



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Ms Louise Clipsham: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**February 2026**

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

<b>Teacher:</b>	Ms Louise Clipsham
<b>Teacher ref number:</b>	0250218
<b>Teacher date of birth:</b>	29 November 1980
<b>TRA reference:</b>	24473
<b>Date of determination:</b>	26 February 2026
<b>Former employer:</b>	St Botolphs CE Academy, Knottingley

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 23 to 26 February 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Louise Clipsham.

The panel members were Mrs Melissa West (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Beverley Williams (teacher panellist) and Mr Tony Coyne (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Alexander Elliott of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Zoe Bushby of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Ms Clipsham was present and was represented by Mr Colin Henderson of the Reflective Practice.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 24 November 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Clipsham was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as a teacher at St Botolph's Academy from January 2011 to July 2024:

1. She failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken in or around January 2023 to March 2024 in that she:
  - a) Failed to disclose that Individual A, [REDACTED], had been arrested on or around 14 February 2023, and/or charged in/or around January 2024, in relation to a sexual offence and/or that Individual A had been convicted of a sexual offence in or around March 2024;
  - b) Failed to undertake safer recruitment checks and risk assessments in relation to Individual A;
  - c) Invited and/or allowed Individual A to attend School events between November 2023 and December 2023.
2. Her conduct as may be found proven at 1a/b/c above lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

Ms Clipsham admitted to the facts of allegation 1a), 1b) and 1c)

As to allegation 2, Ms Clipsham admitted that her conduct lacked integrity. She did not admit that her conduct was dishonest.

Ms Clipsham admitted that her conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/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: Chronology and key person list – pages 6 to 7

Section 2: Notice of referral and response – pages 9 to 39

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 42 to 85

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 87 to 295

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 298 to 396

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

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

## **Witnesses**

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Ms Clipsham also gave oral evidence and called the following witness:

Witness C – [REDACTED]

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

On 4 January 2011, Ms Clipsham commenced employment at St Botolph’s CE Academy (“the School”).

In January 2023, Ms Clipsham became aware of sexual assault allegations that were made against [REDACTED] (“Individual A”).

On 14 February 2023, Individual A was arrested and released on bail awaiting a court date. Ms Clipsham did not report this incident to the School.

In November 2023, Individual A attended a [REDACTED] as a volunteer. Ms Clipsham did not disclose the allegations against Individual A or the fact of Individual A’s arrest prior to this event.

In December 2023, Individual A attended a [REDACTED] event at the School. Again, Ms Clipsham did not disclose the allegations against Individual A or the fact of Individual A’s arrest prior to this event.

On or around 8 February 2024, Individual A attended a court hearing. Shortly after this hearing, Ms Clipsham became aware that Individual A had made a decision to plead guilty to criminal charges, which included sexual assault against a vulnerable adult.

In March 2024, Individual A was sentenced for criminal offences, including sexual assault against a vulnerable adult.

On or around 1 April 2024, the School became aware of Individual A's conviction after it had been reported by local media outlets.

In June 2024, the School commenced an investigation into Ms Clipsham's conduct.

On 18 July 2024, a disciplinary hearing was held by the School and allegations were found to be proven. Decisions were then made to refer the matter to the TRA and to terminate Ms Clipsham's employment.

On 24 July 2024, the TRA received a referral from the Enhance Academy Trust ("the Trust").

## **Findings of fact**

The findings of fact are as follows:

**1. You failed to take appropriate action and/or ensure appropriate action was taken in or around January 2023 to March 2024 in that you:**

- a) Failed to disclose that Individual A, [REDACTED], had been arrested on or around 14 February 2023, and/or charged in/or around January 2024, in relation to a sexual offence and/or that Individual A had been convicted of a sexual offence in or around March 2024;**

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham admitted allegation 1a). Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Clipsham, who stated that, on 14 February 2023, whilst she and Individual A, [REDACTED], were together [REDACTED], two police officers arrived and placed Individual A under arrest, and that she next saw Individual A the following morning after he had been released on bail. Ms Clipsham stated that she was told Individual A had been arrested for sexual assault, that there would be further investigations, and that she and Individual A would need to wait for the next steps.

Ms Clipsham accepted that, in February 2024, she became aware that Individual A would be required to attend a court hearing the same month. Ms Clipsham further stated that, following this hearing, Individual A informed her that he had decided to plead guilty to sexual offences.

Ms Clipsham stated that she took Individual A to court on 28 March 2024, although she chose not to go in with him. At the end of the hearing, she picked Individual A up and Individual A informed her that he had pleaded guilty to sexual offences and received a sentence.

Ms Clipsham admitted that she had not informed the School at any point of Individual A's arrest, charge or conviction. She stated that, in February 2023, she confided in a friend, who was also a colleague, about the incident, and that it did not occur to either of them that she should inform the School. Ms Clipsham further stated that, in September 2023, she shared details with [REDACTED] during a social night out, and that neither individual advised her to disclose the matter to School or the Trust.

The panel considered the notes from the investigation meeting between Ms Clipsham and Witness A dated 20 June 2024. The panel noted that, during this meeting, Ms Clipsham explained that she did not believe Individual A's arrest would impact her role at the School as the allegation against Individual A was not related to a child.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness B who stated that she became aware of the allegations against Individual A on 1 April 2024, after she received a text message from a colleague and subsequently found online articles relating to Individual A's conviction.

Witness B set out that, on the same day, she sent a message to [REDACTED], to ask if Ms Clipsham had made her aware of the incident. In her separate written statement prepared for the purpose of the School's investigation, Witness B stated that [REDACTED] replied on 2 April 2024 to say she knew nothing about the incident and that Ms Clipsham had not said anything to her.

Witness B stated that, on 2 April 2024, she emailed [REDACTED], to inform him of the online news articles relating to Individual A's conviction. She stated that [REDACTED] instructed her to signpost Ms Clipsham to the School's counselling service.

Witness B's statements refer to a meeting on 8 April 2024 between her, Ms Clipsham and [REDACTED]. In her written statement, Witness B noted that Ms Clipsham explained she had not told anyone as she was embarrassed, had wanted it all to go away, and that she had hoped nobody would find out.

The panel found that Ms Clipsham was aware of Individual A's, [REDACTED]'s, arrest on or around 14 February 2023, that in February 2024 she became aware that he had been charged, and that she was aware of his conviction in relation to a sexual offence on or around 28 March 2024.

The panel considered the School's code of conduct, which sets out "*Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual*

*where this might cause a conflict with school activities*". Ms Clipsham accepted in her witness evidence that this covered her relationship with Individual A.

The panel found proven that Ms Clipsham had, from February 2023 to March 2024, failed to inform the School of Individual A's arrest, charge or conviction for a sexual offence. The panel considered that it would have been appropriate for her to have taken these steps and that her not doing so constituted a failure to take appropriate action.

Accordingly, the panel found allegation 1a) proven.

**b) Failed to undertake safer recruitment checks and risk assessments in relation to Individual A;**

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham admitted allegation 1b). Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Clipsham, who stated that in November 2023, she booked a [REDACTED] for a range of activities. She stated that, approximately two weeks before the trip, she became aware that two volunteers were unable to attend and Individual A offered to come on [REDACTED] instead. She therefore arranged for him to go.

The panel considered the notes from the investigation meeting between Witness A and Ms Clipsham on 20 June 2024. The panel noted that during this meeting, Ms Clipsham acknowledged that she was the leader for [REDACTED]. She stated that a risk assessment was completed for [REDACTED] and that she had verbally informed Individual A of the expectations on him as a volunteer. During the meeting, Ms Clipsham informed Witness A that she had not considered Individual A's involvement with the police to be relevant information, or that Individual A's attendance on [REDACTED] was a potential safeguarding issue.

The panel considered the risk assessment completed by Ms Clipsham in respect of the school [REDACTED], which identifies Ms Clipsham as the [REDACTED]'s leader and the [REDACTED]. The risk assessment listed two volunteers, but did not include Individual A. In her oral evidence, Ms Clipsham admitted that she did not amend the risk assessment prior to [REDACTED].

The risk assessment document states "*Please ensure this risk assessment is signed by the assessor and all staff/volunteers attending prior to the visit*". In her oral evidence, Ms Clipsham told the panel that she had read this statement, but that Individual A did not sign the risk assessment.

The panel considered Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 ("KCSIE"). Paragraphs 306 - 308 set out that schools and colleges should undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgment and experience when deciding what checks, if any,

are required in respect of volunteers. They further provide that the risk assessment should consider, among other things, what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers, and that details of the risk assessment should be recorded.

The panel considered the School's Safer Recruitment Policy which states "*All volunteers will be required to provide the school with an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check before they begin volunteering in school*". In her witness statement, Ms Clipsham stated that she did not think any DBS paperwork would need to be completed as all volunteers would be supervised and would not be left alone with children. Ms Clipsham further stated that she accepts there was a small risk that Individual A could have been left alone with children if an emergency occurred.

The panel considered the School's safeguarding policy. This provides that, "*when an allegation is made against a member of staff, including supply staff and volunteers, set procedures must be followed*". It then refers to the importance of having a culture of openness and transparency and a consultation with the LADO if staff have behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. In her oral evidence, Ms Clipsham admitted that she failed to follow this policy in relation to Individual A.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A together with the notes of the investigation meeting on 20 June 2024. Witness A recalled asking Ms Clipsham whether, if Individual A was [REDACTED], she would deem them as fit to go on a school [REDACTED], and that Ms Clipsham answered no. He stated that he asked Ms Clipsham what the difference was between this hypothetical individual and Individual A, and Ms Clipsham said that she felt the situation had died down and that it was fine at the time for Individual A to attend [REDACTED].

The panel found that Ms Clipsham had failed to carry out an appropriate risk assessment concerning Individual A's attendance as a volunteer on the school [REDACTED] in November 2023 in accordance with KCSIE, which the panel considered to be part and parcel of safer recruitment.

The panel found that Ms Clipsham had failed to undertake safer recruitment checks and risk assessments in relation to Individual A. The panel considered that it would have been appropriate for her to have taken these steps and that her not doing so constituted a failure to take appropriate action and/or to ensure appropriate action was taken.

Accordingly, the panel found allegation 1b) proven.

**c) Invited and/or allowed Individual A to attend School events between November 2023 and December 2023.**

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham admitted allegation 1c). Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered the notes from the investigation meeting between Witness A and Ms Clipsham on 20 June 2024. The panel noted that, during this meeting, Ms Clipsham admitted that Individual A attended [REDACTED] in November 2023 and a [REDACTED] event in December 2023.

The panel noted Ms Clipsham's position as the [REDACTED] and that she led [REDACTED] in November 2023.

The panel considered the written statement from [REDACTED] prepared for the purpose of the School's investigation. Within this, [REDACTED] compiled statements from four other witnesses who all corroborated that Individual A attended [REDACTED] in November 2023.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Ms Clipsham, who stated that Individual A had offered to come on [REDACTED] in November 2023 and she had agreed. Ms Clipsham further stated that, in December 2023, there was a [REDACTED] at the School, and that Individual A attended this event with Ms Clipsham [REDACTED].

The panel found that Ms Clipsham had invited and allowed Individual A to attend a school [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] as a volunteer in November 2023 and a [REDACTED] at the School in December 2023. The panel considered that her doing so constituted a failure to take appropriate action and/or to ensure appropriate action was taken.

Accordingly, the panel found allegation 1c) proven.

## **2. Your conduct as may be found proven at 1a/b/c above lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.**

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham admitted that her conduct lacked integrity but that she denied that this conduct was dishonest. The panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel considered whether Ms Clipsham's conduct demonstrated a lack of integrity, with reference to the principles in *Wingate & Anor v Solicitors Regulation Authority*. The panel was mindful that professionals are not expected to be "*paragons of virtue*".

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham's roles as Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, [REDACTED] and Deputy DSL, required a high standard of honesty, transparency, and professional judgment. The panel considered that failing to disclose a live police investigation involving a sexual allegation, knowingly allowing the subject of that

investigation to take part in school activities, and failing to carry out the required risk assessments, amounted to conduct falling significantly below the standards expected of an experienced professional.

The panel found that, by her persistent withholding of material safeguarding information, and her allowing access to children by an individual she knew to be under police investigation for allegations of sexual assault, Ms Clipsham had seemingly allowed her personal relationship with Individual A to compromise her professional obligations. The panel was satisfied that Ms Clipsham's conduct, as found proven at 1a), 1b) and 1c), lacked integrity.

The panel then considered whether Ms Clipsham had acted dishonestly. In doing so, the panel applied the test set out in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockfords*.

The panel considered Ms Clipsham's actual knowledge or belief as to the facts.

As regards allegation 1a), the panel considered Ms Clipsham's oral and written evidence. Ms Clipsham stated that she did not believe that she was under an obligation to disclose the allegations of sexual assault, that had been made against Individual A, to the School. Ms Clipsham gave evidence that, between February and September 2023, she had confided in four individuals, including her friend and colleague, [REDACTED], and that none of these individuals gave an indication that she would need to disclose the allegations against Individual A to the school.

The panel considered Witness C's oral and written evidence. Witness C stated that, after becoming aware of Individual A's arrest, he advised Ms Clipsham not to say anything to anybody as he believed that the investigation would conclude with no offence disclosed. The panel noted Witness C's position as a former [REDACTED], though acknowledged his [REDACTED] to Ms Clipsham, in its consideration of the weight applied to his evidence. The panel also noted that Witness C acknowledged he was not aware of the specific professional expectations on teachers.

The panel considered that a teacher with Ms Clipsham's experience of safeguarding ought reasonably to have been aware of the obligation on her to disclose the allegations regarding Individual A to the School, and that, in any event, she ought reasonably to have sought advice from a more senior leader within the School. However, the panel also noted that the state of Ms Clipsham's knowledge or belief during the relevant period is a wholly subjective issue.

The panel noted that, according to Witness B's written statement, she, [REDACTED], each being senior leaders within the School and the Trust respectively, became aware of Individual A's conviction in April 2024, and that a decision was made not to take any action towards Ms Clipsham at this time. The panel further noted that, in WhatsApp messages exchanged between Ms Clipsham and Witness B in April 2024, Witness B

stated to Ms Clipsham “*you’ve definitely done nothing wrong*”. Whilst the panel noted that this was not direct evidence of the state of Ms Clipsham’s knowledge during the relevant period, the panel took into account the wider context of how Ms Clipsham’s conduct was perceived by the School and the Trust when assessing the credibility of Ms Clipsham’s evidence.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel accepted Ms Clipsham’s evidence that it genuinely did not occur to her, during the relevant period, that there may have been a requirement on her to disclose the allegations against Individual A to the School.

As regards allegation 1b), the panel noted that Ms Clipsham was an experienced teacher, and had significant safeguarding experience in her capacity as Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, [REDACTED] and Deputy DSL. In her oral evidence, Ms Clipsham accepted that she was experienced with safeguarding, and that she attended safeguarding meetings and met with other safeguarding leads on a regular basis. Ms Clipsham also set out in her witness statement that she had read KCSIE and kept up to date with its changes. The panel considered Ms Clipsham’s training records, which show that she attended annual Deputy DSL training sessions in addition to other safeguarding training.

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham had completed a risk assessment for [REDACTED] in November 2023, prior to Individual A offering to attend, and found this to be a strong indication of Ms Clipsham’s awareness of the need to carry out risk assessments. In Ms Clipsham’s oral evidence, she accepted that she had read the requirement for volunteers to sign the risk assessment, although Individual A had not done so.

The panel considered Ms Clipsham’s evidence that she was not aware of any requirement to carry out a DBS check on the basis that she believed Individual A would be supervised. Notwithstanding this, the panel found that Ms Clipsham, in her capacity as Deputy DSL and [REDACTED], was aware of her obligations under KCSIE and, therefore, the importance of carrying out written risk assessments in respect of all volunteers. The panel considered that Ms Clipsham would have had particular awareness of the need for a risk assessment in circumstances where facts suggest a prospective volunteer may not be suitable to work with children.

Accordingly, the panel found that, in November 2023, Ms Clipsham had knowledge of the requirement to carry out a written risk assessment and safer recruitment checks in respect of Individual A, yet failed to do so.

As regards allegation 1c), the panel noted that Ms Clipsham had been made aware of the allegation against Individual A in January 2023 (when she received contact from [REDACTED]), that she knew Individual A was arrested on 14 February 2023, and that she knew Individual A was on bail pending further investigations from 15 February 2023

until February 2024, at which point she became aware that Individual A had been charged and that he had decided to plead guilty.

The panel considered Ms Clipsham's statement that, over the course of 2023, she increasingly thought the police must have found the allegations against Individual A unreliable. The panel noted that, throughout this period, Ms Clipsham had continued to receive messages from the [REDACTED], and that she did not receive any information to indicate that the police investigation had concluded.

The panel found, on the balance of probabilities, that Ms Clipsham had knowledge that the allegations against Individual A of sexual offences were the subject of a live police investigation in November and December 2023.

The panel noted that, during the investigation meeting with Witness A, Ms Clipsham stated that she would not have allowed a different prospective volunteer to attend [REDACTED] in November 2023, had they made her aware that they had been arrested for sexual assault and were awaiting a decision over whether they were to be charged. Therefore, the panel found Ms Clipsham had knowledge that it would not be appropriate for any individual to attend a school [REDACTED] where they are under investigation for alleged sexual offences.

Accordingly, the panel concluded that, throughout November and December 2023, Ms Clipsham had knowledge that, due to the live police investigation into allegations against Individual A of sexual offences, it was not appropriate for Individual A to attend School events. Nevertheless, Ms Clipsham allowed Individual A to attend a school [REDACTED] in November 2023 and a [REDACTED] event at the School in December 2023.

Applying the second limb in *Ivey*, the panel considered whether ordinary decent people would regard Ms Clipsham's conduct as dishonest. The panel noted Ms Clipsham's comments during the School's investigation that she had been embarrassed, that she had wanted it all to go away and that she had hoped nobody would find out.

The panel noted Ms Clipsham's position of responsibility as Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, [REDACTED] and Deputy DSL. The panel found that Ms Clipsham would be expected to be fully aware of the importance of conducting appropriate risk assessments and prioritising the safeguarding of children. Further, the panel found that she would be expected to exercise objective professional judgment and not allow this judgment to be compromised by her personal relationships.

The panel considered Ms Clipsham's failure to conduct an appropriate risk assessment regarding Individual A, and that she allowed Individual A to attend school events alongside children, despite her knowledge that he was under police investigation for allegations of sexual offences and her admission that she would not have allowed a different individual to attend a school [REDACTED] under the same circumstances. The

panel considered that this would amount to dishonest conduct by the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel therefore concluded that Ms Clipsham's conduct as found proven in relation to allegations 1b) and 1c) was dishonest.

Accordingly, allegation 2 was found 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Clipsham, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

By reference to Part 2, the panel found that Ms Clipsham had failed to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. In particular, the panel considered that Ms Clipsham 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 considered that the conduct of Ms Clipsham, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of KCSIE. In particular, the panel found that Ms Clipsham had breached paragraphs 306 – 308 in relation to her failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment regarding Individual A's attendance on the school [REDACTED] in November 2023.

The panel also considered whether Ms Clipsham'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 serious dishonesty was relevant.

The panel was conscious that that Ms Clipsham knew, from February 2023 onwards, that Individual A was subject to a live police investigation into serious allegations of sexual offences which, as she accepted, meant that he was not suitable to attend school events around children. It also considered that Ms Clipsham was aware, due to her experience, of the importance of safeguarding and carrying out adequate risk assessments. The panel noted that, despite this knowledge, Ms Clipsham allowed Individual A to attend two school events whilst the police investigation was ongoing, and failed to carry out any appropriate risk assessments regarding his attendance.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Clipsham amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Ms Clipsham was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Ms Clipsham'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 Ms Clipsham'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 Ms Clipsham was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that serious dishonesty was relevant.

The panel considered that Ms Clipsham's failure to disclose Individual A's arrest, charge and conviction for sexual offences, allowing Individual A to attend school events with children during this period, and failure to carry out appropriate and objective risk assessments, could reasonably have damaged the public's perception of Ms Clipsham as a teacher. This was supported by documentary evidence of multiple parental complaints and evidence from Witness A and Witness B that up to three parents had removed their children from the School for at least one day after becoming aware of Individual A's conviction following his attendance on the school [REDACTED].

The panel noted that the public would expect teachers, particularly senior teachers with safeguarding responsibilities, to act with integrity, prioritise the safeguarding of children in their care and not allow their professional judgment to be compromised by their personal relationships.

For these reasons, the panel found that Ms Clipsham'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 within the teaching profession.

The panel found that there was a strong public interest in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils in that the panel noted that Ms Clipsham was a Deputy Headteacher, SENCo and Deputy DSL and had allowed Individual A to be present on a school [REDACTED] with children, despite knowing that he was under police investigation for alleged sexual offences and given that she had failed to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Clipsham were not treated with the utmost seriousness. The panel noted that there was documentary evidence of multiple parental complaints, including those which expressed a lack of confidence in the School's safeguarding procedures, after it became widely known that Individual A had attended a school [REDACTED] whilst he was subject to a police investigation for alleged sexual offences.

The panel was of the view that there was a strong public interest consideration in declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct within the teaching profession. The

panel noted its finding that Ms Clipsham's dishonest conduct, which they had found displayed a lack of integrity, had fallen significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Ms Clipsham within the profession.

The panel noted that no doubt had been cast on Ms Clipsham's abilities as an educator and there was no evidence that she had been the subject of any previous allegations of misconduct. In her witness statement, Witness B described Ms Clipsham as being reliable, organised and passionate about the School and wider community. In oral evidence, Witness B referred to Ms Clipsham as being dedicated, hardworking and committed, and Witness A described her as being a valued member of the team. The panel also considered Ms Clipsham's evidence that, since her dismissal, she has secured further roles as a supply teacher, with approval from the relevant LADO, and that she has received positive feedback from the schools she has worked in. The panel found that there was a strong public interest in retaining Ms Clipsham within the profession.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of Ms Clipsham's behaviour, noting 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 Ms Clipsham.

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;
- failure to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity.

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

The panel found that Ms Clipsham's actions were deliberate in the sense that she knowingly allowed Individual A to attend school events and failed to carry out an appropriate risk assessment, despite knowing of the police investigation into Individual A for alleged sexual offences and that it was not appropriate for him to attend a school [REDACTED] with children present.

The panel did not find any evidence to suggest that Ms Clipsham was acting under extreme duress.

The panel considered that Ms Clipsham had demonstrated a clear and longstanding commitment to the education sector. It noted that Witness B, who had experience of working with Ms Clipsham, described her as being reliable, organised and passionate about the School and wider community, as well as being hardworking and committed, and that Witness A described her as being a valued member of the team.

This evidence given by Witness B and Witness A was supported by written statements provided by four other teaching professionals, [REDACTED], all of whom were aware of the allegations against Ms Clipsham and her response to those allegations. These statements describe Ms Clipsham as being a hardworking, talented and dedicated teacher with a strong commitment to the profession.

The panel further considered the specific personal circumstances which formed part of the wider context surrounding Ms Clipsham's conduct. This included evidence in her statement relating to [REDACTED]. The panel considered the effect of these issues on Ms Clipsham's [REDACTED], whilst she continued to work. The panel noted Witness B's statement that, even when Ms Clipsham was struggling with [REDACTED], she remained committed to the School and maintained her attendance. The panel noted that Ms Clipsham's personal circumstances did not, in any way, excuse her failures.

Based on the evidence of Witness B and Witness A, the written statements relating to Ms Clipsham's character, and the evidence of Ms Clipsham's unique personal circumstances during the relevant period, the panel was satisfied that Ms Clipsham's conduct was out of character.

The panel considered whether Ms Clipsham had demonstrated insight or remorse.

The panel noted that Ms Clipsham had acknowledged her failures both throughout the School's investigation process and in her evidence. In her oral and written evidence, Ms Clipsham did not attempt to trivialise the allegations against her or the severity of her conduct. The panel further noted that Witness A had described Ms Clipsham as being open and honest during the School's investigation. The panel found that Ms Clipsham had demonstrated genuine remorse for her actions, and the impact of those actions on the School, parents and colleagues.

Ms Clipsham provided evidence that she had reflected on the circumstances behind her decisions. In particular, Ms Clipsham recognised in her witness statement that she had failed to separate her personal and professional roles and “*arrogantly*” assumed that she knew best and that Individual A was not a safeguarding risk. She stated that, following Individual A’s arrest, she was in a “*defensive, bunker mentality*”, that she had hoped the whole issue would resolve quickly and go away, and that she had minimised the seriousness of Individual A’s arrest because she was struggling to process it. She further stated that, had she disclosed Individual A’s arrest to the Head of School at the outset, the Head of School and other Deputy DSLs would have been impartial and assessed the facts.

Ms Clipsham stated that the experience had fundamentally reshaped her understanding of the primacy of safeguarding, the need for transparency and early disclosure, and the necessity of separating personal feelings from professional responsibility. Ms Clipsham provided evidence that she had attended additional safeguarding training since the termination of her employment, and provided copies of certificates for two training courses. Taking this into account, the panel found that Ms Clipsham had taken steps to understand the motivations and triggers behind her decisions and, accordingly, that she had demonstrated measured insight into her actions.

The panel 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. The panel recognised the severity of Ms Clipsham’s conduct as found proven. However, it was also satisfied, based on the evidence, that this was an isolated course of conduct against the wider context of Mr Clipsham’s unique personal circumstances during the relevant period. The panel found that Ms Clipsham’s conduct was out of character, that she had shown remorse and insight into her actions and that she has since demonstrated a continued commitment to the teaching profession.

The panel concluded that prohibition was not proportionate and that the publication of its adverse findings was a less intrusive measure which would meet the public interest requirements of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, maintaining public confidence in the profession and declaring proper standards within the profession, whilst also upholding the strong public interest in retaining Ms Clipsham within the profession. Upon considering this case on its merits, and taking all the circumstances into account, the panel decided that the public interest considerations weighed against prohibition and therefore publication only was its recommendation to the Secretary of State.

## 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/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Louise Clipsham should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended 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 Ms Clipsham 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 was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Clipsham involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel finds that the conduct of Ms Clipsham fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding that the teacher had allowed an individual who had been arrested for a sexual offence to attend school events and had failed to undertake risk assessments. They also included a finding of conduct that lacked integrity and was dishonest.

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

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

“The panel found that there was a strong public interest in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils in that the panel noted that Ms Clipsham was a Deputy Headteacher, SENCo and Deputy DSL and had allowed Individual A to be present on a school [REDACTED] with children, despite knowing that he was under police investigation for alleged sexual offences and given that she had failed to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.”

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

“The panel found that Ms Clipsham had demonstrated genuine remorse for her actions, and the impact of those actions on the School, parents and colleagues.”

“Ms Clipsham stated that the experience had fundamentally reshaped her understanding of the primacy of safeguarding, the need for transparency and early disclosure, and the necessity of separating personal feelings from professional responsibility. Ms Clipsham provided evidence that she had attended additional safeguarding training since the termination of her employment, and provided copies of certificates for two training courses. Taking this into account, the panel found that Ms Clipsham had taken steps to understand the motivations and triggers behind her decisions and, accordingly, that she had demonstrated measured insight into her actions.”

I have therefore given this element weight in reaching my decision.

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

“Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Clipsham were not treated with the utmost seriousness. The panel noted that there was documentary evidence of multiple parental complaints, including those which expressed a lack

of confidence in the School's safeguarding procedures, after it became widely known that Individual A had attended a school [REDACTED] whilst he was subject to a police investigation for alleged sexual offences."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Clipsham herself. The panel has commented:

"The panel considered that Ms Clipsham had demonstrated a clear and longstanding commitment to the education sector. It noted that Witness B, who had experience of working with Ms Clipsham, described her as being reliable, organised and passionate about the School and wider community, as well as being hardworking and committed, and that Witness A described her as being a valued member of the team.

This evidence given by Witness B and Witness A was supported by written statements provided by four other teaching professionals, [REDACTED], all of whom were aware of the allegations against Ms Clipsham and her response to those allegations. These statements describe Ms Clipsham as being a hardworking, talented and dedicated teacher with a strong commitment to the profession."

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

I have considered carefully the panel's comments on the mitigating factors in this case and its conclusion:

"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. The panel recognised the severity of Ms Clipsham's

conduct as found proven. However, it was also satisfied, based on the evidence, that this was an isolated course of conduct against the wider context of Mr Clipsham's unique personal circumstances during the relevant period. The panel found that Ms Clipsham's conduct was out of character, that she had shown remorse and insight into her actions and that she has since demonstrated a continued commitment to the teaching profession."

However, in my judgment, in making its recommendation, the panel has not given sufficient weight to the seriousness of the misconduct which it has found proven in this case. This misconduct involves behaviours which the Advice says it is likely that a panel will consider incompatible with being a teacher, including:

- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE); and
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity.

I have placed considerable weight on the panel's finding on the seriousness of Ms Clipsham's behaviour and the risk that this posed to children. I have also placed considerable weight on the panel's findings that Ms Clipsham's actions were deliberate and that there was no evidence that Ms Clipsham was acting under extreme duress. The panel has said:

"The panel found that Ms Clipsham's actions were deliberate in the sense that she knowingly allowed Individual A to attend school events and failed to carry out an appropriate risk assessment, despite knowing of the police investigation into Individual A for alleged sexual offences and that it was not appropriate for him to attend a school [REDACTED] with children present."

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel's comments that public confidence in the teaching profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Clipsham was not treated with the utmost seriousness. The panel has said:

"The panel noted that the public would expect teachers, particularly senior teachers with safeguarding responsibilities, to act with integrity, prioritise the safeguarding of children in their care and not allow their professional judgment to be compromised by their personal relationships."

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction, therefore, to the contribution that Ms Clipsham has made to the profession and to the mitigating factors identified by the panel. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain

public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In doing so I have referred to the Advice on whether a review period should be permitted and, if so, its length.

None of the factors that weigh in favour of not allowing a review period are relevant in this case.

In terms of factors that weigh in favour of a longer review period, “serious dishonesty” is relevant in this case. However, in my judgement, the mitigating factors mean that a shorter review period would be proportionate. In particular, I have taken account of the panel’s comments that Ms Clipsham’s behaviour “was an isolated course of conduct” and that “she had shown remorse and insight into her actions”.

I have decided, therefore, that a 2-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession.

**This means that Ms Louise Clipsham is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England.** She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 5 March 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 she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Clipsham remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Ms Clipsham has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.



**Decision maker: David Oatley**

**Date: 2 March 2026**

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