”.

Witness A further stated in his written statement that on one evening of the trip, “staff members were sat together by the pool chatting and having a debrief session” but Mr Shilling and Pupil A were “sat at one end of the table and were engaged in a private conversation for most of the time”. Witness A stated in his oral evidence that he saw Mr Shilling walk Pupil A towards the accommodation.

Witness B stated in her written statement that there were “several incidents that caused me great concern” during the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019 as Mr Shilling was “spending a lot of alone time with Pupil A” having “intense conversations, where they would sit facing each other, in very close proximity”. Witness B further stated in her written statement that, as a teacher, she would “not sit with a pupil 1:1 due to safeguarding”.

Witness B also stated in her written statement that she recalled that Mr Shilling walked Pupil A “back to her hotel room” one evening and there was “no need for him to go with her” as it was “not a far walk”. When questioned by the panel in oral evidence, Witness B stated that it was an assumption that Mr Shilling and Pupil A walked back to her hotel room as it was the end of the evening and that was the direction they walked in, but she did not follow where they went.

The panel considered that the evidence was consistent about Mr Shilling and Pupil A engaging in one on one conversations with each other during the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019, as this was admitted by Mr Shilling and corroborated by Pupil A, Witness A and Witness B.

Whilst there was corroborating evidence from Witness A and Witness B that Mr Shilling walked Pupil A back to her hotel room during an evening on the School [REDACTED] trip in 2019, neither of them followed and therefore had assumed that they were walking towards the accommodation. Pupil A’s evidence was that another pupil was also in their presence when Mr Shilling walked her back to her hotel room that evening. As such, the panel was not satisfied on the evidence that Mr Shilling had walked Pupil A back to her room alone, as Pupil A herself said that this was not the case and the other witnesses stated that they relied on an assumption.

The panel determined that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries by having one to one interactions with Pupil A during the School’s trip to [REDACTED] in July 2019, as this was repeated behaviour that concerned his colleagues and was unrelated to educational matters. The panel considered that Mr

Shilling was an experienced teacher and would have been aware of the requirement to have a level of separation with pupils to avoid any inference of impropriety.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(a) proven.

**b) Engaging in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils, in that:**

**i) On or around 22 July 2019, you put your hands on Pupil A's hips in the swimming pool;**

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that “a lot of physical contact” occurred on the School trip in July 2019 as Mr Shilling was very “physical” and lots of “hand touching” or “waist touching” happened “multiple times a day”. Pupil A further stated in her oral evidence that she had “never received any physical touch from any other teacher”.

Pupil A stated in oral evidence that she was in the pool at the same time as Mr Shilling during the School trip in July 2019 as a few staff and pupils were playing volleyball. Pupil A recalled that she wore a bikini in the pool and Mr Shilling was behind her and “brushed against” her side by tapping her waist and rib area.

Witness A stated in his oral evidence and witness statement that he saw Mr Shilling “place his hands on Pupil A’s hips” whilst they were in the pool facilities in the hotel during the School trip in [REDACTED] and that it “did not seem accidental”. Witness A stated in his written statement that he recalled being next to Witness B when this happened and they “both looked at each other signalling that something felt off”. In his oral evidence, Witness A also recalled that Pupil A was wearing a bikini at the time.

Witness B stated in her written statement that she “saw Mr Shilling with his hand on Pupil A’s hips” as he was “stood behind her in the pool and kept his hands there for approximately ten seconds”. Witness B further stated in her written statement that she and Witness A “gave each other a look” to “acknowledge” what they saw and that it was “inappropriate”.

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling denied engaging in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils.

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated “the incident in the swimming pool did not happen”. Mr Shilling further stated that he “was in the swimming pool only once with the student in question” and “there were also the other 99 students from our school around, plus the other 15 members of staff plus all the other students and staff from other schools staying at the hotel” and “to think that [he] would do something like this in front of so many potential witnesses in broad daylight or do it and get away with it with no-one noticing is not credible”.

The panel considered Witness C exhibit to her written statement to the TRA, which contained a note of her meeting with Mr Shilling dated 22 July 2019 at 11:30am, which was two days after the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019 had concluded. The panel noted that Witness C questioned Mr Shilling regarding a potential incident in the pool during the School trip, whereby Mr Shilling put his hands on Pupil A's hips, and Mr Shilling responded to say he could "not recall" the incident but accepted that they were in the pool at the same time.

The panel was satisfied on the corroborating evidence of Pupil A, Witness A, and Witness B that Mr Shilling touched Pupil A's waist/hip area whilst they were both in the pool during the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019.

The panel considered the School's staff code of conduct which was exhibited to Witness C written statement. The panel noted the code of conduct said that physical contact with pupils "should be avoided unless within the guidance of the Physical Intervention Policy and the Behaviour Policy".

Witness A, Witness B and Witness C all stated in their oral evidence that physical contact between a teacher and a pupil was not acceptable unless in exceptional circumstances. In particular, Witness A stated that, as a male teacher, he was very aware to avoid any physical contact with pupils to prevent any misinterpretation of his actions in an all-girls school.

The panel considered that any physical contact between a teacher and a student was inappropriate unless there was a good reason for doing so, such as if a pupil required physical intervention to stop them from drowning. The panel considered that Mr Shilling's physical contact with Pupil A in the pool was inappropriate as there was no good reason for Mr Shilling to touch Pupil A's waist, particularly as she was in a bikini and this was skin on skin contact.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(b)(i) proven.

**ii) On or around July 2019 you were in physical contact with Pupil A on a coach;**

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling held her hand and rested his hand on top of hers whilst they were on the coach travelling to the School trip to [REDACTED]. Pupil A stated that she sat in a seat behind Mr Shilling, and Mr Shilling's hand was "between the gap in the seats" to enable their hands to touch as they were engaged in a conversation and this "was not a one off". In her oral evidence, Pupil A stated that she and Mr Shilling never sat next to each other whilst on the coach.

Witness B stated in her written statement that she went to check on the pupils in the upper deck of the coach on the journey to [REDACTED] and saw Mr Shilling and Pupil A were sat "one in front of the other" and "were holding hands though the gaps of the seat".

Witness B further stated that "Mr Shilling chose to sit upstairs with the pupils" whilst the other staff members "sat downstairs" but she did not "think much of this" as she "thought he just wanted to have a closer watch over the pupils".

Witness A stated that they travelled via coach to [REDACTED] for the School trip, which was a double decker coach. Witness A further stated that "staff members had a set base downstairs apart from Mr Shilling who sat upstairs" as Mr Shilling expressed that "it was easier for him to communicate with the students if he sat upstairs" and Witness A "thought it was reasonable" at the time. Witness A also stated that staff members "checked on students during the journey to deal with any home sickness or motion sickness" and it was relayed to Witness A that Mr Shilling was "sitting with and/or near to Pupil A" and that it "looked like they were holding hands and that Pupil A was resting on Mr Shilling's shoulders".

Pupil C stated in her written statement that she was sat at the front of the coach on the journey to [REDACTED] and Mr Shilling was sat behind them with Pupil A. Pupil C recalled during her oral evidence that she saw Pupil A and Mr Shilling resting their heads on each other.

Pupil D stated in her written statement that Pupil A was "snuggling with Mr Shilling" on the coach journey to [REDACTED]. Pupil D further stated that "Mr Shilling was upstairs with the pupils whilst all the other teachers were downstairs" and Mr Shilling sat next to Pupil A. Pupil D stated that she was sat "right in front of them" and whenever she turned around, could "see them being close to each other".

The panel noted that Pupil C was the only witness to Pupil A and Mr Shilling resting their heads on each other and Pupil D was the only witness to Mr Shilling and Pupil A "snuggling". As such, the panel was not satisfied that this type of physical contact occurred on the coach, particularly as Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that she never sat next to Mr Shilling which would make this type of physical contact very unlikely.

The panel was satisfied that Pupil A and Mr Shilling sat one in front of the other and had held hands during the coach journey to [REDACTED], as this was supported by Pupil A and Witness B evidence. The fact that Pupil A and Mr Shilling were sat close by was also corroborated by Pupil C and Pupil D.

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling denied engaging in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils.

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he "sat alone on the coach for the majority of the trip" and "did not have physical contact with any pupil at any time on the coach" and physical contact with Pupil A "did not happen".

In his written statement dated 2 November 2025, Mr Shilling stated that this allegation was "unsupported by any other witness on the coach of which there were 60 including

other staff members" and Pupil A has been interviewed "around a dozen times by the [School], the police and the TRA and had never raised the suggestion that she was physically touched by me until her final statement" on 21 February 2025.

The panel acknowledged that Pupil A did not refer to Mr Shilling engaging in physical contact with her on the coach in her statement to the police on 22 May 2021 and stated that she did not "remember too much of the tour" because she was [REDACTED]. The panel considered that the absence of Pupil A referencing this specific incident of physical contact in an earlier statement did not mean that the incident did not happen, particularly as Pupil A confirmed that she was [REDACTED]. The panel noted that in her oral evidence, Pupil A was certain that she held hands with Mr Shilling through the gap in the seats and at no point sat next to him.

The panel was satisfied on the corroborating evidence of Pupil A and (Witness B) that Mr Shilling held Pupil A's hand during a coach journey to [REDACTED] for a School trip.

As referred to in allegation 1(b)(i), the panel considered that any physical contact between a teacher and a student was inappropriate unless there was a good reason for doing so. The panel considered that Mr Shilling's physical contact with Pupil A on the coach was inappropriate as there was no good reason for Mr Shilling to hold Pupil A's hand.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(b)(ii) proven.

**iii) In or around 2019-2020, you put your hand on the bottom of Pupil C;**

Pupil C stated in her written statement that "the music class had a group picture taken" during the last day of physical attendance before the COVID lockdown "in or around March 2020". Pupil C further stated that "there were approximately 4 students and 2 teachers, including Mr Shilling" and she "was stood next to him" when he "put his hands behind [her] back" and then she felt it "on or just above [her] bottom". The panel noted this was consistent with Pupil C's written statement to the police dated 3 July 2020, within which she stated that Mr Shilling's "hand had moved from where it was on the middle of [her] back to the top part of [her] bottom/lower back".

When questioned by the panel in oral evidence, Pupil C demonstrated to the panel where Mr Shilling placed his hand and described this as being on her "upper bottom" and "lower back" area, but that this was not her "whole bottom" or a grabbing action, it was simply placed there whilst they had a photograph taken.

Pupil D stated in her written statement to the TRA that she remembered Pupil C telling her on the last day of School that Mr Shilling had "touched her bottom" when they were taking a class photograph. The panel noted that this was consistent with Pupil D's written statement to the police dated 8 July 2020 in which she said that "Pupil C said on the last day of School" that she had felt Mr Shilling's "hand on her bottom".

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling denied engaging in inappropriate physical contact with one or more pupils.

In a written statement dated 8 October 2023, Mr Shilling stated that “on the final day of term there were many photos taken with Year 11, 12 and 13 students” and “all were in public witnessed by other students/staff and photography taken by other students”. Mr Shilling further stated that he has “never in public or in private sexually touched or even accidentally touched anyone’s bottom without their consent let alone this pupil’s on this day in front of dozens of witnesses” and “the alleged touching during a photograph never happened”. The panel was satisfied on the evidence of Pupil D that Pupil C had made a contemporaneous report that Mr Shilling had placed his hand on Pupil C’s lower back and upper bottom area whilst they had a class photograph in March 2020. The panel considered that Pupil C has remained consistent in her account of this incident. The panel considered Pupil C’s evidence to be credible.

The panel considered the School’s staff code of conduct which was exhibited to [REDACTED] written statement. The panel noted the code of conduct said that physical contact with pupils “should be avoided unless within the guidance of the Physical Intervention Policy and the Behaviour Policy”.

As referred to in allegation 1(b)(i) and 1(b)(ii), the panel considered that any physical contact between a teacher and a student was inappropriate unless there was a good reason for doing so. The panel considered that Mr Shilling’s physical contact with Pupil C was inappropriate as there was no good reason to touch Pupil C’s lower back and upper bottom area whilst having their photograph taken. Mr Shilling could and should have kept his hand to himself.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(b)(iii) proven.

**c) Engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text messaging and/or via email with one or more pupils and/or former pupils, by:**

**(i) Having conversations using sexual language and/or sexual remarks with Pupil A;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text message and/or via email with one or more pupils by having conversations using sexual language and/or sexual remarks with Pupil A. Mr Shilling further admitted that that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour as admitted at allegation 1(c)(i).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling overheard her conversation with a friend which involved “some sexual humour” and laughed alongside

them. From this point onwards, Pupil A stated that she believed Mr Shilling used this as a “green flag” and started using “sexual language and sexual innuendos when communicating with [her]”. Pupil A further stated that Mr Shilling would “openly and shamelessly use more sexually profound language” and any conversation he could “manipulate” he would find a way of “making it sexual”. Pupil A further outlined that Mr Shilling even “resorted to using sexualised language within school email” and “no other teacher would have sent the emails he did”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling would “share sexual jokes or innuendos” when she would “hang out” with Mr Shilling. Pupil A further stated that she recalled some jokes related to “how wearing protection is like having a helmet on” and that he was “referring to wearing condoms”. Pupil A further stated that she recalled a game with Mr Shilling where “he had to put money in a jar every time he made an inappropriate joke or comment”.

The panel considered an exhibit to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA which included an email from Mr Shilling to Pupil A. The panel noted that Mr Shilling stated the following under a title “The limerick...”:

“It’s only girls and lines that make [Pupil A] wet

But she once paid me a sexual compliment I cannot forget

Although we know she struggles with size

Imagine my delighted surprise

When she compared me to a French bread baguette....!!”

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling would send her “sexual jokes, limericks, memes”. The panel considered an exhibit to Pupil A’s written statement which included a copy of an email from Mr Shilling to Pupil A which included a sexual limerick.

In light of the evidence of Pupil A and Mr Shilling, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling had conversations using sexual language and sexual remarks with Pupil A in person and by email. The panel considered the discussions to be inappropriate as a teacher should not be engaging in conversations of a sexual nature with a pupil, particularly given the imbalance in power dynamics.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(c)(i) proven.

**(ii) Describing Pupil C as having “the hottest, sexiest body in the world” or using words to that effect;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text message and/or via email with one or more pupils by describing Pupil C as having “the hottest, sexiest body in the world”. Mr Shilling further admitted that that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour as admitted at allegation 1(c)(ii).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he “did use some emotive language when talking to the pupils” and at “various points both discussed their concerns over their looks and body” and he “regrettably chose to use overly positive language to describe their looks and body and did use some inappropriate language to convey this pointing out that the world saw them differently”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil C stated that Mr Shilling would compliment her and write messages such as “you do have a stunningly perfectly face and the hottest, sexiest body in the world”.

The panel considered a copy of the above mentioned message, which was included in an exhibit to Pupil C’s written statement to the TRA. The panel was satisfied that the message reflected what was described by Pupil C. The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Shilling sent Pupil C the message set out in the allegation. The panel considered this message to Pupil C to be inappropriate as it implied that Mr Shilling was sexually attracted to her.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(c)(ii) proven.

**(iii) Stating to Pupil C that “it is clear why men are turned on and driven wild by your looks. This one included” or using words to that effect;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text message and/or via email with one or more pupils by stating to Pupil C that “it is clear why men are turned on and driven wild by your looks. This one included”. Mr Shilling further admitted that that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour as admitted at allegation 1(c)(iii).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he “did use some emotive language when talking to the pupils” and at “various points both discussed their concerns over their looks and body” and he “regrettably chose to use overly positive language to describe their looks and body and did use some inappropriate language to convey this pointing out that the world saw them differently”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil C stated that Mr Shilling would compliment her and write messages such as “It is clear why men are turned on and driven wild by your looks. This one included ...Love you lots always sexy”.

The panel considered a copy of the above mentioned message, which was included in an exhibit to Pupil C's written statement to the TRA. The panel was satisfied that the message reflected what was described by Pupil C. The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent Pupil C the message set out in the allegation. The panel considered this message to Pupil C to be inappropriate as Mr Shilling was suggesting that he was sexually attracted to her.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(c)(iii) proven.

**(iv) Discussing aspects of your personal and/or sexual life;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text message and/or via email with one or more pupils by discussing aspects of his personal life, but denied he had discussed his sexual life. Mr Shilling further admitted that that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour as admitted at allegation 1(c)(iv).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he had only ever "discussed [his] sex life" with his "[REDACTED] at [his] [REDACTED]" when they were "going through [REDACTED] a few years later" but "would never have discussed that sex life with anyone else, let alone a pupil".

Pupil A stated in her written statement to the TRA, that Mr Shilling would "share parts of his personal life" with her, for example, he would tell her "about his [REDACTED], what he did on the weekend, what he had for dinner" and he later stated that "[REDACTED].

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling would regularly discuss his past relationships with her, and gave an example that Mr Shilling had shared the age that he first had sex.

Pupil B stated in her written statement to the TRA that Mr Shilling "told [her] intimate secrets about his personal life", including "his past and present sex life, his sexuality". Pupil C stated her written statement to the TRA that she was aware that Mr Shilling told Pupil B that [REDACTED] and "that he did not know what to do".

The panel considered an exhibit to Pupil C's written statement to the TRA, which showed messages between Mr Shilling and Pupil C on social media. The panel noted that Mr Shilling had sent Pupil C a picture of [REDACTED].

The panel acknowledged that Pupil B's written statement was hearsay evidence that the panel decided to admit in a case management hearing. However, the panel was satisfied that Pupil B's evidence was consistent with Pupil A and Pupil C, in regards to the type of information that Mr Shilling would discuss with them. The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling discussed matters of his personal life with Pupil A and Pupil C and had discussed

matters of his sexual life with Pupil A and Pupil B. The panel was satisfied that these discussions took place in person, by email, by text and by social media. The panel considered that these discussions were inappropriate in a teacher and a pupil relationship.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(c)(iv) proven.

- (v) Sending messages containing kisses;**
- (vi) Sending messages containing hearts;**
- (vii) Sending messages containing emojis**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted engaging in inappropriate discussions in person and/or on social media and/or via text message and/or via email with one or more pupils by sending messages containing kisses, hearts and emojis. Mr Shilling further admitted that that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour as admitted at allegation 1(c)(iii).

Pupil A stated in her written statement to the police that during the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019, Mr Shilling would text her “putting kisses (“xxx”) at the end of his messages”. To that end, the panel considered an exhibit to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA, which showed Mr Shilling sending Pupil A a text message saying “love you always” followed by two kisses.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil C stated that Mr Shilling “had been messaging [her] with hearts” and “kisses”. The panel also considered an exhibit to Pupil C’s written statement to the TRA, which included copies of correspondence between Pupil C and Mr Shilling. The panel noted that Mr Shilling sent Pupil C messages on social media which included kisses, hearts and emojis, on a number of occasions. The panel noted the following examples:

- On 15 May 2020, Mr Shilling said “Best wishes always gorgeous amazing girl” followed by three loving facial expression emojis and five kisses;
- On 19 May 2020, Mr Shilling said “Hope you, your beautifully stunning face and your sexy body are enjoying tanning in this lovely weather again” followed by two emojis displaying a heart eye facial reaction; and
- On 19 May 2020, Mr Shilling said “Stay special gorgeous girl” followed by three kisses and four hearts.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil D stated that she “started to receive direct messages” from Mr Shilling from 31 March 2020 up until 26 February 2021 and he

“would always put hearts and winky faces as emojis on the messages which [she] thought was a bit strange”.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling “put love hearts within his messages and love heart face emoji's”. To that end, the panel considered a copy of an email exhibited to Pupil E's written statement to the TRA which showed that Mr Shilling signed off his email by saying “best wishes and all my love always” followed by two kisses.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent numerous messages with kisses to Pupil A, Pupil C and Pupil E. The panel was also satisfied that Mr Shilling sent numerous messages with hearts and emojis to Pupil C, Pupil D and Pupil E. The panel considered that these messages were inappropriate as hearts, kisses and emojis are used to show love and affection which should not be displayed by a teacher towards a pupil.

The panel therefore found allegations 1(c)(v), 1(c)(vi) and 1(c)(vii).

**d) Sending inappropriate and/or sexual letters and/or cards to one or more pupils and/or former pupils**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate and/or sexual letters and/or cards to one or more pupils and/or former pupils. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(d).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling “wrote and sent [her] an abundance of letters and cards” and they all consisted of “sexual language, sexual hidden meanings and innuendos”. Pupil A further stated that one card Mr Shilling sent her said “I'm hoping your bird is moist this year” and he would sign his cards off with “all my love always”.

Pupil E stated in her written statement to the police, that Mr Shilling had sent her a “hand written letter in December 2018” which was sent with a thong.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling sent her the following:

- A birthday card which included seven pictures of her on the front from her social media and Mr Shilling wrote words to the effect of “you've developed into a wonderful young lady in all respects”. Pupil E stated in her oral evidence that the pictures were taken from her Instagram;
- A card around Christmas in 2018, in which Mr Shilling wrote “you are the most amazingly wonderful and beautiful young lady.. please accept the few gifts I have assembled” and the gifts included jewellery and underwear;

- A letter where Mr Shilling writes “your smile and laugh brightens my day and can light up a room” and lists ten gifts which she received under a heading titled “uni [sic] starter pack”; and
- A Valentine’s Day card in February 2020 which said “love is all you need (oh and sex and biscuits)” on the front, alongside some gifts. Pupil E exhibited a scan of this card in which Mr Shilling said “a girl deserves flowers and an orgasm every day” and “as you are such a wonderful girl you deserve these as a minimum. However … clearly I’ve failed on this front!”.

The panel considered copies of each of the above letters and cards which were exhibited to Pupil E’s written statement to the TRA. The panel was satisfied that the letters and cards were as described by Pupil E in her statement.

The panel was satisfied on the corroborating evidence of Pupil A and Pupil E, as well as the contemporaneous documents, that Mr Shilling sent inappropriate and sexual letters and cards to Pupil A and Pupil E. The panel considered the letters and cards were a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries as a teacher should not be engaging in correspondence of a sexual nature with a pupil which is unrelated to educational matters. The panel was particularly concerned that Mr Shilling had sent a Valentine’s Day card to Pupil E on Valentine’s Day which referenced sexual pleasure, on a day associated with romantic relationships.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(d) proven.

**e) Sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including**

**(i) Sending imagery (“gifs”) and/or photos of a penis and/or depiction of a penis to one or more pupils;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including sending imagery (“gifs”) and/or photographs of a penis and/or depiction of a penis to one or more pupils. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(i).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he “sent one gif to Pupil C” that had an erection connotation and this was “part of a joke conversation [they] were having” but he “did not send any other gifs of this style again”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil C stated that Mr Shilling sent her “a photograph of [herself], accompanied by an animated imagery (“gif”) of an erection”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling sent her photographs of a sexual nature, such as “a drawing of a penis” and “a penis shaped cactus”.

The panel considered copies of messages pictures sent to Pupil E which corresponded with Pupil E’s description in her written statement. The panel noted the following:

- Mr Shilling sent Pupil E a picture of an egg which had a drawing of a penis on it;
- Mr Shilling sent Pupil E a picture of a cactus which resembled a penis; and
- Mr Shilling sent Pupil E a picture of pancakes, one of which resembled a penis.

In light of the above evidence, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent photographs which depicted a penis to Pupil C and Pupil E. The panel considered this to be a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil C and Pupil E, as the photographs were sexual in nature and unrelated to their education.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(i) proven.

**(ii) Sending photos of yourself showing your bottom and/or penis to one or more pupils;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending photographs of himself showing his bottom to one or more pupils, but denied he sent photographs of his penis. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(ii).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he “sent one picture from behind [him] to one pupil” with the aim of showing his “suntan progress”. Mr Shilling stated that “after a few trial shots” he “believed he had sent a picture with [his] behind modesty covered by the sunlight” but he accepted that “however successful [his] photography skills and angles were this was completely wrong, inappropriate and was not solicited by the pupil”. Additionally, Mr Shilling stated that he had a message from the pupil “stating that unfortunately unknown to [him] at the time” that the reflection of his front was caught in a mirror in the photograph so Mr Shilling “immediately deleted the picture from our chat thread without viewing it” and “apologised wholeheartedly and unreservedly if this was the case”.

The panel considered a copy of messages between Mr Shilling and Pupil E, which was exhibited to Pupil E’s written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling sent Pupil E a photograph of himself in which he is facing away from the camera and showing his bottom.

In her written statement, Pupil B stated that Mr Shilling sent her “completely inappropriate images, including a nude photo” and in this she could “see his bum and his penis”. The

panel noted that Pupil B's written statement was hearsay evidence that had been admitted by the panel at the case management hearing. As such, the panel went on to consider whether this evidence was demonstrably reliable.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil D stated that Pupil B received a photograph of Mr Shilling "fully naked", and she was aware of this because Pupil B sent it to Pupil C who then showed the picture to Pupil D. Pupil D further stated that she could see Mr Shilling's bottom and his penis from "the reflection of the mirror in front of him".

The panel considered the description from each of Mr Shilling, Pupil B, Pupil C and Pupil D to be consistent regarding how Mr Shilling was positioned in a photograph with mirrors. Whilst Mr Shilling denied sending a picture of his penis, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent Pupil B a picture which showed his bottom and his penis. Additionally, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent Pupil E a picture of his bottom, as they had seen a copy of this in evidence which was supported by Mr Shilling and Pupil E's written evidence.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries by sending pupils a picture of his bottom and his penis, as they are explicit and inappropriate pictures which have sexual connotations and should not form part of a teacher and pupil relationship.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(ii) proven.

### **(iii) Sending photos of yourself showing your chest;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including sending photographs of himself showing his chest. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(iii).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated Mr Shilling sent her "a picture of himself, bare chested in only his underpants". This was stated again in Pupil A's written statement to the TRA, in which Pupil A outlined that Mr Shilling would send her "pictures of his body" which included "his bare chest".

The panel considered text messages which were exhibited to Pupil A's written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling messaged Pupil A to say "whose sunburn is is [sic] worse – mine or [REDACTED]...?!!" followed by a picture of Mr Shilling's body from the waist up, but cut off at the neck in which he was not wearing a top and his bare chest could be seen.

The panel noted that Mr Shilling and Pupil A's evidence is consistent with the copy of the message in evidence. As such, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent Pupil A a photograph of his chest.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries by sending Pupil A a picture of his chest as the photograph was inappropriate in the context of a teacher and student relationship, given it was unrelated to educational matters and was very personal in nature.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(iii) proven.

**(iv) Sending photos of yourself wearing only underwear and/ or holding a French baguette in front of your underwear;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including sending photographs of himself wearing only underwear and/or holding a French baguette in front of his underwear. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(iv).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated Mr Shilling sent her "a picture of himself wearing only a pair of sunglasses and his underwear, holding a French baguette in front of his penis" and "pictures of his bare legs wearing no trousers".

The panel considered a text message between Mr Shilling and Pupil A which was exhibited to Pupil A's written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that the message included a picture of Mr Shilling in his underwear whilst he held a French baguette in front of his underwear.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent a photograph of himself as described in the allegation as the panel saw a copy of the message and Mr Shilling and Pupil A both confirmed the content of the message.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A, as the image has a sexual connotation and is inappropriate given that it is unrelated to educational matters and is very personal and sexual in nature.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(iv) proven.

**(v) An image of your tongue poking out;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including an image of your tongue poking out. Mr Shilling also admitted that he

failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(v).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling sent her pictures which included “one of him poking his tongue out”. This was consistent with Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA, in which Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling sent her a photograph “with his tongue sticking out”.

The panel considered copies of messages which were exhibited to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling messaged Pupil A “Ok trouble x” followed by a picture of his lower face displaying his tongue poking out of his mouth and further followed by the message “Get ready..”.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent a photograph of himself poking his tongue out as the panel saw a copy of the message and Mr Shilling and Pupil A both confirmed the content of the message.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A, as sending an image of his tongue poking out was inappropriate to send within the context of a teacher and pupil relationship given that it is unrelated to educational matters. Additionally, the panel considered that the messages could be interpreted as having sexual implications.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(v) proven.

#### **(vi) Images and/or pseudo-images of females in a state of undress;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including images and/or pseudo-images of females in a state of undress. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(vi).

The panel considered copies of messages which were exhibited to Pupil E’s written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling messaged Pupil E the following:

- Two images of the same brunette woman in a green bikini, showing the front and back of her body;
- An image of a brunette woman wearing green lingerie and some jewellery; and
- An image of a blonde woman wearing a thong showing the back of her body whilst she is sat on the side of the road hitch hiking.

The panel noted that each of the above images did not appear to have been taken by Mr Shilling directly, as they appeared to be stock images from the internet and/or memes.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent pseudo-images of females in a state of undress as the panel saw copies of the messages, and Mr Shilling and Pupil E both confirmed the content of the messages in their written statements.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil E, as the pseudo-images of females in a state of undress had sexual connotations and was inappropriate to send within the context of a teacher and pupil relationship given that it is unrelated to educational matters and sexual in nature.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(vi) proven.

#### **(vii) Photograph and or pseudo-photograph of your leg and or legs**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to sending inappropriate images and/or images of sexual connotation to one or more pupils and/or ex-pupils including photograph and or pseudo-photograph of his leg and or legs. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(e)(vii).

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling sent her pictures of “his bare legs wearing no trousers”. This was consistent with Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA in which Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling sent her “pictures of his body” which included “his legs”.

The panel considered a text message between Mr Shilling and Pupil A which was exhibited to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling messaged Pupil A saying “please find attached the latest of my [REDACTED]/Wales tan...” followed by a picture of his bare legs.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling sent a photograph of his legs to Pupil A as the panel saw a copy of the message and Mr Shilling and Pupil A both confirmed the content of the message. The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A, as the image is inappropriate in the context of a teacher and pupil relationship given that it is unrelated to educational matters and is very personal in nature.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(e)(vii) proven.

#### **f) Encouraging one or more pupils and/or former pupils to send you photos of themselves without clothing**

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling “never explicitly asked” for her to send photographs of herself without clothing but it “was implied” as he would send pictures of himself without clothing on. The panel considered copies of messages which were exhibited to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling sent

Pupil A multiple photographs of himself without clothing on when making reference to his suntan.

In her written statement to the School, Pupil B stated that Mr Shilling sent her “completely inappropriate images, including a nude photo” and he “put constant and significant pressure” on her to “send similar photos back, but thankfully, [she] didn’t”. Pupil B further stated that it was “clear that this annoyed him”.

In her written statement to the School, Pupil C stated that she “never sent [Mr Shilling] revealing photos” but whenever it was sunny “he would ask to see the updates with [her] tan lines” and he “even hinted that a picture [she] sent of [herself] was enough to give him an erection as he sent [her] a gif”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil C stated that she would send pictures of herself to Mr Shilling on Instagram, as he “would ask [her] for photographs, such as those showing progress of [her] tan lines” and she “felt compelled and pressured to do so”. Pupil C further stated that the picture of her was in a bikini showing her neck and the top of her chest.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling would “say that he does not wear pyjamas and would make jokes about me being naked”. In her oral evidence, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling became aware that she did not wear pyjamas to bed and would “relentlessly” comment on Pupil E being in bed and Pupil E understood this to be referencing her being naked. Pupil E further stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling would seek to have a video chat with Pupil E if he was aware that she was in bed.

Pupil E stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling “never asked for photographs explicitly” but inferred this from their conversations, such as his continuous reference to her being in bed and welcoming a video chat.

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling denied encouraging one or more pupils and/or former pupils to send him photographs of themselves without clothing.

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he “did not ask any pupil to send [him] photos of themselves without clothing”. Mr Shilling further stated that “the lockdown period was blessed with a period of great sunshine and part of the conversations were around suntans and progress of these” meaning “Pupil C sent [him] some photos of her arm suntans and possible Pupil B did as well”, however Mr Shilling outlined that he “did not request naked or more revealing pictures at any stage”.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling encouraged Pupil A, Pupil B, Pupil C and Pupil E to send photographs of themselves without clothing on. The panel acknowledged that it did not have evidence that Mr Shilling ever explicitly asked for a pupil to send him such a photograph, but the panel was satisfied that this was implied and invited through his

conduct. The panel noted that Mr Shilling continuously sent photographs of himself without clothing on which created an environment in which the pupils felt like they were expected to send similar photographs back, which did occur in the case of Pupil C.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A, Pupil B, Pupil C and Pupil E, as he used his position of trust and authority to pressure pupils to send inappropriate photographs of themselves.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(f) proven.

**g) Screenshotting photographs of pupils on one or more occasions;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to taking screenshots photographs of pupils on one or more occasions. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(g).

In his written statement dated January 2025, Mr Shilling stated that taking a screenshot of a photograph of a pupil “mistakenly happened during an online game during the lockdown period”.

In her written statement to the School dated July 2020, Pupil C stated that her music class [REDACTED]. Pupil C stated that Mr Shilling participated and when a photograph came up of Pupil C in a “very short skirt which highlighted [her] figure” she received a notification that Mr Shilling had taken a screenshot of the photograph. Pupil C further stated that Mr Shilling messaged her after the game to apologise for the screenshot.

In her written statement to the School in July 2020, Pupil C stated that “whenever [she] sent [Mr Shilling] a photo on Instagram, even if it was only half of [her] face and not posy at all, it would notify [her] that [Mr Shilling] would screenshot it”. This was consistent with Pupil C’s written statement to the police and her written statement to the TRA, in which Pupil C stated that she received a “notification” during a [REDACTED] that Mr Shilling had taken a screenshot of a photograph of herself wearing a “tight fitting” dress. Pupil C further stated that Mr Shilling contacted her to “say sorry” for taking the screenshot.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil D stated that she also participated in the [REDACTED] “which is an app which chooses photos from your phone to upload and then everyone else has to guess whose phone they are from”. Pupil D further stated that a picture of Pupil C came up on the screen and a “notification appeared” to say that Mr Shilling had taken a screenshot of it. Pupil D stated that they “all felt incredibility awkward”.

The panel considered exhibits to Pupil E’s written statement to the TRA which contained copies of letters and cards sent to her by Mr Shilling. The panel noted that Mr Shilling sent Pupil E cards which had images of her on, such as a birthday card containing seven

images of Pupil E. In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated that the photographs of her on the card were obtained by Mr Shilling from her social media and photographs taken on School trips.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling had taken screenshots of photographs of Pupil C and Pupil E, as the panel saw a copy of the cards containing photographs of Pupil E, and the evidence of Mr Shilling, Pupil C and Pupil D was consistent regarding the circumstances that resulted in Mr Shilling taking a screenshot of Pupil C's photograph during a [REDACTED].

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil C and Pupil E, as it is not acceptable for a teacher to have photographs of pupils on his personal device which are unrelated to educational matters.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(g) proven.

**h) Being alone in a vehicle with one or more pupils on one or more occasions;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to being alone in a vehicle with one or more pupils on one or more occasions. Mr Shilling denied that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(h).

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he "gave one pupil a lift home from the train station following educational trips to London" and that this was "known and agreed by the pupils' parents, other pupils and colleagues including my departmental colleague (now successor) who walked with us to the car park as a group of three on all occasions". Mr Shilling also stated that he "made sure [he] had business insurance as part of [his] car insurance as [his] understanding was this was needed for this to be legally allowed". Mr Shilling further stated that "nothing untoward was ever said or happened on these journeys home".

In her oral evidence, Pupil A stated that she recalled being in Mr Shilling's car on one occasion with Pupil E but that Pupil E "had most of the lifts" as [REDACTED].

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling drove her in his car alone to [REDACTED] which was a two hour drive, but that her parents had given permission for this to occur. Pupil E further stated that Mr Shilling would "drop [her] home" on three to five other occasions after School trips which was about a thirty to forty minute journey.

In her oral evidence, Pupil E stated that her parents had provided permission for Mr Shilling to drive her home after a trip on the first occasion but did not thereafter. Pupil E also stated in her oral evidence that she recalled that Pupil A was also in the car with them on one of the occasions that Mr Shilling dropped them home.

The panel considered the School's staff code of conduct, which was exhibited to Witness C's written statement. The panel noted a provision regarding transporting pupils which stated that "staff should not travel alone with pupils unless in an emergency or where the child is at risk".

The panel was satisfied on the corroborating evidence of Pupil A and Pupil E, that Mr Shilling had been alone in his car with Pupil E on more than one occasion.

Whilst Pupil E supported Mr Shilling's position that her parents had provided permission for her to receive a lift on the first occasion, the panel noted that this did not extend to later lifts. In any case, even if Pupil E's parents had provided permission on each occasion, the panel considered that it was still not permissible pursuant to the staff code of conduct as Mr Shilling was not travelling with Pupil E in an emergency situation or where a child was at risk. As such, the panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, as he did not comply with the School's code of conduct in relation to travelling with pupils.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(h) proven.

**i) Having contact with one or more pupils;**

**(i) Outside of school hours;**

**(ii) via social media and/or text message;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to having contact with one or more pupils outside of school hours and via social media and/or text message. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(i).

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil A stated that during the School's trip to [REDACTED] in 2019, she and Mr Shilling would exchange text messages. This was consistent with the following evidence:

- Witness A stated in his written statement to the TRA, that a staff member on the trip told him that she saw Pupil A's name "pop up as a notification" on Mr Shilling's phone and it was a "text message notification with the words thank you".
- Pupil B stated in her written statement to the School that she "saw that [Mr Shilling] was texting" a pupil from [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED] tour.

The panel considered copies of messages exhibited to Pupil C's written statement to the TRA. The panel noted the following messages:

- On Friday 15 May 2020 at 7:06pm, Mr Shilling said via message on Instagram "Love you lots sexy beautiful lady" followed by four hearts and four kisses.

- On Friday 22 May 2020 at 7:56pm, Mr Shilling said via message on Instagram “Hey – I see you have seen my message”.
- On Thursday 28 May 2020 at 8:52pm, Mr Shilling said via message on Instagram “Hope it all goes well and everyone has a great time” followed by three hearts.
- On Friday 26 June 2020 at 6:10am, Mr Shilling said via message on Instagram “Hope you have a fantastic day wonderful lady” followed by a heart.

The panel considered a copy of an email sent from Mr Shilling to Pupil E on Saturday 21 December 2019 at 6:46pm which said, among other things, “Merry Christmas” and “Your continued presence in my life and friendship to me remain a source of happiness and joy everyday”.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling had contact with Pupil C and Pupil E outside of School hours, as the panel saw copies of the correspondence sent early in the morning, late at night and on weekends. The panel was also satisfied that Mr Shilling had contact with Pupil A by text message, in light of the corroborating evidence of Pupil A, Witness A and Pupil B, and that he had contact with Pupil C on social media as the panel saw copies of their messages on Instagram.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling was in breach of the following provision of the School’s code of conduct which was exhibited to Witness C’s written statement:

- “Social Contact with pupils – All social contact outside of school hours with pupils should be avoided. Home or mobile phone numbers, addresses or email addresses should not be exchanged. Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship”.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling’s contact with Pupil A, Pupil C and Pupil E was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, as he did not comply with the School’s code of conduct in relation to social contact with pupils and engaged in conversations which were unrelated to educational matters.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(i) proven.

**j) Giving gifts to one or more pupils and/or one or more former pupils including one or more gifts as detailed in Schedule A;**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to giving gifts to one or more pupils and/or one or more former pupils including one or more gifts as detailed in Schedule A. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(j).

In his written statement dated January 2025, Mr Shilling stated that his gifts had “completely innocent intentions” and they “formed part of conversations at the time and were accepted as harmless and kind gestures at the time”. Mr Shilling further stated that “only one student ever requested any gifts to stop and that they weren’t welcome and/or made them now feel uncomfortable” at which point Mr Shilling “immediately stopped as that was not the aim of the gestures of kindness”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil A stated the following in relation to gifts from Mr Shilling:

- “My friend and I used the Music Department as place to work and study during our free period, and Mr Shilling left us chocolates, sweets, crisps, edible treats for that day”
- “Mr Shilling gifted me a small wind instrument as [REDACTED]” and the instrument had the word “Blow & Tug Gently” printed on it;
- “He also gave me a door sign which read ‘frantic fingering and talented tonguing in progress’”;
- “Mr Shilling gave me a glass rose, vase, earrings, towel with the wording ‘I’m wet with salvation’, theatre tickets, flowers, Harry Potter bookmarks, stationary, tea towels, chocolate, T-shirts, wine glass, two thongs and underwear”;
- “Mr Shilling bought me Lord of the Rings themed gifts”; and
- “Mr Shilling also wrote and sent me a number of letters and cards”.

The panel considered exhibits to Pupil A’s written statement to the TRA, which supported Pupil A’s description of the wind instrument and the door sign.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil A stated that one gift provided to her by Mr Shilling was described in his letter as “some [Pupil A] puppets that can be regularly fingered at your leisure and convenience – 1 on the thumb and 1 on the fourth finger maybe!!” and other gifts he gave her were “two photo frames with pictures” of herself and “underwear, which were two thongs, one with a sexual meaning on the front about oral sex”.

In her oral evidence Pupil A stated that the flowers were sent to her home address and the glass rose was given to her in a vase during the School trip to [REDACTED] when they were alone in Mr Shilling’s hotel room, but the remainder of the gifts were given at School. In particular, Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling had put together a cardboard box filled with gifts where the majority of the above mentioned gifts were given and Pupil E received a similar box.

In her oral evidence Pupil A stated that Mr Shilling's gifts in relation to food at School would escalate over time, as it started as the odd snack which was available and escalated to "enormous spreads of foods" with a note saying "help yourself" and he had "spent a lot of money".

Pupil A also stated in her oral evidence that she believed the wind instrument gift to be a "reference to a blowjob" and that the door sign was "linking skills to play a clarinet with sexual activities".

In her written statement to the School, Pupil B stated that Mr Shilling "sent presents and letters" to her house "frequently" and the gifts included an "everlasting rose, penis shaped bottle openers and penis shaped pasta" and she found this "highly inappropriate and embarrassing. The panel noted that Pupil B's statement was hearsay evidence which a panel at a case management hearing decided to admit. The panel considered that Pupil B's evidence was consistent with other evidence which the panel had the opportunity to test in oral evidence, as follows:

- Pupil C stated in her written statement to the TRA that she recalled "Pupil B receiving something in the post, which was in the shape of a penis"; and
- Pupil D stated in her written statement to the TRA that Pupil B had told her that "Mr Shilling had sent her penis-shaped pasta in the post".

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil C stated that "Mr Shilling would bring in lots of food and snacks" that she was gifted "placemats, bottle openers and small trinkets" from Mr Shilling.

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil D stated that "Mr Shilling spent a lot of money on food on every single lesson".

In her written statement to the TRA, Pupil E stated the following in relation to gifts given by Mr Shilling:

- Mr Shilling "sent me a card or letter around the Christmas period in 2018. In that card he writes 'you are the most amazingly wonderful and beautiful young lady... please accept the few gifts I have assembled in this personal Christmas Collection of Cheer'" and he "then proceeded to list 5 gifts which I received with the card. These included jewellery and underwear";
- "Mr Shilling gave me a letter or card" and he listed "10 gifts which I received under a heading or section titled 'uni starter pack'. These included a 6-inch ruler 'to make sure those skirts aren't too long', glow in the dark condoms, lace underwear, a wine stopper with a man's penis being the stopper"; and

- “After I left School, Mr Shilling sent me a Valentine’s Day Card” and “some gifts” which included by his description “lacy flowers to hopefully encourage a situation for the second event to occur”, “ownership rings for you to put on your glass” and “a yearlong lasting flower”.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling gave her “champagne, wine, personalised wine glass, lord of the rings collectable’s item candle holder” and “sexy lingerie style nurse’s outfit” and a “uni package” containing a ruler.

In her oral evidence, Pupil E stated that often she would receive anonymised gifts to her house but that Mr Shilling would later ask Pupil E whether she had received the particular gifts so that she would know they were from him.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling gave gifts to Pupil A, Pupil B, Pupil C, Pupil D and Pupil E as they had seen photographs of some of the gifts exhibited to Pupil A and Pupil E’s written statements and the written and oral evidence of each of the pupils was consistent.

Whilst the panel noted that Mr Shilling did not gift each of the pupils every gift listed in Schedule A, the panel was satisfied that each of the gifts in Schedule A were given by Mr Shilling to at least one of Pupil A, Pupil B, Pupil C, Pupil D and Pupil E. For example, the panel noted that all of Pupil A, Pupil B, Pupil C, Pupil D and Pupil E were gifted food but only Pupil A was gifted the wind instrument.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling was in breach of the following provision of the School’s code of conduct which was exhibited to Witness C’s written statement:

- “Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism – Staff should ensure that the motivation behind the giving of gifts/awards or rewards is clear to all pupils in order to avoid any misunderstandings of intent. You must not give child gifts personally – any appropriate gifts should come from the school as an organisation. The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements ...”

The panel considered that giving gifts to pupils in the manner done so by Mr Shilling was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, as the gifts were often of a sexual nature, excessive in volume and given individually to the pupils. The panel noted that there was a distinction to be drawn between the situation in which a teacher provides a small impersonal group gift to a class of pupils as an educational reward, and the situation which Mr Shilling created by repeatedly giving several personalised gifts to his pupils, often on an individual basis. In particular, the panel noted that a number of the gifts were sexual in nature which was a completely unacceptable gift for a teacher to give a pupil.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(j) proven.

**k) Engaging in inappropriate behaviour by making and/or using sexual innuendos and/or sexual imagery in class and/or on a class worksheet.**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to engaging in inappropriate behaviour by making and/or using sexual innuendos and/or sexual imagery in class and/or on a class worksheet. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(k).

In his written statement dated January 2025, Mr Shilling stated that the worksheet was a “poor attempt at a cheap 30 second laugh at the start of a lesson” and in “retrospect” he regretted it. Mr Shilling further stated that he agrees it was “inappropriate and misguided” but was an “attempt to start a theory lesson (not known for being much fun) with a little smile or chuckle”.

The panel considered two videos in evidence which showed a worksheet used during a music lesson. The panel noted that the worksheet was titled “Slightly adult musical dingbats”. The panel noted that the videos displayed images of characters in sexual positions or had questions which made sexual references. For example, the panel noted there was:

- an image of lions from the Lion King in a sexual position;
- two images of women’s bottoms in thongs; and
- a sexually explicit cartoon graphic showing “rimming” with the answer being “rimshot”.

In her written statement to the TRA, Witness C stated that she recalled “seeing a worksheet which contained inappropriate sexual language and images” at the time that she was investigating concerns into Mr Shilling’s behaviour at the School.

In her written statement to the police, Pupil D stated that in December 2019 Mr Shilling “set the class a work sheet which was titled ‘slightly adult musical dingbats’” and there were “photo questions you had to guess the musical words to but the pictures were all sexual positions or sexual references including naked female bottoms”.

The panel noted that the videos in evidence were consistent with the worksheets described by Pupil D, Witness C and Mr Shilling. As such, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling used a worksheet in a lesson which contained sexual innuendos and sexual imagery. The panel considered this to be a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries as it was unnecessary to incorporate content of a sexual nature into learning material.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(k) proven.

**I) Instructing one or more pupils not to tell anyone and/or show anyone about the messages and or photos and/or gifts they were receiving from you**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted to instructing one or more pupils not to tell anyone and/or show anyone about the messages and/or photos and/or gifts they were receiving from him. Mr Shilling also admitted that he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with one or more pupils by way of his behaviour at allegation 1(I).

The panel considered an exhibit to Pupil A's written statement to the TRA containing correspondence between Mr Shilling and Pupil A. The panel noted that Mr Shilling emailed Pupil A saying "please please please don't discuss this with anyone apart from me including your parents" and "remember I'm not meant to have contacted you about this anyway so I will have immediately be found out as having broken a clear rule" and "if you do like me and respect me as you often say then you will follow these wishes". These messages were also referenced by Pupil A in her written statement to the police.

The panel considered an exhibit to Pupil C's written statement to the TRA containing correspondence between Mr Shilling and Pupil C. The panel noted that Mr Shilling messaged Pupil C saying "please don't mention it to anyone else including your parents! One person misunderstanding either would see me in trouble. Hopefully you don't want that for me! Xxx".

In her oral evidence, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling told her not to tell her parents about the gifts that he had given her and he had also specifically asked her to delete the photograph he had sent to her with a French baguette.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling instructed Pupil A and Pupil C to not tell anyone about their messages as there were copies of these messages exhibited to their written statements. Additionally, the panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling instructed Pupil E to not tell her parents about her gifts and to delete a photograph he had sent her as her evidence was consistent with Mr Shilling's behaviour with Pupil A and Pupil C.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries as it was manipulative for a teacher to abuse his position of authority to direct a pupil to conceal information from others, particularly their family.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(I) proven.

**2. Failed to follow a management warning and/ or instructions and/ or demonstrate insight into previous concerns reported in respect of your conduct towards pupils, in particular, your conduct at allegation 1.a to 1.I continued after:**

**a) Concerns were raised by one or more staff members**

- b) You were spoken to on or around 12 July 2019 and/or 22 July 2019 due to concerns with blurring of boundaries and/or physical contact and/or perception of others**
- c) You were spoken to during the conversation in July 2019 above about use of mobile phones and having contact details for students**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted that he failed to follow a management warning and/or instructions and/or demonstrate insight into previous concerns reported in respect of his conduct towards pupils. In particular, Mr Shilling admitted that his conduct at allegation 1(a) to 1(l) continued after concerns were raised by one or more staff members, after he was spoken to on or around 12 July 2019 and/or 22 July 2019 due to concerns with blurring of boundaries and/or physical contact and/or perception and after he was spoken to during the conversation in July 2019 about use of mobile phones and having contact details for students

Witness C stated in her written statement that [REDACTED] (Teacher A) spoke to Mr Shilling prior to the School's trip to [REDACTED] regarding Pupil A's potential "crush" on him. To that end, the panel considered a note titled "statement form" dated 20 July 2019, which recorded that Teacher A had voiced "some concerns" to Mr Shilling about his closeness to Pupil A during the School's [REDACTED]. It was noted that the conversation was had with the intention of protecting Mr Shilling from "putting himself in a risky position" due to "the possible infatuation of a student".

Witness C stated in her written statement that she "spoke to Mr Shilling on 22 July 2019 and reminded him that he needed to be absolutely sure that nothing more happened by way of the blurring of pupil/teacher boundaries". The panel considered a copy of Witness C's contemporaneous notes which were exhibited and supported this statement. The panel noted that within this note, Witness C had spoken to Mr Shilling regarding whether Pupil A had his mobile number and told him that "he should not be giving his mobile number out to pupils and that trips should be well enough organised not to need the last-minute exchange of text". Witness C's stated in her oral evidence that her conversation with Mr Shilling included instructions but did not constitute a warning.

The panel considered an email from Mr Shilling to Pupil A, which was exhibited to Pupil A's written statement to the TRA. The panel noted that Mr Shilling detailed several instances, in the form of a diary entry, where he was spoken to by a member of staff at the School regarding his behaviour towards Pupil A. Mr Shilling stated the following:

- On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> [REDACTED] Teacher A asked for a private chat and explained that she is "unhappy and uncomfortable" with Mr Shilling and Pupil A's friendship.
- On Friday 19<sup>th</sup>, Witness B told him that a member of staff on the [REDACTED] School trip had approached him about their "unease" at his closeness with Pupil A.

- On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>, Witness C informed Mr Shilling that two members of staff on the School trip had raised concerns regarding his behaviour with Pupil A and that in “no uncertain terms” it is not Mr Shilling’s place to be friends with Pupil A.

The panel considered that the above diary entries referred to dates in July 2019, as this was consistent with the dates referenced by Witness C and Witness A.

In his written statement to the TRA, Witness B stated that he “pulled Mr Shilling aside” on 19 July 2019 and “told him that numerous staff members had raised concerns” over his behaviour and he “told him that he needed to protect himself”. Witness B further stated that he “saw no change of behaviour from Mr Shilling, despite concerns being raised to him directly”.

The panel was satisfied that concerns were raised by Teacher A, Witness A and Witness C to Mr Shilling in respect of his conduct towards Pupil A, in particular as each of Mr Shilling, Witness A and Witness C confirmed that this happened in their evidence and this was supported by contemporaneous notes.

The panel was further satisfied that Mr Shilling was spoken to on or around 12 July 2019 and/or 22 July 2019 due to concerns with blurring of boundaries and/or physical contact and/or perception of others. Both Witness C and Mr Shilling were consistent in stating that Witness C spoke to Mr Shilling on 22 July 2019 regarding the blurring of boundaries. Additionally, both Witness B and Mr Shilling were consistent in stating that Witness B spoke to Mr Shilling on 19 July 2019 regarding the perception that others had regarding his relationship with Pupil A.

The panel was also satisfied that Mr Shilling was spoken to by Witness C during a conversation in July 2019, regarding the use of mobile phones and having contact details for students, as Mr Shilling’s email to Pupil A and Witness C’s evidence was consistent regarding the existence of this conversation and the panel was able to consider the contemporaneous notes from that meeting.

The panel was unable to identify a date that Mr Shilling was alone in his car with a pupil, as found proven at allegation 1(h). As such, the panel was unable to determine whether this conduct occurred before or after the concerns and discussions were had with Mr Shilling as outlined in allegations 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c). However, the panel was satisfied that some of Mr Shilling’s conduct in allegations 1(a) to (g) and 1(i) to (l) occurred after the relevant time when the concerns and discussions were had with Mr Shilling as outlined in allegations 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c).

As such, the panel considered that Mr Shilling had failed to follow instructions and failed to demonstrate insight into his previous conduct as his behaviour did not change in respect of things he was told not to do. To the contrary, the panel considered that Mr

Shilling's behaviour towards pupils escalated as he increased the amount of gifts and messages he sent to pupils.

The panel therefore found allegations 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) proven.

### **3. Your behaviour as may be found proven at allegation 1 above was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.**

The panel was mindful of section 78 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the cases of Sait v The General Medical Council [2018], Basson v General Medical Council [2018] and The General Medical Council v Haris [2020].

In particular, the panel noted guidance from Basson v General Medical Council [2018] that "a sexual motive means that the conduct was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship".

The panel also considered the case of the General Medical Council v Haris [2020], in which it was held that, "in the absence of a plausible innocent explanation for what he did, the facts spoke for themselves".

Finally, the panel considered the case of Haddon v UK Council for Psychotherapy [2025], in which it was stated in that "there are often stepping stones on the way to a sexual relationship – small signals, verbal or physical, where one party seeks, and another party gives, encouragement that the attraction between them is reciprocal".

The panel firstly considered whether the conduct found proven at allegation 1 was of a sexual nature.

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted that his behaviour as may be found proven at allegation 1 was conduct of a sexual nature.

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he accepts "that the language and content [he] used to Pupil B and [Pupil] C was wrong on some occasions" and that he "may have used innuendo and cheap humour on occasions to get a cheap laugh or used inappropriate language to praise a student to build up their personal confidence".

The panel considered the following allegations in particular that it found proven:

- Allegation 1(c) - that Mr Shilling had discussions with pupils using sexual language and sexual remarks;
- Allegation 1(d) – that Mr Shilling sent pupils sexual letters and cards;
- Allegation 1(e) – that Mr Shilling sent pupils inappropriate images of sexual connotations;

- Allegation 1 (j) – that Mr Shilling sent gifts to pupils which were sexual in nature; and
- Allegation 1(k) – that Mr Shilling used sexual innuendos and sexual imagery in a worksheet.

The panel found that the above mentioned conduct were by their nature sexual and had sexual connotations. The panel therefore found that Mr Shilling's conduct was of a sexual nature.

The panel went on to consider whether the conduct found proven at allegation 1 was sexually motivated.

Mr Shilling denied that his behaviour as may be found proven at allegation 1 was sexually motivated.

Mr Shilling stated in his written statement dated November 2023 that he is "not sexually interested in underage or schoolgirls or young school leavers" and "nothing [he] did during [his] teaching career was sexually motivated". Mr Shilling further stated that he accepted his "style of teaching" may have "pushed the boundaries" due to his "humour and use of language" but its sole purpose at the time was to be "supportive and friendly" to his pupils and to try and get the best out of them.

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling "built up a well-crafted environment" as pupils "went to him" with all their problems and he "used that environment" where Pupil A felt like she "owed him" and he "used it to his advantage to get what he wanted from the situation" such as having "emotional support". Pupil A further stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling's actions were purposeful and manipulative" to create a "sexualised environment".

Pupil A stated in her oral evidence that she felt a "weight of expectation" when Mr Shilling gave her a gift whilst she was in his room during the School trip to [REDACTED] in 2019. Pupil A further stated that she felt like "he wanted an action or words from [her] that [she] did not give", such as a "kiss" and she felt "unsafe". Pupil A also stated in her oral evidence that the situation felt similar to other romantic situations that she had been in with people her own age.

Pupil E stated in her oral evidence that she felt "trapped" by her relationship with Mr Shilling and felt "indebted" to him. Pupil E further stated that she had "few people she could trust" and looked to him for "support".

The panel considered that Mr Shilling's conduct across all of the proven allegations showed a pattern of behaviour, sending inappropriate and sexual messages, photographs and gifts to pupils which escalated at certain points in time, such as when a pupil reached a certain age, or were no longer in face to face lessons with him. The panel

considered that Mr Shilling escalated his behaviour to test the boundaries and make their engagements more sexual to progress their relationships. The panel found Mr Shilling's behaviours showed a level of control and intention towards his pupils.

Additionally, the panel considered that Mr Shillling's interactions demonstrated that he was getting sexual gratification, as he complimented the appearance of his pupils, encouraged them to send photographs without clothing on and made reference to sexual pleasure, such as orgasms and being "turned on". The panel determined that the nature of Mr Shilling's interactions suggested that he was trying to develop a sexual relationship with his pupils and former pupils. The panel did not consider Mr Shilling's motivation of being "supportive and friendly" to be a reasonable explanation and neither did the panel consider there to be another innocent explanation.

For the above reasons, the panel considered that it had been proven, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Shilling had been sexually motivated in his conduct as found proven at allegation 1.

The panel therefore found allegation 3 proven.

#### **4. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegation 1.I was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.**

In the Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts, Mr Shilling admitted that his conduct lacked integrity as outlined within the case *Wingate v SRA [2018] EWCA 366*, specifically, that Mr Shilling's admitted conduct fell short of the standards society expects from members of the teaching profession. Further, Mr Shilling admitted that his conduct was dishonest as outlined within the case *Ivey v Genting Casinos [2017] UKSC 67*, namely that Mr Shilling knew at the time that his admitted conduct was dishonest, and ordinary decent people would view his conduct as dishonest.

The panel firstly considered whether Mr Shilling was dishonest by his conduct in allegation 1(I). The panel considered the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford [2017]*.

In reaching a decision in respect of dishonesty, the panel needed to first ascertain, subjectively, the actual state of Mr Shilling's knowledge or belief as to the facts. Secondly, the panel needed to determine whether Mr Shilling's state of mind was honest or dishonest by the application of the objective standards of the ordinary honest person.

The panel firstly turned its mind to the actual state of Mr Shillling's knowledge or belief as to the facts.

Mr Shilling stated in his written statement dated January 2025 that his "messages or gifs sent were sent with pure intentions and thoughts with the aim only of helping students through difficult times" but he "was aware that taken out of context (i.e. not seeing whole

conversations, hearing verbal issues at the me, no concept of historical factors etc...) that this is not necessarily how they would be viewed by through outside eyes".

The panel noted that Mr Shilling told Pupil A not to tell anyone about their messages as he was "not meant to have contacted" her and he will be "found out as having broken a clear rule". Additionally, Mr Shilling told Pupil C not to tell anyone about their messages as "one person misunderstanding" would "see [him] in trouble". The panel was satisfied on this evidence that Mr Shilling understood that his messages to Pupil A and Pupil C were not acceptable and a breach of the School's rules. As such, Mr Shilling asked Pupil A and Pupil C to conceal the messages so that he did he did not get in "trouble" or be found to have "broken a clear rule".

The panel considered that Mr Shilling was an experienced teacher and head of the music department at the School and would have known that it was wrong and deceitful to direct a pupil to hide information from others, including their family.

In weighing up the evidence as to Mr Shilling's knowledge of the facts, the panel considered that Mr Shilling understood that telling pupils to conceal information regarding his interactions with them to be wrong and dishonest.

The panel then considered the objective standards of the ordinary honest person and was further satisfied that an ordinary honest person would consider that a teacher instructing a pupil to conceal their interactions to be dishonest. The panel determined that Mr Shilling's conduct had a clear intention to prevent anyone from finding out about the inappropriate messages and gifts which he sent to pupils which attempted to mislead the School and was fundamentally dishonest.

The panel therefore found Mr Shilling's conduct as proven at allegation 1(l) to be dishonest.

The panel considered whether Mr Shilling had failed to act with integrity by his conduct at allegation 1(l). The panel considered the case of *Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority* [2018]. The panel was mindful of the legal advice it received and that integrity is a more nebulous concept than honesty, for which it is not possible to formulate an all-purpose comprehensive definition but connotes adherence to the ethical standards of one's own profession.

In reaching a decision in respect of integrity, the panel noted that Mr Shilling ultimately failed to put the interests of the School or his pupils first. Mr Shilling's conduct fell below the standards expected of a teacher.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling's conduct in instructing pupils to conceal their interactions with him was in breach of the following provision of the School's code of conduct, which was exhibited to Witness C's written statement:

- “Professional Boundaries – staff are in a position of trust and the relationship with pupils is not one of equals, Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others”; and
- “Communication with Pupils (including the Use of Technology) – staff must ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. These should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Staff should not share any personal information with a child or young person. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.”

The panel considered that Mr Shilling’s behaviour did not adhere to the ethical standards expected of a teacher and was contrary to the manner in which the profession professes to serve the public. This was especially the case as Mr Shilling was the head of his department.

For the reasons set out above, the panel determined that Mr Shilling’s conduct at allegation 1(l) lacked integrity.

The panel therefore found allegation 4 proven.

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

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

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Shilling 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; and
  - 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 Shilling, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”).

The panel considered that Mr Shilling was in breach of the following provisions:

- All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the: child protection policy; behaviour policy; staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct);
- All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn; and
- As schools and colleges increasingly work online, it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

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

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

The panel found that the offences of sexual communication with a child, and controlling or coercive behaviour were relevant.

The panel noted that some of Mr Shilling’s conduct took place outside the education setting, such as his messages with pupils outside of school hours and via social media as found proven at allegation 1(i). The panel considered that this conduct affected the way Mr Shilling fulfils his teaching role as it blurred the professional boundaries that he should have maintained with his pupils. Additionally, his conduct exposed his pupils to his behaviour in a harmful way, as the pupils stated that they felt very uncomfortable by his messages but felt obliged to respond as he was in a position of authority over them.

The panel considered that Mr Shilling’s conduct was serious, as his interactions with pupils was extremely inappropriate and sexual in nature, going well beyond what is acceptable within a teacher and pupil relationship.

Mr Shilling was found to have engaged in physical contact with a pupil, including hand-holding, instructed pupils to conceal messages from their families, and encouraged them to send photographs of themselves without clothing on. The panel considered that these

actions demonstrate a clear abuse of the position of trust and authority inherent in the teacher and pupil relationship.

Mr Shilling's conduct was a significant breach of his School's code of conduct, particularly in relation to social interactions with pupils, travelling with pupils, maintaining professional boundaries and the giving of gifts.

While some of Mr Shilling's individual actions, such as offering coffee or tea on the School premises, may not have been serious in isolation, the panel was satisfied that this formed part of a calculated pattern of behaviour intended to foster an inappropriate relationship and blur the boundaries with pupils.

In addition to the above, the panel found that Mr Shilling's dishonesty and lack of integrity, by deliberately concealing his actions and encouraging pupils to do the same, was a significant departure from the standards expected of a teacher, as he undermined the School's processes and attempted to conceal his actions which he knew were wrong.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Shilling found proven at allegations 1, 2, 3 and 4 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 Shilling was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Shilling'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 Shilling'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 Shilling was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offences of sexual communication with a child, and controlling or coercive behaviour were relevant.

The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher.

The panel considered that any member of the public would regard Mr Shilling's engagement with his pupils and former pupils as highly inappropriate and deeply concerning given the inherent power imbalance between a teacher and a pupil. This

concern was heightened by the fact that Mr Shilling instructed pupils to conceal their communications from their families and the School.

The panel considered that the extent and nature of Mr Shilling's interactions, which focused on matters of a sexual nature and were entirely unrelated to educational responsibilities, would be viewed by the public as unacceptable as the conduct placed the welfare of pupils at risk.

In light of the above, the panel considered that Mr Shilling's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Shilling's actions as found proven at allegations 1, 2, 3 and 4 constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

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

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

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

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

The panel considered there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of sexually motivated behaviour towards pupils.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Shilling 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 Shilling 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 Shilling in the profession. Whilst there was evidence that Mr Shilling had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Shilling in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he sought to exploit his position of trust.

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

The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been

repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests; and

- collusion or concealment including concealing inappropriate actions and lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing.

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 found that Mr Shilling's actions were deliberate, as he instructed pupils and former pupils to conceal their messages and gifts as he knew that they were inappropriate. Additionally, Mr Shilling's conduct occurred across two years with multiple pupils in two different year groups. The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling's behaviour was not a momentary lapse of judgment, but was a calculated course of action in pursuit of sexual gratification.

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

The panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Shilling demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel saw no evidence that showed Mr Shilling was previously subject to disciplinary proceedings/warnings prior to these allegations.

The panel were not provided with any character references which could attest to Mr Shilling's previously good character. As such, the panel did not accept that the incident was out of character.

The panel noted the following evidence in respect of Mr Shilling's previous abilities as a teacher:

- In his oral evidence, Witness A stated that he "relied on" Mr Shilling and "thought he was a good head of music" prior to the allegations;
- In her written statement to the TRA, Witness B stated that whilst she had "limited interactions" with Mr Shilling, she had seen his "day-to-day interactions with students in large group settings such as in the classroom and assemblies and had no concerns".
- In Witness C's contemporaneous notes exhibited to her witness statement to the TRA, she stated that "the entire time [Mr Shilling] had been employed" that there had been "no concerns".

- In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that throughout his career his “annual reviews only ever spoke positively about [his] relationships and interactions with students” and he created a “positive working environment for them” that achieved “reasonably successful examination results”.

Whilst the above context was considered, the panel was not satisfied that it mitigated Mr Shilling’s conduct. To the contrary, the panel considered that as a head of department and experienced teacher, Mr Shilling would be well aware of the requirement to safeguard pupils and maintain appropriate professional boundaries, but he nevertheless displayed inappropriate behaviour towards several pupils.

The panel noted that Mr Shilling’s conduct was directed towards vulnerable and impressionable pupils, as he built their trust and used this for his own gain, to develop a sexualised relationship. The panel relied on the following evidence in this regard:

- [REDACTED]
- Pupil C stated in her written statement to the School that Mr Shilling “knew [REDACTED] she was “very vulnerable” and used that as an opportunity to get close to her and abuse his power.
- Pupil B stated in her written statement to the School that Mr Shilling “created an environment at school where me and other students felt safe and cared for. He would shower us with gifts and praise us to make us feel good about our insecurities. At a time that I was extremely vulnerable, he took advantage of my fragile state of mind and made me feel like I was the only person that he could trust. From here it became more inappropriate”.
- Pupil E stated in her oral evidence that she would describe herself at the relevant time to be vulnerable as she was “naïve”. In her written statement to the police, Pupil E stated that Mr Shilling “preyed” on her.

The panel noted the following evidence demonstrated that Mr Shilling’s conduct caused harm to his pupils:

- Pupil A stated in her written statement to the TRA that she felt “dependent on” Mr Shilling.
- Pupil B stated in her written statement to the School that she felt “totally manipulated” and [REDACTED] as she had [REDACTED] and felt “unsafe about the situation”. Pupil B further noted that she felt “watched and isolated”. [REDACTED]
- Pupil C stated in her written statement to the TRA that she “felt so embarrassed by everything”;

- [REDACTED]. Pupil C also described in oral evidence that she felt like she was in an “abusive relationship that she could not leave”; and
- Pupil E stated in her oral evidence that Mr Shilling’s conduct “affected her life” for a long time and that she felt “ashamed” and “embarrassed”. Pupil E also stated that she was “worried” about ever seeing Mr Shilling as his conduct was a “massive betrayal”. Pupil E also stated in her written statement to the police that Mr Shilling’s behaviour continues to affect her as she struggles to “trust anyone” and feels like they could be taking “advantage” of her.

The panel noted that Mr Shilling stated in his written statement dated 18 September 2023, that he is “not allowed to contact” the pupils to express his “deep regret over any upset” has caused but “if he could do so [he] would do so immediately and without reservation”. The panel considered this statement to demonstrate a lack of insight into the harm that his conduct has caused to the pupils, as he believed it would be acceptable to contact the pupils again.

In his written statement dated 18 September 2023, Mr Shilling stated that he was “deeply apologetic and upset for any hurt, anxiety or stress” he has caused. Additionally, Mr Shilling stated that he “made several mistakes during the 3 month lockdown period from March 2020 and June 2020 for which [he] will always be responsible for and shamed and haunted by”. Whilst the panel noted that Mr Shilling apologised for his conduct, the panel considered this to be a self-serving apology as it was not accompanied by a clear understanding of the nature and gravity of his conduct. The panel noted that Mr Shilling justified some of his actions by describing that he had “honest” motives and he was trying to “support” the pupils. However, the panel found that Mr Shilling was sexually motivated and dishonest in his conduct.

As a result of Mr Shilling’s lack of insight and genuine remorse, the panel considered that there was a risk of repetition. There was no evidence to persuade the panel that Mr Shilling’s conduct would not happen again.

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 Shilling 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

Shilling. Mr Shilling's repeated inappropriate and sexualised behaviour towards his pupils, which he attempted to conceal, was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. One of these include serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons. The characteristics in this type of case were engaged by the panel's findings as Mr Shilling was found to have used his position of trust to engage in sexually motivated behaviour towards his pupils which caused them harm.

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.

Having found that Mr Shilling's conduct towards his pupils was sexual in nature and sexually motivated, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously damaged if Mr Shilling was provided any opportunity to return to teaching. Similarly, the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils would be at risk given the harm suffered by the pupils as a result of Mr Shilling's behaviour. The panel considered that any contribution that Mr Shilling could make to the teaching profession in the future was outweighed by the seriousness of his conduct and his lack of insight and genuine remorse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Shilling 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; and
  - 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 Shilling involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexually motivated conduct with pupils.

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

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

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed that “there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of sexually motivated behaviour towards pupils.” A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

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

“Whilst the panel noted that Mr Shilling apologised for his conduct, the panel considered this to be a self-serving apology as it was not accompanied by a clear understanding of the nature and gravity of his conduct. The panel noted that Mr Shilling justified some of his actions by describing that he had “honest” motives and he was trying to “support” the pupils. However, the panel found that Mr Shilling was sexually motivated and dishonest in his conduct.

As a result of Mr Shilling’s lack of insight and genuine remorse, the panel considered that there was a risk of repetition. There was no evidence to persuade the panel that Mr Shilling’s conduct would not happen again.”

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

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

“The panel considered that any member of the public would regard Mr Shilling’s engagement with his pupils and former pupils as highly inappropriate and deeply concerning given the inherent power imbalance between a teacher and a pupil. This concern was heightened by the fact that Mr Shilling instructed pupils to conceal their communications from their families and the School.

The panel considered that the extent and nature of Mr Shilling’s interactions, which focused on matters of a sexual nature and were entirely unrelated to educational responsibilities, would be viewed by the public as unacceptable as the conduct placed the welfare of pupils at risk.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct with pupils in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Shilling himself. The panel has commented:

“The panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Shilling demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

The panel has also noted evidence of Mr Shilling’s teaching abilities but was not satisfied that this mitigated his conduct.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Shilling 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 seriousness of Mr Shilling’s repeated inappropriate and sexually motivated conduct towards pupils. The panel has said:

“The panel found that Mr Shilling’s actions were deliberate, as he instructed pupils and former pupils to conceal their messages and gifts as he knew that they were inappropriate. Additionally, Mr Shilling’s conduct occurred across two years with multiple pupils in two different year groups. The panel was satisfied that Mr Shilling’s behaviour was not a momentary lapse of judgment, but was a calculated course of action in pursuit of sexual gratification.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s finding that Mr Shilling had not demonstrated insight or genuine remorse.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Shilling has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in

light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by insight and genuine remorse, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

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

I have considered the panel's comments:

“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. One of these include serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons. The characteristics in this type of case were engaged by the panel's findings as Mr Shilling was found to have used his position of trust to engage in sexually motivated behaviour towards his pupils which caused them harm.”

“Having found that Mr Shilling's conduct towards his pupils was sexual in nature and sexually motivated, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously damaged if Mr Shilling was provided any opportunity to return to teaching. Similarly, the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils would be at risk given the harm suffered by the pupils as a result of Mr Shilling's behaviour. The panel considered that any contribution that Mr Shilling could make to the teaching profession in the future was outweighed by the seriousness of his conduct and his lack of insight and genuine remorse.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the misconduct found proven, the lack of insight and genuine remorse, and the risk of repetition.

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

**This means that Mr Ian Shilling 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 Shilling 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 Shilling 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 "David Oatley".

**Decision maker: David Oatley**

**Date: 15 December 2025**

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