



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Julian Nicholl: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

March 2026

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

Teacher:	Mr Julian Nicholl
Teacher ref number:	0985097
Teacher date of birth:	5 April 1977
TRA reference:	22095
Date of determination:	6 March 2026
Former employer:	Barnet Education Arts Trust, London

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 6 March 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Julian Nicholl.

The panel members were Mrs Michelle Chappell (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Christopher Taylor (lay panellist) and Ms Olivia Kong (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Ben Schofield of Blake Morgan LLP.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr James Lloyd, instructed Brabners LLP.

Mr Nicholl was not present but was represented at the hearing by Mr Jonathan Storey, instructed by The Reflective Practice.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of proceedings dated 19 December 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Nicholl had been convicted of a relevant offence in that:

1. On 3 April 2023 at North London Magistrates' Court, he was convicted of engaging in sexual communication with a child contrary to Section 15A(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

In advance of the hearing, Mr Nicholl had indicated that he admitted this allegation.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 2 to 27

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 28 to 54

Section 3: Teacher documents – pages 55 to 59

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 TRA did not call any witnesses in support of its case.

Mr Nicholl did not call any witnesses in support of his case.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

Mr Nicholl was employed by Barnet Education Arts Trust ("BEAT") from 2011. He was an Instrumental Music Teacher and mainly taught children in schools and on an individual basis.

Pupil A was [REDACTED] at the time the alleged offence took place and had been taught by Mr Nicholl for around [REDACTED]. On 7 June 2021, the mother of Pupil A noticed a WhatsApp message was sent to her daughter's phone from Mr Nicholl at around 7am. She wondered why Mr Nicholl would be sending a message at this time of the morning and on seeing the content of the messages, she considered its content was inappropriate and raised a concern with BEAT. The Local Authority Designated Officer was then informed by BEAT and a police investigation was undertaken.

Mr Nicholl resigned from BEAT on 31 December 2021. Following the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, BEAT made a referral to the TRA on 8 June 2023.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. On 3 April 2023 at North London Magistrates' Court, you were convicted of engaging in sexual communication with a child contrary to Section 15A(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Before the panel was a certificate of conviction from Wood Green Crown Court. It set out Mr Nicholl's details and confirmed he was convicted at North London Magistrates' Court on 3 April 2023 of an offence under section 15A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

It further set out that Mr Nicholl was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court to 8 months imprisonment suspended for 24 months, along with 100 hours of unpaid work and attending up to 40 days of a 'rehabilitation activity requirement' as supervised by the Probation Service. As a result of Mr Nicholl's sentence, he was also made subject to the notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (commonly referred to as the 'sex offender's registers') for a period of ten years.

Also before the panel was a transcript of the sentencing remarks of the Crown Court judge and a copy of the police case summary. The summary set out that the police had searched both Mr Nicholl's and Pupil A's phone and found a lengthy WhatsApp exchange between them, including messages in which Mr Nicholl commented on Pupil A's attractiveness.

Mr Storey confirmed Mr Nicholl's admission to this allegation at the start of this hearing. The panel considered that Mr Nicholl's admission was unequivocal and entirely consistent with the surrounding evidence.

Accordingly, the panel found this allegation proved.

Findings as to a conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to the conviction of a relevant offence. 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 Nicholl, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Nicholl 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.

In regard to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ Part 1, the panel considered that Mr Nicholl was in breach of the requirement that sets out that *“safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility... This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.”*

The panel noted that the individual’s actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting, as Mr Nicholl’s actions were directed towards one of his own pupils that he taught.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and security of pupils, as Mr Nicholl sought to prioritise his own sexual gratification over the welfare of a young pupil under his care.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Nicholl’s behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The public expect pupils to be safe under the care of members of the profession and for them to protect pupils against sexual conduct from adults.

The panel noted that Mr Nicholl's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, (albeit that it was suspended), which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. This was a case concerning an offence of "*sexual communication with a child*" which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

In assessing these relevant factors, the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Nicholl's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel therefore concluded that Mr Nicholl's conviction was for a 'relevant offence'.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, 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;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Nicholl, which involved sexual conduct towards one of his pupils, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils. Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously damaged if conduct such as that found against Mr Nicholl 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 Nicholl was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

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 Nicholl.

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;

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 the list of factors at paragraph 43 of the Advice. The panel considered that none of those listed factors applied. Mr Nicholl's actions were deliberate. He was not acting under duress and there was no evidence of his contribution to the profession before the panel.

The panel noted that Mr Nicholl had engaged with the regulatory process and pleaded guilty at the first opportunity.

In his statement for these proceedings, Mr Nicholl accepted the only proportionate outcome would be a prohibition order without a review period. The panel considered this demonstrated that Mr Nicholl had a recognition as to the seriousness of his conviction. Similarly, the panel considered Mr Nicholl had also demonstrated a degree of remorse in his statement. In discussing what might happen in the future, Mr Nicholl's statement set out:

“I can’t say that I will never do it again. Surprisingly, and thankfully, I don’t find that hard to write today. I wasn’t expecting that. Certainly not the case when first working through it with [name], the counsellor probation supported me with... The concept terrified me. I couldn’t even approach it. To say I will never do it again is to say it is impossible for me to do it. But that is what I would have said before my offending. Saying I will never do it again is to say I never could have done it, it must have been “an other me”, an altered state, an aberration. And that is hiding in shame, and pretending. Not living in responsibility. I did it. And I could do it again.”

The panel considered this concerning paragraph as evidence which suggested there was still a heightened level in regard to a ‘risk of repetition’ of similar conduct occurring in the future.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending the publication of adverse findings would be insufficient and would compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Nicholl of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Nicholl. The damage to the public’s confidence in the profession should restrictive regulatory action not be recommended in these circumstances was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. This included “*any sexual misconduct involving a child*”. The panel could not identify any factors in this case which suggested there should be any departure from the guidance.

The panel therefore decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in

all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found the allegation proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a conviction for the relevant offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child which resulted in a suspended custodial sentence.

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 a relevant conviction, 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 Nicholl, 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 noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and security of pupils, as Mr Nicholl sought to prioritise his own sexual gratification over the welfare of a young pupil under his care.”

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

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

“In his statement for these proceedings, Mr Nicholl accepted the only proportionate outcome would be a prohibition order without a review period. The panel considered this demonstrated that Mr Nicholl had a recognition as to the seriousness of his conviction. Similarly, the panel considered Mr Nicholl had also demonstrated a degree of remorse in his statement. In discussing what might happen in the future, Mr Nicholl’s statement set out:

“I can’t say that I will never do it again. Surprisingly, and thankfully, I don’t find that hard to write today. I wasn’t expecting that. Certainly not the case when first working through it with [name], the counsellor probation supported me with... The concept terrified me. I couldn’t even approach it. To say I will never do it again is to say it is impossible for me to do it. But that is what I would have said before my offending. Saying I will never do it again is to say I never could have done it, it must have been “an other me”, an altered state, an aberration. And that is hiding in shame, and pretending. Not living in responsibility. I did it. And I could do it again.”

The panel considered this concerning paragraph as evidence which suggested there was still a heightened level in regard to a ‘risk of repetition’ of similar conduct occurring in the future.”

I agree with panel’s conclusion that there is a risk of repetition. In my judgement, this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

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

“The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Nicholl’s behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The public expect pupils to be safe under the care of members of the profession and for them to protect pupils against sexual conduct from adults.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for engaging in sexual communication with a child 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 a relevant conviction, 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 Nicholl himself. The panel has not commented on Mr Nicholl’s professional conduct and contribution to the education sector. However, the panel has considered that none of the mitigating factors at paragraph 43 of the Advice applied in this case.

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the seriousness of the offence for which Mr Nicholl was sentenced to a suspended custodial sentence, the strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, and the risk of repetition.

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s comment:

“The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Nicholl. The damage to the public’s confidence in the profession should restrictive regulatory action not be recommended in these circumstances was a significant factor in forming that opinion.”

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

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

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

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

I have considered the panel's comments:

"The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. This included "*any sexual misconduct involving a child*". The panel could not identify any factors in this case which suggested there should be any departure from the guidance."

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offences of which Mr Nicholl was convicted, the risk of repetition and consequent risk to the safety and welfare of pupils, and the potential damage to the public's perception of the teaching profession.

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

This means that Mr Julian Nicholl is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegation found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Nicholl shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

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

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



Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 10 March 2026

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