



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr David Egford: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

January 2026

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Allegations | 4 |
| Summary of evidence | 4 |
| Documents | 4 |
| Witnesses | 5 |
| Decision and reasons | 5 |
| Findings of fact | 5 |
| Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State | 13 |
| Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State | 19 |

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

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Teacher: | Mr David Egford |
| TRA reference: | 23508 |
| Date of determination: | 15 January 2026 |
| Former employer: | Athena Learning Trust, Launceston College, Launceston (“the College”) |

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 13 to 14 November 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr David Egford. The panel convened in camera on 8 January 2026 and announced its decision on 15 January 2026.

The panel members were Miss Louisa Munton (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Michelle Chappell (teacher panellist) and Mr Maurice Smith (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel on 13 to 14 November 2025 and 8 January 2026 was Mrs Luisa Gibbons of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors. The legal adviser to the panel on 15 January 2026 was Mrs Shanie Glen of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Miss Shirly Duckworth of Lincoln House Chambers instructed by Brabners LLP.

Mr Egford was present and was represented by Mr Andrew Faux of the Reflective Practice.

The hearing took place in public save that portions of the hearing were heard in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 5 August 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Egford was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst working as a teacher:

1. Between November 2023 and 15 February 2024, he developed an inappropriate relationship with Former Pupil A by engaging in communication that:
 - a. Was sexual in nature; and
 - b. Crossed professional boundaries.
2. His conduct as described at paragraph 1a. above was sexually motivated.

Mr Egord admitted allegation 1b but denied allegations 1a and 2. He did not admit that he was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of referral and response, notice of proceedings and anonymised person list – pages 3 to 23

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 24 to 124

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 125 to 155

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 167 to 186

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

A witness statement prepared by Mr Egford – 35 pages;

A bundle of documents provided by Mr Egford – 68 pages; and

A testimonial statement of a former colleague – 3 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].

Mr Egford also gave oral evidence and called the following witness:

Witness B – [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.

Mr Egford was employed by the College from 1 September 2008. He subsequently became designated safeguarding lead (“DSL”) in 2014 and assistant principal in 2016. An investigation was commenced on 29 January 2024 following concerns having been raised that he had engaged in inappropriate communications with Former Pupil A, who was under the age of 18 and left the College in [REDACTED]. A disciplinary hearing took place on 12 March 2024. Mr Egford was dismissed. Mr Egford appealed the decision, and the matter proceeded to an appeal panel. The decision to dismiss on grounds of gross misconduct was upheld. The College referred him to the TRA on 5 April 2024.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

Whilst working as a teacher:

- 1. Between November 2023 and 15 February 2024, you developed an inappropriate relationship with Former Pupil A by engaging in communication that:**
 - a. Was sexual in nature; and**

The panel was provided with photographs of messages exchanged between Mr Egford and Former Pupil A. Witness A confirmed in evidence that she was provided with these photographs by the Trust's [REDACTED]. The photographs had been provided to the [REDACTED], who had spoken with Former Pupil A when she first reported the messages and to whom Former Pupil A had sent the messages on 18 January 2024. Witness A confirmed that the messages commenced on 16 January 2024.

The messages depicted on the photographs began with a message from Mr Egford dated 16 January 2024 timed at 21:14 stating "Good answer...want me to never do that again then?". Former Pupil A responded, "Yes lol" to which Mr Egford responded, "Deal and genuinely sorry". Mr Egford expressed that he was "amazed you've forgiven me that quickly" and then sent a message at 21:18 stating "I will do my best to be completely appropriate from now on lol You set the tone of what's allowed seeing as tho [sic] I'm already in too far."

The following day, on 17 January 2024, Mr Egford passed on some advice to Former Pupil A explaining that he had "reached out to a couple of friends" to see if they could help with Former Pupil A finding a job. Former Pupil A expressed some frustration and Mr Egford responded, "We'll [sic], good job you have me then lol" to which Former Pupil A responded, "yeah to be fair lol!". In a subsequent message Mr Egford stated, "be brutal about me if you want lol I was expecting you to say I am way better." Further messages were exchanged and Former Pupil A asked, "Any chance you know how to get rid of bags under the eyes lol?" and Mr Egford responded "Lol... less stress, more sleep... And more time with me lol." Former Pupil A responded that she was getting more than enough sleep and Mr Egford replied, "Well just have to be more time with me then." Former Pupil A sent a photograph of her face saying that she was showing him the "bags under my eye". Mr Egford responded "Fair enough! Is it ok to say that I liked what I saw tho lol But they aren't that bad". Former Pupil A explained that "they look worse in real life" and Mr Egford responded "Haha – I will have to see them in person then lol". Former Pupil A responded that she did not leave the house without make up. Mr Egford replied "honestly... You look really good without it... And I don't care if I've taken it too far lol." A subsequent message from Mr Egford stated, "you could Take the compliment and accept I think that And at least you didn't say that I was taking it too far lol".

Mr Egford then confirmed that he had deleted her photograph and stated, "you can always trust me." Mr Egford then sent a message stating "I know I ask a lot but you still enjoying and ok that we chat like this?", then after passing on a message from a potential employer sent a further message stating "Honest question now – would you prefer to just message me about job stuff." Former Pupil A responded, "Yeah please."

In Witness A's investigation report, she stated that earlier messages dated 16 January 2024 had been amongst those provided by Former Pupil A. The first was sent by Mr Egford timed at 21:09 stating "ok when I sent it show me a screenshot that chat is deleted yeah?" then at 21:13 "so this morning when we were chatting I kind of forgot I

wasn't supposed to be and I liked it and I took it too far and honestly liked the fact I thought you were in bed and not dressed. I know that's wrong but I still don't mind that I thought it. Just wanted to be honest." In oral evidence, Witness A could not explain why the photographs depicting the messages recorded as having been sent at 21:09 and 21:13 were not within the images provided to the panel. However, the panel considered that Mr Egford's subsequent message timed at 21:18, referred to above, corroborated that there had been an earlier message that Mr Egford considered to have been inappropriate.

The panel also had sight of the note of a meeting held with Mr Egford as part of the College's investigation. When interviewed, Mr Egford stated that he had made a comment in an earlier chat where, after Former Pupil A told him that she was in bed and cold, he had told her to put some clothes on. He stated that he had apologised for making the comment about Former Pupil A putting some clothes on. The message sent at 21:13 was read to Mr Egford during the course of the interview and he responded "Oh, God!". He was asked if those were the messages that he had asked Former Pupil A to delete and he confirmed this to be the case and explained he had asked Former Pupil A to do this "because it's wrong isn't it? I don't know what I was thinking".

In Mr Egford's evidence for this professional conduct panel hearing he stated that he agreed that his messages became "weird." He stated that he had made some "clumsy" joke on the morning of 16 January in response to Former Pupil A saying she was cold, telling her to put some more clothes on then. He stated that he then made matters "far worse" that evening by, in terms of his apology, where he said "so this morning when we were chatting I kind of forgot I wasn't supposed to be and I liked it and I took it too far and honestly liked the fact I thought you were in bed and not dressed. I know that's wrong but I still don't mind that I thought it. Just wanted to be honest". He stated that he had asked her to delete "the clumsy joke".

The panel considered it more likely than not that Mr Egford had sent the message timed at 21:13. Having sent a message of that nature was consistent with Mr Egford's subsequent comment seen by the panel acknowledging some impropriety on his behalf given his promise to be "completely appropriate from now on". The panel noted that Mr Egford had not denied sending the message at 21:13 when he was asked about it during the College's investigation and had admitted sending the message in his evidence for the present hearing.

The panel considered that a message expressing appreciation for Former Pupil A being in bed and not dressed was, by its very nature, sexual.

The panel went on to consider whether engaging in this communication constituted developing an inappropriate relationship with Former Pupil A.

Witness A's investigation report referred to Former Pupil A as being an ex-student of the College who had left in the [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Witness A had asked a number of questions of [REDACTED].

Mr Egford confirmed in his evidence for this hearing that [REDACTED]. He was therefore fully aware of Former Pupil A's vulnerabilities. Mr Egford explained that his involvement with Former Pupil A, after she left the College, began in [REDACTED] when she was [REDACTED] when he was approached by a former colleague who asked if he could provide Former Pupil A with a reference and some support in looking for work.

The panel considered that Mr Egford had developed an inappropriate relationship with Former Pupil A given that he had known that she was vulnerable, that he was in a position in which he was being entrusted to provide her with support to secure employment. Despite this, he engaged in communication with Former Pupil A that was sexual in nature.

The panel found this allegation proven.

b. Crossed professional boundaries.

Mr Egford admitted this allegation. In the note of his interview as part of the College's investigation, he confirmed that he had "reached out" to Former Pupil A via Facebook Messenger after a former colleague had been in touch to tell him that she thought Former Pupil A was struggling. He confirmed that there had become a point when he suggested that they moved their communications to Skype as his "Facebook Messenger didn't work very well."

Questions were asked of Former Pupil A via [REDACTED] as part of the College's investigation and she explained that Mr Egford had suggested this so profile names could be changed. The panel exercised caution with this evidence given the hearsay nature of it but noticed that the photographs of the messages provided to the panel attributed to Mr Egford described him as simply "E" rather than his full name.

In Mr Egford's evidence for this professional conduct hearing, he stated that he believed they had used Facebook messenger to communicate as it had been suggested that Former Pupil A would be more comfortable with that. He stated that he could not remember why the communication moved from Facebook to Skype, but he suspected it was simply that he preferred the interface offered by Skype.

The panel noted that Witness A's Investigation Report quoted from the College's Code of Conduct even though that Code of Conduct had not been provided to the panel. The Code of Conduct was quoted as saying that it was expected that staff will "only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils." The panel

considered that Mr Egford's use of social media crossed professional boundaries. Use of social media prevented the relationship being visible to the College.

The panel also noted that the timing of the messages sent by Mr Egford to Former Pupil A. Messages were sent after 21:00 to Former Pupil A on 16 January 2024 and as early as 07:49 on 17 January 2024. The panel considered this to also cross professional boundaries, by blurring the distinction between the exercise of professional functions and social communications.

As the messages sent by Mr Egford strayed into areas outside of providing advice to Former Pupil A regarding her job search, the content of his messages also crossed professional boundaries.

The panel considered that using social media, sending messages outside of working hours and the content of Mr Egford's messages that strayed outside the provision of career advice all constituted developing an inappropriate relationship with Former Pupil A.

The panel found this allegation proven.

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

2. Your conduct as described at paragraph 1a. above was sexually motivated.

The panel considered whether, even in the absence of any direct evidence, sexual motivation should be inferred from all of the circumstances of the case.

Mr Egford had not initiated contact with Former Pupil A. He was asked by a third party to contact her to provide her with support in seeking a job. The third party confirmed this to be accurate.

The panel noted that only one comment, being that timed at 21:13 on 16 January 2024 was overtly sexual in nature. Mr Egford acknowledged he had made the comment and that it was inappropriate. There was no evidence that Mr Egford had received any sexual gratification from engaging in that comment, nor any evidence that he was pursuing a future sexual relationship with Former Pupil A. This was a passing comment in the context of exchanges in which the majority of the messages related to supporting Former Pupil A with pursuing her career. It was apparent that Mr Egford was in contact with [REDACTED] with regard to the support being provided to Former Pupil A.

The panel noted that Mr Egford made comments regarding Former Pupil A spending time with him and complimented her on her appearance. No further evidence was presented to the panel that there was any intent to pursue or encourage any further development of the relationship.

This was particularly the case since the panel noted that he had asked Former Pupil A if she would prefer to only exchange messages that were job related. After she confirmed that to be the case, the messages did not continue beyond informing her that he had contacted [REDACTED]. It appeared to the panel that Mr Egford appreciated he had crossed professional boundaries and was calling a halt to this developing further. It was, at that point, that Former Pupil A decided to report the communications she had received and there was no further opportunity for the relationship to either develop or return to a strictly professional one.

The panel considered the notes of the meetings held with a colleague and a former colleague who were asked, during the College's investigation, whether there had been any previous concerns regarding his behaviour. The panel noted that one of Mr Egford's colleagues interviewed during the College's investigation confirmed there had been no other incidents that would have given her any concerns regarding Mr Egford and Keeping Children Safe in Education ("KCSIE"). An ex-colleague, who Former Pupil A had contacted after reporting the messages sent by Mr Egford, stated, during the School's investigation, that there had been no other incidents that had given her cause for concern. She stated that Mr Egford is an advocate for safeguarding, that everything was "by the book" and he was "very strict" with regards to safeguarding. She confirmed that this was not the type of conduct he advocated at all. The [REDACTED] (to whom Former Pupil A initially reported her concerns) stated that the allegations had come as a surprise to her.

The panel also had regard to the testimonial evidence as to Mr Egford's character. An [REDACTED], who had worked with Mr Egford previously, stated that he would never befriend or remain loyal to a person he deemed to be a potential risk to young people. He confirmed that posing such a risk "simply isn't in David's normal character." A [REDACTED] who had worked with Mr Egford over a period of fourteen years described Mr Egford as being "committed and emphatic in his role as DSL, working tirelessly to engage with and protect students, and to deliver regulatory compliance and investment in safeguarding across the staff." He referred to Mr Egford's "sophisticated grasp of safeguarding duties". This witness referred to the allegations against Mr Egford and stated that he found this to be "completely out of character for him and everything I know he stands for". The panel concluded that Mr Egford did not have a propensity to act in a sexually motivated manner towards a former pupil.

Applying the ordinary meaning of sexual motivation, the panel did not consider that there was sufficient evidence to establish that it was more likely than not that the messages sent by Mr Egford were stepping stones on the path to a sexual relationship.

The panel found this allegation not proven.

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

Having found allegation 1 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 Egford, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Egford in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of KCSIE. The panel considered that Mr Egford was in breach of the obligation to ensure his approach was child centred, and to consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. He was required to prevent the impairment of children’s mental health, and yet his conduct risked having a lasting impact upon Former Pupil A given the trust she had placed in Mr Egford to support her. He failed to safeguard Former Pupil A’s wellbeing.

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

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

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

The panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant given that Mr Egford had engaged in communication with Former Pupil A that was sexual in nature, even though the panel had not found it to have been sexually motivated.

The panel noted that the allegations took place outside the education setting. The panel noted that Former Pupil A had been sufficiently uncomfortable with the communications she received to have reported the matter to the College. The panel considered that engaging in communications with a former pupil that crossed professional boundaries and sending a message of a sexual nature does affect the way Mr Egford fulfils his teaching role, given that he was entrusted not to engage in such conduct. Conduct of this nature may lead to pupils being exposed to or influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way.

In exercising its judgment as to whether Mr Egford is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel considered whether Mr Egford was morally culpable for his behaviour. The panel noted Mr Egford's explanation that [REDACTED]. His evidence was that his actions could be explained by a [REDACTED]. He stated that a combination of professional pressures, a lack of supervision, operational challenges and [REDACTED]. He asserted in his evidence that: the pressures at work to "deliver consistently"; the significant emotional strain of [REDACTED]; staffing challenges within the safeguarding team; the distress of enforcing policies he "knew were not in the students' best interests"; the fear of job insecurity; line management scrutiny; and witnessing [REDACTED].

Mr Egford explained that within a week of the messages having been exchanged with and reported by Former Pupil A, [REDACTED]. He stated that, following [REDACTED], he now views his actions in sending a young person "weird" messages "which would raise safeguarding concerns in the eyes of any professional reading them", to be a [REDACTED].

The panel considered that there was evidence that Mr Egford was subject to stress, but that such stresses were common within the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the panel considered whether Mr Egford had acted in the manner found proven because of the stress he was experiencing. [REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

The panel considered that, in its judgment, there was insufficient evidence that the conduct found proven could be attributed to the stress Mr Egford describes as having experienced.

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

In relation to whether Mr Egford's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took account of 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 Egford'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 Egford was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

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

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Egford'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 a 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 and the protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession, and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public, given the panel's findings that Mr Egford engaged in communications of a sexual nature with a child (albeit there were no findings of sexual motivation), and that he failed to maintain appropriate boundaries.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Egford 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 Egford was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated. In particular, the panel noted that Mr Egford was a very experienced teacher and he had been the DSL at the College for over 10 years. The panel noted testimonial statements in the bundle that Mr Egford demonstrated a "high level of dedication" and "unwavering commitment" to this role. As a result, the panel considered that Mr Egford would undoubtedly have understood that his conduct was unacceptable and incompatible with his role as the DSL. The panel found this was evidenced by the fact that Mr Egford had initially apologised to Former Pupil A for his inappropriate messages. Despite this, the panel noted that Mr Egford continued to send inappropriate messages to Former Pupil A. The panel found this behaviour to be totally unacceptable for any teacher but even more so in this case where Mr Egford was a senior member of staff and the DSL, and he knew that he was crossing a professional boundary. The panel also took into account that Mr Egford's behaviour made Former Pupil A feel so uncomfortable that she reported the messages to the College.

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 Egford in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and he is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

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 Egford.

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

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

The panel considered whether Mr Egford's actions were deliberate. The panel took into account Mr Egford's explanation that his actions could be explained by a [REDACTED]. The panel also heard that Mr Egford had [REDACTED]. The panel noted that it had already made clear findings [REDACTED]. The panel also noted that it had clearly found Mr Egford to be morally culpable for his behaviour. As a result, the panel determined that Mr Egford's actions were deliberate.

The panel also determined that there was no evidence to suggest that Mr Egford was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. The panel did acknowledge that Mr Egford's conduct took place during a period of his life that was stressful. In particular, the panel took into account Mr Egford's evidence that he was under pressure at work to "deliver consistently"; he was dealing with the significant emotional strain of [REDACTED]; there were staffing challenges within the safeguarding team; and he had [REDACTED]. The panel acknowledged that Mr Egford was working within a stressful environment, and that teaching in general is a profession which carries a high amount of stress. Notwithstanding this, the panel noted that it had already found that there was insufficient evidence to attribute this stress to the conduct found proven, and that it had found Mr Egford to be morally culpable for his behaviour.

The panel acknowledged that Mr Egford did previously have a good history, and that he did make a significant contribution both more widely to the education sector and within

the College. The panel found that Mr Egford's conduct was out of character. In particular, the panel noted that this was the only incident that had occurred in an otherwise unblemished 20-year career. The panel also noted that Mr Egford had spent 14 years at the College, and during this time, he did demonstrate very high standards both as a teacher and in his role as the DSL. In particular, it was noted that during his time at the College, Mr Egford embarked on a reasonably continuous line of career development which led to him being promoted to assistant principal and also to DSL (a role which would have required a significant amount of trust from the College). The panel noted that Mr Egford spent a number of years as the DSL (over 10 years), and that there were no suggestions that he had acted unprofessionally within this role during this time.

The panel considered testimonial statements in the bundle, which stated that Mr Egford had demonstrated high standards in that role. In particular, during the College's investigation, [REDACTED] of the College attended an interview with Witness A. During this interview, she confirmed that there were no historical allegations or any causes for concern, and that this was an isolated incident. In addition, another member of staff during their investigatory interview stated that Mr Egford is "an advocate for safeguarding, everything is by the book and he is very strict with it, which is why it came as such a shock. This is not the type of thing he advocates at all". It was also said that Mr Egford demonstrated sound standards in personal and professional conduct.

The panel also considered a number of character references which were in the bundle. One former colleague stated that "As DSL [Mr Egford] led the whole staff in training for safeguarding and was a very good source of information for any staff who asked." Other references stated that he was a "caring and considerate teacher"; his "genuine concern for his students' emotional wellbeing is evident in the way he interacts with them daily"; and "his desire and ability to encourage and embolden the students in his care make him extremely well suited to his pastoral roles, fostering responsibility, resilience and respect among his students".

The panel also had sight of a character reference from a former colleague which stated that Mr Egford "has been an integral part of any school community for over two decades, and throughout his tenure, he has consistently demonstrated a remarkable track record of professionalism, compassion, and service. His passion for education and his genuine concern for the well-being of our students have always been evident in his work".

The panel also noted a former colleague and [REDACTED] of Mr Egford's specifically stated that he "would never befriend nor remain loyal to any person, friend or otherwise, who [he] deemed to be a potential risk to young people. This simply isn't in [Mr Egford's] normal character."

The panel also noted within the character statements that there were positive comments about Mr Egford's overall character and ability as a teacher. In particular, they stated that "his approachability encourages students to seek help whenever needed, fostering a

positive and collaborative environment”; he “is well-liked by his pupils”; he is a “caring, considerate, supportive, and approachable teacher who has made a significant impact on the lives of his students”; and that “his ability to connect with students from difficult backgrounds and those displaying challenging behaviours – and to offer tangible and effective support for them and their families – are particularly exceptional qualities to be valued”. The panel also noted that there were comments such as “any inappropriate or erratic temporary lapses in judgment would not be in keeping with the person I’ve always known him to be”.

The panel also took into account positive comments made during an Ofsted inspection that took place in [REDACTED] (not long before the conduct took place). The panel noted that the Ofsted report particularly stated that “the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.” In addition, within the teacher’s written representations in the bundle, the panel noted that [REDACTED] had praised the teacher after this inspection for his “exceptional work”. The panel also took into account Mr Egford’s written representations, which stated that from September 2022 until the date that he left the College, he sat on the Cornwall and Isle of Scilly Safeguarding and Children’s Board as the education representative for the county. The panel noted that this was an entrusted role that would not have just been offered to Mr Egford without them having felt that he had excelled in his role as the DSL.

The panel noted that Mr Egford had not been previously subject to disciplinary proceedings or warnings.

Taking into account all of the evidence, the panel considered that Mr Egford’s conduct was a singular incident during an exemplary and unblemished 20-year career. In particular, the panel noted that it had only found one message to be of a sexual nature and that it had not made a finding of sexual motivation. The panel also noted that the messages were sent over a very limited period of 2-3 days, and that Mr Egford did not initiate the contact with Former Pupil A of his own accord but was doing so after being asked by a former colleague to support Former Pupil A with her future employment. The panel noted that the majority of Mr Egford’s communications with Former Pupil A were professional in nature and related to her potential employment. The panel also noted that during this time, Mr Egford had also been engaging with Former Pupil A’s [REDACTED] and so, whilst there were a limited number of inappropriate messages, he was still acting professionally and in accordance with his role as the DSL. The panel also took into account that it was Mr Egford who first asked Former Pupil A whether she would prefer to only message about “job stuff”, and that once Former Pupil A had said “Yeah please”, he did not send her any further inappropriate messages and all future messages also related to employment. The panel found that this was an unprofessional lapse of judgment, during an exemplary career, and that there was no evidence to suggest that Mr Egford was a risk to pupils or children.

The panel considered Mr Egford's level of insight and remorse. In particular, the panel found that whilst Mr Egford did not appear to have insight at the time of the event, he did demonstrate full insight after the event. In particular, the panel noted that Mr Egford engaged fully with the College's investigation and also with these regulatory proceedings. He admitted some wrongdoing, and he accepted that his behaviour was unacceptable. The panel found that Mr Egford took full responsibility for his actions, appeared to be remorseful and accepted the impact of his behaviour on others including Former Pupil A. In particular, the panel took into account comments made by Mr Egford during his interview, where he said that he was "sincerely remorseful", that he was "sorry to the girls, to the school, to the community" and that he does not want people "thinking this behaviour is who [he is]". The panel also took into account that during her investigatory interview, [REDACTED] at the College stated that Mr Egford admitted what he had done straight away, immediately understood the gravity of the situation and said, "I've let you down, I've brought the college into disrepute". The panel also had sight of a character reference in the bundle which said: "he has experienced genuine remorse, he has been exceptionally upfront and honest, and I have never had the impression that he is unwilling to do other than face the consequences of his actions." The panel also noted that Mr Egford had since sought support for his [REDACTED] stress [REDACTED] and that he had "began the slow process of rebuilding". Overall, the panel felt that Mr Egford had demonstrated, subsequently, a significant level of insight and remorse, and that he had learnt from his behaviour.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the 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 the public interest requirement of declaring the proper standards of the profession.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Egford involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of a teacher sending a message to a recent former pupil that was sexual in nature.

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 Egford, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

“There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public, given the panel’s findings that Mr Egford engaged in communications of a sexual nature with a child (albeit there were no findings of sexual motivation), and that he failed to maintain appropriate boundaries.”

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

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

“The panel considered Mr Egford’s level of insight and remorse. In particular, the panel found that whilst Mr Egford did not appear to have insight at the time of the event, he did demonstrate full insight after the event. In particular, the panel noted that Mr Egford engaged fully with the College’s investigation and also with these regulatory proceedings. He admitted some wrongdoing, and he accepted that his behaviour was unacceptable. The panel found that Mr Egford took full responsibility for his actions, appeared to be remorseful and accepted the impact of his behaviour on others including Former Pupil A. In particular, the panel took into account comments made by Mr Egford during his interview, where he said that he was “sincerely remorseful”, that he was “sorry to the girls, to the school, to the community” and that he does not want people “thinking this behaviour is who [he is]”. The panel also took into account that during her investigatory interview, [REDACTED] at the College stated that Mr Egford admitted what he had done straight away, immediately understood the gravity of the situation and said, “I’ve let you down, I’ve brought the college into disrepute”. The panel also had sight of a character reference in the bundle which said: “he has experienced genuine remorse, he has been exceptionally upfront and honest, and I have never had the impression that he is unwilling to do other than face the consequences of his actions.” The panel also noted that Mr Egford had since sought support for his [REDACTED] stress [REDACTED] and that he had “began the slow process of rebuilding”. Overall, the panel felt that Mr Egford had demonstrated, subsequently, a significant level of insight and remorse, and that he had learnt from his behaviour.”

In my judgement, this evidence of insight and remorse means that the risk of a repetition of this behaviour is very limited. I have therefore given this element some weight in reaching my decision.

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

“In relation to whether Mr Egford’s actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took account of 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 Egford’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 Egford was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offence of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

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

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

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding in this case of a teacher sending a message that was sexual in nature to a recent former pupil and the negative impact that such a finding may have on the reputation of the profession.

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

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct, 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 Egford himself. The panel makes this observation:

“The panel acknowledged that Mr Egford did previously have a good history, and that he did make a significant contribution both more widely to the education sector and within the College. The panel found that Mr Egford’s conduct was out of character. In particular, the panel noted that this was the only incident that had occurred in an otherwise unblemished 20-year career. The panel also noted that Mr Egford had spent 14 years at the College, and during this time, he did demonstrate very high standards both as a teacher and in his role as the DSL. In particular, it was noted that during his time at the College, Mr Egford embarked on a reasonably continuous line of career development which led to him being promoted to assistant principal and also to DSL (a role which would have required a significant amount of trust from the College). The panel noted that Mr Egford spent a number of years as the DSL (over 10 years), and that there were no suggestions that he had acted unprofessionally within this role during this time.”

The panel also notes having seen character evidence testifying to Mr Egford’s general good character and commitment to safeguarding. It also references other mitigating evidence that may have had a bearing on Mr Egford’s behaviour.

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning whether Mr Egford represents a risk to the safety and wellbeing of pupils in the future:

“The panel found that this was an unprofessional lapse of judgment, during an exemplary career, and that there was no evidence to suggest that Mr Egford was a risk to pupils or children.”

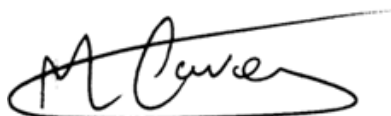
I have also noted the panel’s findings that this misconduct was an isolated incident within a career spanning 20 years, appears to have been completely out of character, and was not sexually motivated. I have also noted its comments regarding the degree of insight and remorse exhibited by Mr Egford.

I have also considered the panel’s concluding comments, and its assessment of the seriousness of Mr Egford’s behaviour:

“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 the public interest requirement of declaring the proper standards of the profession.”

For these reasons, and while the misconduct found by the panel was undoubtedly serious, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 20 January 2026

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