



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Thomas Barnecut: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

January 2026

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

Teacher:	Mr Thomas Barnecut
Teacher ref number:	1542811
Teacher date of birth:	18 March 1983
TRA reference:	25549
Date of determination:	19 January 2026
Former employer:	Oasis Academy Connaught, Bristol

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 19 January 2026 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Thomas Barnecut.

The panel members were Ms Mona Sood (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Gill Lyon (teacher panellist) and Mr Nigel Shock (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr James Corrish of Birketts LLP Solicitors.

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

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 9 January 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Barnecut was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as an Assistant Principal at Oasis Academy Connaught (“the School”), during the period of 2023-2025:

1. On or around 27 November 2023 he attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;
2. On or around 3 May 2023 he attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;
3. On or around 16 April 2024 he attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;
4. On or around 17 April 2024, he attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;
5. On or around 11 March 2025 he attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;
6. His conduct at allegation 5 above was despite his receiving a final written warning for his conduct on 13 May 2024;
7. His conduct at allegations 1 and/or 2 and/or 3 and/or 4 and/or 4 and/or 5 above put one or more pupils at risk of harm.

Mr Barnecut admitted allegations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, and further admitted that his conduct with regard to all allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, as set out in the notice of referral form signed by Mr Barnecut on 17 September 2025, and the statement of agreed facts signed by Mr Barnecut on 13 December 2025 and subsequently signed by the presenting officer on 16 December 2025.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of referral and response – pages 3 to 22

Section 2: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 23 to 29

Section 3: TRA documents – pages 30 to 82

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 83 to 87

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing.

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

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Barnecut on 13 December 2025 (the “Statement of Agreed Facts”).

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

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

On 1 September 2021, Mr Barnecut commenced his employment at Oasis Academy Connaught (“the School”). At the relevant time he was employed as an Assistant Principal and classroom teacher.

On 17 April 2024, a parent contacted [REDACTED] and reported that Mr Barnecut smelled of alcohol when she brought her child into the School that day and the previous day.

On 11 March 2025, Individual A, [REDACTED], reported to [REDACTED] that Mr Barnecut smelled of alcohol and a disciplinary process was instigated.

On 2 May 2025, the matter was referred to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

In respect of all the allegations, the panel scrutinised the entire bundle including the TRA’s documents concerning the investigations and the meetings of the School surrounding these allegations.

The panel noted that the evidence within a lot of these documents was hearsay but considered that the evidence was relevant and formed part of the School's investigations. The panel therefore admitted the hearsay evidence after careful consideration in each case but noted that the evidence should be considered carefully and cautiously, including in relation to the appropriate amount of weight to place on it.

In relation to weight, the panel placed reasonable weight upon the full contents of the bundle. The panel recognised that Mr Barnecut had chosen to admit to all the allegations and had not called into question the validity of any of the evidence, after having had sight of it.

The panel carefully considered Mr Barnecut's statement of mitigation dated 24 November 2025 in its consideration of all allegations.

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

1. On or around 27 November 2023 you attended school whilst smelling of alcohol

Mr Barnecut admitted to allegation 1 in the statement of agreed facts and in his response to the notice of referral.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered the referral document to the LADO dated 23 April 2024 which, under the "*previous concerns and actions*" heading, recorded that on 27 November 2023, a parent made a complaint about Mr Barnecut smelling of alcohol and that, on 5 December 2023, a management instruction had been issued in relation to that complaint of 27 November 2023.

In relation to this allegation, and allegations 2, 3 and 4, the panel noted an excerpt stated to be from an e-mail from [REDACTED] sent at 11.05 on 11 March 2025 in which she was recorded as having written "*I decided to say something today, because after the last time I was annoyed with myself for not having raised it with SLT and I worry that our children are being looked after by someone who is possibly under the influence of alcohol*".

The panel considered an interview record of 14 March 2025, in which Mr Barnecut provided his account of the events of 11 March 2025. During this interview, he stated that he was "*fully aware of the consequences of slipping up again*" and that he had put things in place to "*try and stop this happening again*".

Although the panel noted that it had no direct evidence that these later comments related to the alleged activities of 27 November 2023, 3 May 2023 and 16 and 17 April 2024 the

panel did consider that it increased the likelihood that the facts alleged in allegations 1, 2, 3 and 4 were true.

Given the evidence which it had seen and the contents of the statement of agreed facts, the panel considered that the TRA had demonstrated, to the standard of the balance of probabilities, that Mr Barnecut had attended the School, smelling of alcohol, on 27 November 2023.

The panel therefore found allegation 1 proven.

2. On or around 3 May 2023 you attended school whilst smelling of alcohol

Mr Barnecut admitted to allegation 2 in the statement of agreed facts and in the response to the notice of referral.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel again considered the referral document to the LADO dated 23 April 2024 which, under the “*previous concerns and actions*” heading, recorded that on 3 May 2023, [REDACTED] were “*concerned about the smell of alcohol*” and that “*TB spoken to by Principal and told it was not acceptable*”.

The panel found, given the evidence which it had seen as well as the contents of the statement of agreed facts, that the TRA had demonstrated to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Barnecut had attended the School, smelling of alcohol, on 3 May 2023.

The panel therefore found allegation 2 proven.

3. On or around 16 April 2024 you attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;

4. On or around 17 April 2024, you attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;

Mr Barnecut admitted to allegations 3 and 4 in the statement of agreed facts and in the response to the notice of referral.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel again considered the referral document to the LADO dated 23 April 2024 which set out that [REDACTED] telephoned [REDACTED] at the School on 17 April 2024 stating that “*She did not want to approach [him – [REDACTED]] on the gate [that] morning*” but “*She is feeling worried about TB drinking again and wants to raise her concern with [him]*”.

[REDACTED] was recorded as saying to [REDACTED] that “*yesterday she smelt alcohol on TB, he was acting cagey and keeping a distance from her*”. The report also recorded

[REDACTED] as having recorded, with regard to that mother, that *“Today she brought [REDACTED] to school and again she smelt alcohol on TB, also saying he got [REDACTED] name wrong a few times this week which she thought was weird and again today he smelt of alcohol and she noticed he was really trying to distance himself from her, physically moving back when she was trying to talk and not wanting her to get near him. She also said- today he looked well-presented though, not like before, he looked tidy today not dishevelled like last time”*.

The panel considered the interview record dated 14 March 2025, in which Mr Barnecut provided his account of the events of 11 March 2025. During this interview, he stated that he was *“fully aware of the consequences of slipping up again”*, referring to previous concerns regarding him attending work smelling of alcohol.

The panel then considered the interview record of Individual B, who stated that Mr Barnecut had said in the meeting which she attended on 11 March 2025 that he was *“aware he was on a final warning”* and the panel considered the evidence appeared to make clear that this warning had related to the alleged occasions of 16 and 17 April 2024 in allegations 3 and 4.

The panel noted in fact that within the statement of agreed facts Mr Barnecut admitted that he had received a final written warning on 13 May 2024 as a result of his actions in attending the School smelling of alcohol on 16 April 2024 and 17 April 2024.

The panel noted that within the TRA referral form, signed by individual C, [REDACTED], Mr Barnecut’s previous disciplinary record was listed. It stated that he was given a final written warning on 13 May 2024 in relation to the allegation that on the 16 and 17 April 2024 he smelled of alcohol whilst at work in charge of pupils at the School.

The panel found, it having carefully considered the evidence which it had seen as well as the contents of the statement of agreed facts, that the TRA had demonstrated to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Barnecut had attended the School, smelling of alcohol, on 16 and 17 April 2024.

The panel therefore found allegations 3 and 4 proven.

5. On or around 11 March 2025 you attended school whilst smelling of alcohol;

Mr Barnecut admitted to allegation 5 in the statement of agreed facts and in his response to the notice of referral.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel noted an excerpt stated to be from an e-mail from Individual A of 11.05 on 11 March 2025 in which she was recorded as having written *“While sitting in the staff room next to TB today I noted a very strong smell of alcohol to the point of it being a little*

overwhelming. He looked flushed and had red eyes too. I have noticed this before, probably on a few occasions dating back perhaps a year. I decided to say something today because after the last time I was annoyed with myself for not having raised it with SLT and I worry that our children are being looked after by someone who is possibly under the influence of alcohol. I am also concerned about the welfare of TB”.

The panel also considered the notes of an investigatory meeting with Individual A of 11 March 2025 in which she was recorded as stating that, on 11 March 2025 she “*noticed the smell of alcohol pretty much straight away. Because I've noticed it before and because it was so overpowering I felt I needed to do something*” and that “*previous time I had smelt it, a while ago, made me go home feeling bad about our children being in the care of someone who had been drinking*”. She was also recorded as saying that the “*previous time was quite a long time ago, and was definitely more than once*” and “*he looked flushed as in his cheeks, he had red, tired eyes. He was a little sweaty and the smell of alcohol was almost instant.*”.

The panel also considered the notes of an investigatory meeting with Individual B of 11 March 2025 in which she was recorded as stating that she “*believed there was a slight aroma of alcohol*” when she met with Mr Barnecut in Individual D’s office. Individual B recalled Mr Barnecut as indicating that he had had “*a glass of wine*” the previous evening which he later changed to “*some wine*”.

The panel also considered the notes of an investigatory meeting with Individual D of 12 March 2025 in which he was recorded as stating that Individual A came into his office on 11 March 2025 to inform him that she “*felt really uncomfortable as this was about a colleague*” and that “*TB reeked of alcohol*” and that she said to him that “*this was not the first time*”.

Individual D was recorded as having said “*TB came in and sat down; I noted that he was red faced*” and “*he reported that he had had a glass of wine last night*” and that “*he had been a bit stressed so had had some wine*”. Individual D stated that “*during the discussion with TB I could clearly smell alcohol*”.

The panel also considered the notes of an investigatory meeting with Individual E of 18 March 2025 in which Individual E stated, regarding Mr Barnecut’s actions on 11 March 2025, “*Tom seemed completely normal. Throughout planning Tom was acting perfectly normally. He didn't present as flustered in any way.*”. In response to the question “*did he smell of alcohol*” Individual E replied “*no he didn't. That didn't cross my mind at any point*”.

The panel went on to consider a record of an interview with Mr Barnecut dated 14 March 2025, in which Mr Barnecut was recorded as stating that the night before he had had “*a glass and a half of wine at home with dinner*” and that he was “*feeling really stressed in the evenings and was making bad decisions about how to manage it, e.g. drinking in the*

evenings". He was also recorded as stating that he "rarely drink[s] in the week anymore. I don't have a pattern of drinking on Mondays this was purely because I was having dinner with my husband".

The panel found, it having carefully considered the evidence which it had seen as well as the contents of the statement of agreed facts, that the TRA had demonstrated to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Barnecut had attended the School, smelling of alcohol, on 11 March 2025.

The panel therefore found allegation 5 proven.

6. Your conduct at allegation 5 above was despite receiving a final written warning for your conduct on 13 May 2024

Having found allegation 5 proven, the panel went on to make a determination as to allegation 6.

Mr Barnecut admitted to allegation 6 in the statement of agreed facts and in his response to the notice of referral. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel again noted that within the statement of agreed facts that Mr Barnecut admitted that he had received a final written warning on 13 May 2024 as a result of his actions in attending the School smelling of alcohol on 16 April 2024 and 17 April 2024.

Mr Barnecut also admitted in that statement that, despite receiving the letter on 13 May 2024, he still attended the School on 11 March 2025 smelling of alcohol.

The panel again considered the TRA referral form, signed by Individual B, [REDACTED]. Mr Barnecut's previous disciplinary record was listed there including that he was given a final written warning on 13 May 2024 in relation to the allegation that on the 16 and 17 April 2024 he smelt of alcohol whilst at work and in charge of pupils in the School. The panel noted that it had not had sight of any direct evidence of the disciplinary warning as issued to Mr Barnecut.

The panel also considered the notes of an investigatory meeting with Individual C of 18 March 2025 in which she stated that Mr Barnecut had said in the meeting which she attended on 11 March 2025 that he was "*aware he was on a final warning*".

The panel found, it having carefully considered the evidence which it had seen as well as the contents of the statement of agreed facts, that the TRA had demonstrated to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Barnecut received a final written warning for his conduct on 13 May 2024 and that he had conducted himself as found proven in allegation 5 regardless of this.

The panel found allegation 6 proven.

7. Your conduct at allegations 1 and/or 2 and/or 3 and/or 4 and/or 4 and/or 5 above put one or more pupils at risk of harm.

Having found allegations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 proven, the panel went on to make a determination as to allegation 7.

The panel noted that within the statement of agreed facts Mr Barnecut had admitted that, as a result of attending School on the occasions listed within the five allegations smelling of alcohol, he had put students at risk of harm.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel noted that it had found proven that on consistent occasions over the course of close to two years Mr Barnecut had continued to attend the School whilst smelling of alcohol. Rather than being isolated events the panel considered that its findings demonstrated a course of conduct. The School had directed Mr Barnecut to appropriate support which he had not taken up.

The panel reminded itself of Individual A's e-mail in which she was recorded as writing "*I decided to say something today because after the last time I was annoyed with myself for not having raised it with SLT and I worry that our children are being looked after by someone who is possibly under the influence of alcohol. I am also concerned about the welfare of TB*".

The panel reminded itself of the statement which it had understood had been made by a parent to [REDACTED] in connection with the matters which it had found proven at allegations 3 and 4 that "*again she smelt alcohol on TB, also saying he got [REDACTED]name wrong a few times this week which she thought was weird and again today he smelt of alcohol and she noticed he was really trying to distance himself from her, physically moving back when she was trying to talk and not wanting her to get near him*".

The panel noted that it had no medical evidence and no evidence as to the level of alcohol which was within Mr Barnecut's bloodstream at the time he attended the School.

The panel carefully considered Mr Barnecut's statement of mitigation dated 24 November 2025 in which he had stated that he had "*never consumed alcohol in the morning before school or during the school day*" and noted that he had "*never been accused of being under the influence of alcohol whilst at school*" and that he "*Found himself in increasingly stressful situations at school*" and "*managed this badly by drinking in the evenings at home*".

The panel noted it also had very limited information as to the volume of alcohol which Mr Barnecut had drunk on any of the occasions which it had found proven. It noted Mr Barnecut's admission that he had a problematic relationship with alcohol.

The panel considered that, given that it had evidence as to the strong smell of alcohol on Mr Barnecut from a number of witnesses, there was a possibility Mr Barnecut was still metabolising the alcohol when he attended the School on at least some of these occasions and, if that were the case, his judgement may have been impaired.

The panel carefully considered the evidence.

The panel did not consider that there was any evidence that there was any intention to cause harm or to place any pupils at risk on Mr Barnecut's part. The panel noted though the young age of Mr Barnecut's class.

The panel considered that Mr Barnecut having attended the School smelling of alcohol on a number of occasions and over a significant period of time, which it had found proven, demonstrated conduct which put one or more pupils at risk of harm.

The panel therefore found allegation 7 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 Barnecut, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Barnecut 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
 - 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 also considered whether Mr Barnecut'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 none of these offences were relevant.

The panel carefully considered the allegations which it had found proven. The panel had established that, over the course of a period of time, Mr Barnecut had attended the School smelling of alcohol on at least five separate occasions. The panel found that he was cautioned in respect of his behaviour and given guidance but that he did not sufficiently address this behaviour. The panel did not consider that there was any intent to cause harm to any child or place any child at risk and it noted that it had no evidence before it that any harm had been caused to any child. The panel nevertheless considered that the conduct which it had found proven by Mr Barnecut was serious and had placed one or more children at risk of harm. The panel considered this was far below the standards expected of a teacher.

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

In relation to whether Mr Barnecut'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 Barnecut'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 Barnecut was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

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

The panel again considered the allegations which it had found proven and noted indeed that at least three of the allegations which had been raised concerning Mr Barnecut's conduct had come directly from parents who had clearly considered Mr Barnecut's conduct to be sufficiently unacceptable and worrisome to report it. The panel noted that

one of the parents and Individual A had demonstrated a shared awareness of Mr Barnecut having previously presented smelling of alcohol.

The panel considered that the public generally would find it unacceptable that any teacher would present at work on five occasions smelling of alcohol, or place children at risk as it had found, intentionally or otherwise. The panel considered that this would be considered by the general public to be actions substantially below the standards which the public would expect.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

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

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Barnecut, which involved attending the School while smelling of alcohol on multiple occasions and then continuing to do so in spite of a warning, and potentially placing the welfare of children at risk there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Barnecut was 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 Barnecut 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 Barnecut in the profession. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Barnecut in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

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.

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 Barnecut.

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;

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.

Mr Barnecut's actions were clearly deliberate.

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

There was no evidence within the bundle that demonstrated Mr Barnecut had exhibited exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character and noted that part of the allegations which it had found proven related to the fact that that Mr Barnecut was previously subject to a disciplinary warning.

The panel had no character evidence before it.

The panel again considered Mr Barnecut's letter of mitigation of 24 November 2025 in which he stated that he was "*greatly embarrassed and ashamed*". Mr Barnecut stated

that he had been experiencing “*increasingly stressful situations*” at school and that the stress had [REDACTED]. Mr Barnecut admitted the allegations and acknowledged that the School had sought to assist him.

In his letter, Mr Barnecut said that, since March 2025, he had taken what he described as positive steps to address these issues, [REDACTED].

The panel considered then 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 noted that there was no direct criticism of Mr Barnecut’s teaching either within the allegations or the evidence.

The panel was conscious that the publication of these findings would mean that new employers would be aware of Mr Barnecut’s history and would put in place careful measures, were they to employ him, to ensure at all times Mr Barnecut remained in a fit condition to carry out the duties of his employment.

The panel was conscious of the advice which it had received in connection with the case of *Wallace v Secretary of State for Education* [2017] EWHC 109 (Admin) regarding whether a less intrusive measure which may convey some moral blameworthiness might be appropriate. [REDACTED].

The panel did not consider that it had been explained how prohibiting Mr Barnecut for a period of at least two years will produce any material change or serve any useful purpose. The panel considered that the misconduct, although serious, fell at the lower end of the scale of severity.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet public interest requirements of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils the maintenance of public confidence in the profession/declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

The panel therefore recommended that no prohibition order be imposed.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found 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 recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Barnecut 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
 - 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 finds that the conduct of Mr Barnecut fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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 Barnecut 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 pupils. The panel has observed,

“The panel considered that Mr Barnecut having attended the School smelling of alcohol on a number of occasions and over a significant period of time, which it had found proven, demonstrated conduct which put one or more pupils at risk of harm”.

The panel has further noted that,

“...it had evidence as to the strong smell of alcohol on Mr Barnecut from a number of witnesses, there was a possibility Mr Barnecut was still metabolising the alcohol when he attended the School on at least some of these occasions and, if that were the case, his judgement may have been impaired”.

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

The panel also considered the Advice, and identified the following behaviours as listed in the Advice which would indicate that a prohibition order may be appropriate,

- *“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”*

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments about whether there were any mitigating factors identified. The panel note,

“Mr Barnecut’s actions were clearly deliberate.

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

There was no evidence within the bundle that demonstrated Mr Barnecut had exhibited exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character and noted that part of the allegations which it had found proven related to the fact that that Mr Barnecut was previously subject to a disciplinary warning”.

The panel also identify factors in relation to Mr Barnecut’s insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows,

“The panel again considered Mr Barnecut’s letter of mitigation of 24 November 2025 in which he stated that he was “greatly embarrassed and ashamed”. Mr Barnecut stated that he had been experiencing “increasingly stressful situations” at school and that the stress had [REDACTED]. Mr Barnecut admitted the allegations and acknowledged that the School had sought to assist him.

In his letter, Mr Barnecut said that, since March 2025, he had taken what he described as positive steps to address these issues, [REDACTED].

It appears from the panel's findings that Mr Barnecut has some insight into his behaviour and that he is taking steps to address that. The panel note that "[REDACTED]".

In my judgement, the finding that Mr Barnecut is still seeking to address the cause and triggers of the conduct may indicate a lack of full insight. This 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 observe,

"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 Barnecut was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated".

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.

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

In this case, I have placed some weight on the panel's comments concerning Mr Barnecut's insight or remorse. The panel has said, "he stated that he was *"greatly embarrassed and ashamed"*. Mr Barnecut stated that he had been experiencing *"increasingly stressful situations"* at school and that the stress had [REDACTED]. Mr Barnecut admitted the allegations and acknowledged that the School had sought to assist him".

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction, to the contribution that Mr Barnecut has made to the profession.

In my view, the panel has not placed sufficient weight on the risk of repetition of the behaviour. The panel foresee that this may become an issue in the future as it notes in its

recommendation that “...publication of these findings would mean that new employers would be aware of Mr Barnecut’s history and would put in place careful measures, were they to employ him, to ensure at all times Mr Barnecut remained in a fit condition to carry out the duties of his employment”.

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 full insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession, and means that the risk of harm to pupils the panel has identified, remains.

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.

I have considered the panel’s comments that Mr Barnecut is taking steps to address the causes and triggers of his behaviour.

I have also referred to the Advice, and factors which may indicate a longer review period. None of the listed factors are relevant in this case.

I consider therefore that a two year review period (the statutory minimum) is required to mitigate the risk of harm to pupils and to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr Thomas Barnecut is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England. He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 30 January 2028, 2 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Barnecut remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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



Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 23 January 2026

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