



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Reuben Adams: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

November 2025

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

Teacher: Mr Reuben Adams

Teacher ref number: 9462216

Teacher date of birth: 21 April 1972

TRA reference: 19776

Date of determination: 20 November 2025

Former employer: Sunninghill Preparatory School, Dorchester

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 18 to 20 November 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Reuben Adams.

The panel members were Ms Lucy Childs (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Adrian Meadows (teacher panellist) and Robert Della-Sala (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Helen Kitchen of Blake Morgan LLP, solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Zahra Evans of Capsticks LLP, solicitors.

Mr Adams was not present but was represented in his absence for part of the hearing, by Mark Rose of the NASUWT.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 6 August 2025, as amended in the course of the hearing.

It was alleged that Mr Adams was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that:

- 1a. While employed as a mathematics teacher at Sunninghill Preparatory School, he in or around April 2020 and/August 2020, was in possession of up to 20 indecent images of children;
- 1b. On or about 29 January 2021, he accepted a police caution for possessing an indecent Photograph or Pseudo-Photograph of a child on 11 April 2020, contrary to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 s.160.
2. While employed as a teacher at Lockyer's Middle School, in or around February 1997, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with respect to Pupil A, in that he sent Pupil A:-
 - a. a Valentine's Day card
 - b. an inappropriate handwritten message (within the card detailed at Allegation 2a)
3. His conduct as set out in allegation 1a and/or 2a and/or 2b was sexually motivated.

Mr Adams made a partial admission to allegations 1a and 1b in that he admitted to being in possession of one category C image and admitted to being cautioned for possession of that one image. As this was an equivocal admission the panel treated it as a denial. Mr Adams admitted allegations 2a and 2b. Mr Adams made an admission to allegation 3 in relation to allegation 1a, on the same basis that 1a was admitted. He denied allegation 3 in relation to allegations 2a and 2b. The admission to allegation 3 was treated as equivocal and so the panel treated this part of the allegation as denied.

Mr Adams admitted unacceptable conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in relation to allegation 1a and 1b and 3 as it applied to allegation 1a, on the same basis on which he had admitted those allegations, and also admitted unacceptable conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in relation to allegations 2a and 2b.

Mr Adams denied unacceptable conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in relation to allegation 3 as it applied to allegations 2a and 2b.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and List of key people – pages 1 to 6

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 42

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts – pages 43 to 47

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements and documents – pages 48 to 118

Section 5: Teacher Documents – pages 119 to 151

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- A TRA Admission of evidence application bundle which included the further supplemental statement of Witness A dated 7 November 2025 and its exhibits, and, emails relating to the circumstances of its production (16 pages).
- A TRA submission in relation to the admission of the further supplemental statement of Witness A dated 7 November 2025 (3 pages).
- An email from Mr Adams' representative dated 17 November 2025 (and earlier linked emails) confirming that Mr Adams was not proposing to attend his hearing and was content for the case to proceed in his absence and that Mr Adams' representative was proposing to attend, although not throughout the entirety of the hearing (4 pages).
- A skeleton argument on behalf of Mr Adams which, [REDACTED], included his account and comments upon the issues concerned in the allegations, his responses to the allegations, and his mitigation (5 pages).

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A - [REDACTED]

Witness B - [REDACTED]

Witness C - [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

The School is an independent school with pupils from nursery to Year 8.

On 1 September 2011 Mr Adams was employed as Head of Mathematics at the School. He taught mathematics to Years 6-8. He also taught games to Years 5-8 and had a role as co-curricular organiser organising activities for pupils on a Friday afternoon for senior pupils.

On 25 August 2020 Mr Adams was arrested by Dorset Police having received a report from the National Crime Agency in relation to an image of a child.

On 26 August 2020 Mr Adams made a self-referral to the Headteacher of the School about his having been arrested and questioned by the police. This self-referral led to a review of Mr Adams' personnel file at the School which brought to light that minutes of a Dorset County Council multi-agency meeting, held in March 2021, recorded that he had sent a Valentine's Day card to Pupil A in February 1997.

On 15 January 2021 Mr Adams' employment at the School came to an end.

On 29 January 2021 Mr Adams accepted a police caution for the offence of possession of an indecent image of a child in 2020.

On 1 February 2021 a referral in relation to Mr Adams was made to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1a. Whilst employed as a mathematics teacher in Sunninghill Preparatory School, you, between 11 April 2020 and 25 August 2020, were in possession of up to 20 indecent images of children;

Mr Adams accepted in the statement of agreed facts that he worked as a mathematics teacher at the School from 1 September 2011 to 15 January 2021.

The panel noted Mr Adams denied the allegation of being in possession of 20 category C indecent images of children but admitted to being in possession of one category C indecent image of a child. Mr Adams contended that he had consistently admitted the allegation to the TRA on this basis, and, had taken responsibility for his actions.

In the statement of agreed facts before the panel Mr Adams had agreed the following:

- The police had received a report from the National Crime Agency that on 11 April 2020 a user of an Imgur account (Imgur being a social media site used for sharing images) had “uploaded” a Category C indecent image of a child to the internet.
- That the police conducted an investigation and identified that the user of the account was Mr Adams
- That Mr Adams was arrested at his home address on 25 August 2020. A search was conducted and an Apple iPhone and iPad were seized.
- The teacher was interviewed by the police. The teacher stated that during lockdown he started using Pornhub and ended up on a site called Imgur. He chatted to some people and obtained some images of clothed girls 16 plus years old and that he did not consider them sexual although he accepted obtaining the images for sexual purposes. He stated that he regretted looking and that he was not sexually interested in children. He confirmed that the browsing took place on “his tablet” and that the only child search term used would be “teen”.

The panel heard evidence from Witness A, whom it found to be an honest and credible witness, who gave thoughtful and measured responses to questions.

The panel noted from the evidence of Witness A that the initial referral to the police had been for one image. After Mr Adams had been arrested his iPhone and iPad had been examined and 84 images found, 64 of which were considered and deemed not to be illegal. However, 20 images were classified as being category C indecent images of children. Of these 20 images 9 were unique and the remaining images were duplicates of the 9 unique images, for example, as thumb nails. It was Witness A’s understanding that duplicate images may have been produced by the iPad itself. Witness A stated that he was 100% certain that the 9 unique images were indecent category C images. He explained to the panel that the categorisation of images, including the identification of the ages of the children in the images, was undertaken by specially trained officers who went through a very formal analysis and categorisation process for each image categorised. The panel noted that the forensic investigator’s report that Witness A exhibited, identified that there were three categories of indecent images, A, B and C, and all 9 unique images, being at category C, were at the lowest of the three categories.

Witness A advised the panel that, to his recall, the images were of girls in their early teens, probably 13 or 14 or so years old. He referred the panel to the forensic report

which included an analysis of three images from the 9 unique images. The report provided a detailed description of the images and referenced one image of a girl no older than 12, created on 18 August 2020, and two images of girls no older than 13, created on 16 April 2020 and 20 August 2020.

The panel considered that possession of the 9 unique images would not have been accidental, although Mr Adams may not have been aware of the images having been duplicated on, or by, the iPad.

The panel accepted Mr Adams' admission in relation to one image but found allegation 1a proven in relation to 9 unique Category C indecent images of children.

1b. On or around 29 January 2021, you accepted a police caution for possessing an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child on 11 April 2020 contrary to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 s.160.

Mr Adams had admitted this allegation, including in the statement of agreed facts, but had stated that he had accepted the police caution in relation to one category C indecent image of a child only.

The panel noted that the caution form, signed by Mr Adams, referred to one offence of "possess indecent photograph / pseudo-photograph of a child 11/04/2-". It made no reference to any other detail of the offence i.e. the actual number of the images. Witness A confirmed that the wording of the offence in the caution would have been standard wording from a drop down box that described the offence.

Witness A confirmed that a caution "tended to be done in conjunction with the categorisation report". It was noted by the panel that the categorisation report referred to three images which Witness A indicated would have been a sample from the category C images found.

However, Witness A told the panel that he could not recall whether Mr Adams' caution was based on one, or more, images. He thought that in accepting the caution Mr Adams has accepted one offence. He could not say if Mr Adams had been told of the number of images involved. On this evidence the panel found that the caution was accepted, and the offence admitted, in relation to possession of one image only.

The panel found allegation 1b proven in relation to one image, on the basis of the admission made by Mr Adams and the evidence of Witness A.

2. While employed as a teacher at Lockyer's Middle School, you failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in that you, on or about February 1997, sent Pupil A:-

a. a Valentine's Day card

b. an inappropriate handwritten message (within the card detailed at Allegation 2a)

The teacher admitted allegation 2, including 2a and 2b.

It was Mr Adams' contention that this allegation should be removed as:

- It had been agreed by the union and the local authority that the relevant record would be removed from his record after the probationary two years.
- That this allegation, combined with allegation 3, conflates two separate and entirely unrelated incidents twenty years apart and with no intervening concerns of any sort in an unblemished teaching career in between.

The panel did not accept this contention in the context of its regulatory role and duties and proceeded to consider allegations 2a and 2b, and, later, allegation 3.

In the statement of agreed facts Mr Adams admitted that, in February 1997, he sent Pupil A, a Valentine's Day card which contained the following message:

Written by the teacher: "*Always in my thoughts and dreams , , ,*"

Printed message in the card then said "*...My heart belongs to you!*"

Followed by the teacher writing "*Until the day I can be with you and hold you in my arms, I'll just have to keep on thinking, dreaming and loving you. All my love, ? xxx*"

The panel had sight of a copy of the Valentine's Day card and confirmed that the wording was as detailed above.

Witness B, DSL, advised the panel that this issue came to the notice of the School after Mr Adams had self-referred to the headmaster about his having been questioned and arrested by the police. Mr Adams' personnel file had then been reviewed, and the issue of the Valentine's Day card, sent in February 1997, whilst he was employed by Lockyer's Middle School, came to light.

The Valentine's Day card issue was mentioned in a one-page memo from the then Local Authority Safeguarding Officer, which confirmed that a record would remain on Mr Adams' file and not be removed after a passage of time, as would usually be the case.

The sending of the card was also mentioned in the minutes of a multi-agency meeting held on 23 March 2001 exhibited by Witness B. These minutes confirmed that Pupil A was 13 at the time the card was sent to her by Mr Adams.

The panel also noted that in the minutes of a local authority Allegations Management Meeting held on 16 September 2020, exhibited by Witness C, there was also reference to

it having come to light at a Multi-agency meeting held in March 2011 that Mr Adams had “sent a Valentines card - containing inappropriate comments – to one of his female pupils”.

The panel was aware that these documents were hearsay, but as these were formal records of official meetings, which recorded factual matters, the panel considered that it was able to place significant weight on their content.

On this basis the panel found that the allegation related to the sending of a Valentine’s Day card by Mr Adams to a 13-year-old female pupil at the school where he was working and to whom he had a duty of care.

On the basis of the admission made by Mr Adams and the findings of the panel, the panel found allegations 2a and 2b proven.

3. Your conduct as set out in allegation 1a and/or 2a and/or 2b was sexually motivated.

Mr Adams admitted allegation 3 in relation to allegation 1a but only in relation to one image. He denied allegation 3 in relation to allegations 2a and 2b.

The panel considered if Mr Adams’ conduct was either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a future sexual relationship.

The panel noted that in the statement of agreed facts, Mr Adams admitted that his conduct at allegation 1a was sexually motivated in relation to one unique category C indecent image. He admitted that he had come into possession of an image from the internet which contained a category C image of a child. He admits these images [sic] were for sexual gratification.

The panel also noted that Witness A, in his report to the Crown Prosecutor, provided to the panel, that Mr Adams had accepted that his “reason for the images was sexual”. The report also noted that the 9 unique category C indecent images were “of girls in their early teens. They are dressed in sexual outfits including props like collars and whips”.

The panel took into consideration the detailed description of the 3 unique Category C indecent images contained in the forensic examiner’s report which matched the description of the images provided to the Crown Prosecutor by Witness A.

The panel also took into consideration that there were multiple images (9) that had been obtained/possessed by Mr Adams over a period of time that were indecent in nature.

Taking these factors into account the panel determined that Mr Adams' actions in allegation 1a, in relation to the 9 unique images, was sexually motivated in that they were done in pursuit of sexual gratification.

With regard to allegation 3, as applied to allegations 2a and 2b, the panel considered these two parts of the allegation alongside each other.

The panel particularly noted the wording of the Valentine's Day card (as detailed above) which left the panel in no doubt that it was written with sexual motivation, with the view to pursuing a future sexual relationship. It was sent to a 13-year-old female pupil at the school where he was teaching.

The panel noted that Mr Adams had referred to his sending of the card as "naive".

Taking these factors into account the panel considered that allegation 3 was made out in relation to allegations 2a and 2b. Mr Adams' actions in sending the card with the wording it contained to a 13-year-old female pupil at his school was sexually motivated.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3 proven in relation to allegation 1a, allegation 2a and allegation 2b.

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 Adams in relation to the facts found proved in allegations 1a and 1b and 3, in so far as allegation 3 related to allegation 1a, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

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

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including ... the rule of law...

Mr Adams' conduct as detailed in allegation 2a and 2b considered together, and allegation 3 as it applied to allegation 2a and 2b, took place prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards in 2011. Accordingly, the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of the teaching standards at the time of the conduct. Having done so, it considered that the principles of maintaining appropriate boundaries and keeping children safe were paramount at that time, and that Mr Adams, by seeking to exploit his position of responsibility to a 13-year-old pupil, had breached these key principles.

The panel also considered whether Mr Adams' 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 offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant to allegations 2a and 2b and allegation 3 as it applied to allegation 2a and 2b.

The panel found that possessing any indecent photograph or image or pseudo photograph or image of a child including one-off incidents was relevant to allegation 1a and 1b and allegation 3 as it applied to 1a.

The panel noted that allegations 1a and 1b and allegation 3 as it applied to allegation 1a, took place outside the education setting. The panel considered that Mr Adams' conduct as particularised in these proven allegations demonstrated an unhealthy interest and relationship with children in their early to mid-teens. He was teaching children of this age group. His interest and relationship to this age-group as demonstrated in the proven allegations may have led to pupils being exposed to, or influenced by, the behaviour in a harmful way. This presents a safeguarding risk to those pupils.

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

In relation to whether Mr Adams' 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 Adams' 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 Adams was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant to allegations 2a and 2b and allegation 3, as it applied to allegation 2a and 2b. The panel also found that possessing any indecent photograph or image or pseudo photograph or image of a child including one-off incidents was relevant to allegation 1a and 1b and allegation 3 as it applied to 1a.

The findings of misconduct in allegation 1a and 1b and allegation 3 as it applies to 1a are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher.

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Adam's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct/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 protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Adams, which involved possession of 9 unique Category C indecent images of children in pursuit of sexual gratification, receiving a caution for the possession of one such image which resulted in Mr Adams being on the sex offenders register for 2 years, and, sending a 13 year old pupil a Valentine's Day card with a view to pursuing a future sexual relationship, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious finding of an inappropriate communication with a pupil and the possession of indecent images of children.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Adams 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 Adams 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 Adams in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining Mr Adams in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator. However, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Adams 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 Adams.

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

serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;

the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a ... caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;

misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;

abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);

an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;

sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;

any activity involving ... possessing ... any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child ... including one-off incidents.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors.

Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

There was evidence that Mr Adams' actions were deliberate.

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

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

The panel took into account the following mitigating factors;

- Mr Adams had consistently admitted allegation 1a and allegation 3 as it related to allegation 1a, although on the basis of one image, which was more limited than the basis on which it was found proven by the panel. He had also admitted allegation 1b, allegation 2a, and, allegation 2b. He had accepted the police caution and admitted allegation 1b. To this extent he accepted responsibility for his wrongdoing.
- Mr Adams had self-referred to the School that he was the subject of arrest and police investigation.
- Mr Adams' possession of unique Category C indecent images of children was related to 9 images.
- Mr Adam's possession of the indecent images had taken place during lockdown when he was under what he describes as [REDACTED].
- Mr Adams had said he was "deeply sorry" for his actions in being in possession of the indecent images as it meant that he let his family down and was forced to leave the profession that he loved dearly and to which he had committed himself for an extended period of time happily. He said that he had "paid a very dear price already" for his actions.

- Between the incidents in 1997 and 2020, Mr Adams stated that he had worked successfully as a teacher with no issues of concern arising.
- Mr Adams stated that he was naive in sending the Valentine's Day card and that this had happened in the context of a [REDACTED] and had not happened again. He accepted that his action was a "grave error of judgement" due in part to his "inexperience & lack of insight as a relatively newly qualified teacher".
- To Mr Adams' understanding was that the record of his sending the Valentine's card should have been removed from his personnel file at the school. The implication was that if this had taken place the issue would not have come to the attention of the School and the TRA.
- Mr Adams had co-operated with the TRA's investigations and engaged with the TRA's regulatory hearing. He had provided the hearing with what he described as his "honest" account of events.
- Mr Adams has said that the matter had been "hanging over him for nearly 5 years and this has taken a significant toll [REDACTED].
- Mr Adams' apology to the Secretary of State and the School.
- That Mr Adams had no previous record with the TRA.

However, the panel also noted the following serious aggravating factors;

- Mr Adams expressed no insight in to or recognition of the impact of his conduct on a young girl, in terms of sending the Valentine's Day card, or, on other young girls, by his possessing the unique category C indecent images. He showed no victim recognition or remorse for the impact of his conduct. His concern appeared to be focussed on the impact of his conduct on himself.
- That despite the Valentine's Day card concerns involving a young teenage pupil arising in 1997, and his teaching for a further 20 years afterwards, Mr Adams failed to have sufficient appreciation of the standards required of him as a teacher, such that, at a later date, he was found to be in possession of indecent images of young teenagers and received a caution for his possession of one of them.
- The panel had no evidence before it of Mr Adams taking any rehabilitative steps, including undertaking training, including safeguarding training, to address the serious concerns that arose from his conduct.

The panel noted that Mr Adams had no further wish to teach and would never return to the profession. He had moved to another career, which did not involve children, some detail of which was made known to the panel.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the consequences for Mr Adams 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 Adams. The serious and on-going high risk to pupils posed by Mr Adams' actions, which were sexually motivated and demonstrated an unhealthy interest in young teenage girls, were significant factor in forming that opinion. Mr Adams' failure to recognise the impact of his conduct, and, his failure to take steps to address his conduct were also important factors in forming the panel's view. The panel considered that there was a high, and on-going, risk of repetition of inappropriate conduct involving young teenage girls. 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.

The panel considered that the following listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings:

- 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;
- any activity involving ... possessing ... any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents.

Mr Adam's action in having possession of 9 unique category C indecent images of children for the purpose of sexual gratification, and, sending a Valentine's Day card to a 13 year old pupil at his school for the purpose of pursuing a future sexual relationship with a pupil, raised serious concerns about Mr Adams' unhealthy and repeated interest in

young teenage children. That he had failed to recognise the impact of his action on the victims and failed to take step to address his conduct added to the panel's serious concerns.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The panel took into account the serious nature of Mr Adams conduct, and, the mitigating and aggravating factors detailed above. It considered that Mr Adams had shown no insight into his actions and shown only limited remorse, which the panel was concerned was focussed on the impact of his actions on himself rather than on the children involved. He had taken no steps to address his conduct through rehabilitation or training. He had produced no evidence of any coping strategies and/or support mechanisms having been put in place by him to reduce the level of risk. In these circumstances the panel was concerned that there remained a high risk of repetition of inappropriate sexual conduct. The panel took into account the period of time that had elapsed between, and since, the incidents, but considered that the high risk of repetition remained.

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/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

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

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including ... the rule of law...

The panel also comments as follows:

“Mr Adams’ conduct as detailed in allegation 2a and 2b considered together, and allegation 3 as it applied to allegation 2a and 2b, took place prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards in 2011. Accordingly, the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of the teaching standards at the time of the conduct. Having done so, it considered that the principles of maintaining appropriate boundaries and keeping children safe were paramount at that time, and that Mr Adams, by seeking to exploit his position of responsibility to a 13-year-old pupil, had breached these key principles.”

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a teacher accepting a police caution for possessing an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child. They also include sexually motivated behaviour towards a pupil.

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

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel makes this observation:

“In the light of the panel’s findings against Mr Adams, which involved possession of 9 unique Category C indecent images of children in pursuit of sexual gratification, receiving a caution for the possession of one such image which resulted in Mr Adams being on the sex offenders register for 2 years, and, sending a 13 year old pupil a Valentine’s Day card with a view to pursuing a future sexual relationship, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of

pupils, given the serious finding of an inappropriate communication with a pupil and the possession of indecent images of children.”

A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

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

“Mr Adams had said he was “deeply sorry” for his actions in being in possession of the indecent images as it meant that he let his family down and was forced to leave the profession that he loved dearly and to which he had committed himself for an extended period of time happily. He said that he had “paid a very dear price already” for his actions.”

The panel also records that:

“Mr Adams stated that he was naive in sending the Valentine’s Day card and that this had happened in the context of a [REDACTED] and had not happened again. He accepted that his action was a “grave error of judgement” due in part to his *“inexperience & lack of insight as a relatively newly qualified teacher”*.”

However, I have also noted the following observations made by the panel:

“Mr Adams expressed no insight in to or recognition of the impact of his conduct on a young girl, in terms of sending the Valentine’s Day card, or, on other young girls, by his possessing the unique category C indecent images. He showed no victim recognition or remorse for the impact of his conduct. His concern appeared to be focussed on the impact of his conduct on himself.”

“That despite the Valentine’s Day card concerns involving a young teenage pupil arising in 1997, and his teaching for a further 20 years afterwards, Mr Adams failed to have sufficient appreciation of the standards required of him as a teacher, such that, at a later date, he was found to be in possession of indecent images of young teenagers and received a caution for his possession of one of them.”

“The panel had no evidence before it of Mr Adams taking any rehabilitative steps, including undertaking training, including safeguarding training, to address the serious concerns that arose from his conduct.”

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

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

“The findings of misconduct in allegation 1a and 1b and allegation 3 as it applies to 1a are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher.

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Adam’s actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher accepting a police caution for possessing an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to have on the reputation of the profession.

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

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of 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 Adams himself. The panel comments that “There was no evidence before the panel that Mr Adams demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the very serious nature of the misconduct found by the panel. I have also placed considerable weight on the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse and what the panel describes as the “...high risk of repetition of inappropriate sexual conduct.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Adams has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

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

In doing so, the panel has made reference to the Advice:

“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.

The panel considered that the following listed characteristics were engaged by the panel’s findings:

- 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;
- any activity involving ... possessing ... any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents.”

I have considered the panel’s concluding comments:

“The panel took into account the serious nature of Mr Adams conduct, and, the mitigating and aggravating factors detailed above. It considered that Mr Adams had shown no insight into his actions and shown only limited remorse, which the panel was concerned was focussed on the impact of his actions on himself rather than on the children involved. He had taken no steps to address his conduct through rehabilitation or training. He had produced no evidence of any coping strategies and/or support mechanisms having been put in place by him to reduce the level of risk. In these circumstances the panel was concerned that there remained a high risk of repetition of inappropriate sexual conduct. The panel took into account the period of time that had elapsed between, and since, the incidents, but considered that the high risk of repetition remained.

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.”

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

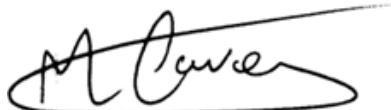
are the very serious nature of the misconduct found, as well as the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse and consequent risk of repetition and jeopardy to the future wellbeing of pupils.

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 Reuben Adams 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 Adams 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 Adams 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 "Marc Cavey", enclosed within a thin oval border.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 25 November 2025

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