



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Reece Denton: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

January 2026

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

Teacher:	Mr Reece Denton
Teacher ref number:	1765798
Teacher date of birth:	10 August 1996
TRA reference:	23198
Date of determination:	21 January 2026
Former employer:	Learn Northwest Education LLP, Altrincham and Beamont Collegiate Academy, Warrington

Introduction

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

The panel members were Mr Richard Young (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Emma Barnett (lay panellist) and Miss Eleanor Wilson (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Davina Kahlon of Eversheds Sutherland LLP solicitors.

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

Mr Denton was not present and was not represented.

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 4 November 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Denton was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst working as a maths tutor at Learn North West Education and/or teacher at Beamont School:

1. Mr Denton engaged in [REDACTED] and/or unprofessional behaviour by;
 - a. Messaging Pupil A on WhatsApp;
 - b. Engaging in telephone calls with Pupil A;
 - c. Facetiming Pupil A;
 - d. Visiting Pupil A [REDACTED] without Learn North West Education's consent and/or knowledge on or around 25 November 2023;
 - e. Suggesting to Pupil A he could cover up the CCTV camera with his blazer or using words to that effect on or around 25 November 2023;
 - f. Asking his [REDACTED] to send a letter to Pupil A's [REDACTED].
2. Mr Denton's conduct as may be found proven at Allegation 1d was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

In the absence of/non-response from the teacher, the allegations were not admitted.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Anonymised pupil list – page 5

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 21

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 22 to 104

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 105 to 164

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the proof of delivery of the Notice of Proceedings.

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

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B - [REDACTED]

Witness C - [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Denton had been employed as maths teacher at Beamont Collegiate Academy (“the School”) since July 2018 and resigned from his post on 21 December 2023. In addition to this role, he undertook subcontracted work as a self-employed maths tutor with Learn Northwest Education LLP (“Learn Northwest”) from 27 January 2022 until his resignation on 21 December 2023.

[REDACTED]

The panel noted during the presenting officer’s submissions that they should draw adverse inferences as the teacher did not provide any reasonable explanation or response for his lack of attendance. The panel decided not to draw adverse inferences as the teacher had engaged with the TRA to some extent and whilst no explanation for non-attendance had been given the panel noted the evidence before it in relation to the teachers [REDACTED].

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:

1. You engaged in inappropriate and/or unprofessional behaviour, by:

a. Messaging Pupil A on WhatsApp

The panel heard evidence from Witness B, a [REDACTED] where Pupil A was admitted. Witness B explained in her oral testimony that she requested a handover from Mr Denton following his visit. During that handover, Mr Denton informed her that he was more of a family friend than a tutor and that he was regularly contacting Pupil A via WhatsApp.

The panel noted paragraph 16 of Witness B's statement which stated: *"I know that after concerns were raised about Mr Denton's visit, [REDACTED], Pupil A's [REDACTED], had a meeting with Pupil A's [REDACTED] who then reviewed her phone. I know that [REDACTED] was in contact with Pupil A's [REDACTED] who said that they had been monitoring Pupil A's phone but has not seen anything of concern. Although, [REDACTED] did say there had been deleted messages on WhatsApp between Pupil A and Mr Denton."*

The panel also considered the [REDACTED] dated 25 November 2023. These notes recorded an entry made by Witness B following Mr Denton's visit, which stated: *"Showed me that he had ongoing WhatsApp conversations with [Pupil A]..."*

The panel also heard oral evidence from Witness C, a partner at Learn Northwest. [REDACTED] explained that, during a telephone call with Pupil A's [REDACTED] on 20 December 2023, Pupil A's [REDACTED] stated that she had reviewed the WhatsApp interactions between Pupil A and Mr Denton and described them as "bland" and solely focused on arranging visits. The panel considered the safeguarding report dated 23 December 2023 at Exhibit 7 of [REDACTED]'s statement and noted that the call log between [REDACTED] and Pupil A's [REDACTED] recorded the same account.

The panel also considered an email at Exhibit 6 to Witness C's statement from a consultant psychiatrist responsible for Pupil A's care. The email, which was sent to Witness C, raised concerns following Mr Denton's visit to the [REDACTED]. It stated: *"There is a record of texts between the maths tutor and the young person's phone, but no content that the [REDACTED] are concerned about. He has stated to the [REDACTED] that he has not used Snapchat to communicate with [Pupil A] and will not do so for safeguarding reasons (as there is no record of the texts), but has used WhatsApp."*

The panel noted that, in her oral evidence, Witness C confirmed that arrangements for tutoring were made with pupils' [REDACTED] rather than with pupils directly. She explained that there was an expectation that all meetings and communications would take place with [REDACTED] only, and that Learn Northwest did not hold pupils' personal contact details on its systems.

The panel assessed the weight and reliability of the evidence, and on the balance of probabilities concluded that it was more likely than not that Mr Denton messaged Pupil A

on WhatsApp. In reaching this conclusion, the panel placed particular reliance on Mr Denton's own admissions to nursing staff at the [REDACTED].

The panel considered that messaging Pupil A via WhatsApp was inappropriate and unprofessional, particularly in light of Pupil A's vulnerability [REDACTED]. Although the evidence indicated that there was nothing untoward in the content of the messages, the panel was concerned that the messages between Pupil A and Mr Denton had been deleted. The panel further noted that there was no necessity for Mr Denton to contact Pupil A in a personal capacity, as any communication could and should have been conducted through Pupil A's [REDACTED] in line with Learn Northwest's arrangements. In any event, the panel concluded that there was no justification for Mr Denton to continue contacting Pupil A following the termination of the tuition.

The panel therefore found allegation 1a proven.

b. Engaging in telephone calls with Pupil A;

c. Facetiming Pupil A;

The panel noted paragraph 14 of Witness B's statement which stated: *"During the handover, Mr Denton also informed me that he was regularly contacting Pupil A via WhatsApp and that they regularly call and facetime. He also told me he is now more of a family friend than a tutor since he no longer tutors Pupil A."*

The panel also considered the [REDACTED] dated 25 November 2023. These notes recorded an entry made by Witness B following Mr Denton's visit, which stated: *"Said he calls and facetimes with [Pupil A]"*.

In addition, the Panel considered the safeguarding report dated 21 December 2023 at Exhibit 7 of Witness C's statement. The panel noted that this report included a call log between Witness C and Mr Denton, which recorded Witness C expressing concerns about Mr Denton contacting Pupil A, and Mr Denton confirming that he would delete Pupil A's phone number.

The panel considered that there was less evidence in respect of telephone calls and facetime interactions between Pupil A and Mr Denton than in relation to WhatsApp messages for the purposes of the allegations. However, applying the balance of probabilities, the panel concluded that there was sufficient evidence to find that it was more likely than not that Mr Denton engaged in telephone calls and facetime interactions with Pupil A.

The panel considered that calling and facetiming Pupil A was inappropriate and unprofessional for the same reasons as those set out in respect of allegation 1a.

The panel therefore found allegations 1b and 1c proved.

c. Visiting Pupil A in [REDACTED] without Learn North West Education's consent and/or knowledge on or around 25 November 2023;

The panel considered paragraph 4 of Witness B's statement, which stated: "*Pupil A had a visit on 25 November 2023 from Reece Denton. This visit was scheduled and recorded on [REDACTED] (the electronic record system) by one of the [REDACTED] on 21 November 2023.*"

Witness B also explained in her oral evidence that she was tasked with undertaking regular 15-minute interval checks during Mr Denton's visit. She confirmed that Mr Denton and Pupil A were seated in the teenage lounge, which was separate from the bedroom spaces and other communal areas. Witness B further confirmed that, in accordance with procedure, she conducted a handover with Mr Denton following the visit to assist with the ongoing care of Pupil A.

The panel also noted an email at Exhibit 6 to Witness C's statement from a [REDACTED] responsible for Pupil A's care, which stated: "*[REDACTED] arranged a visit from the maths tutor on 25/11/2023 to [REDACTED], which we understand was the first time the young person and the tutor had met in person.*"

The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Denton visited Pupil A in [REDACTED] on 25 November 2023.

The panel then went on to consider whether the visit occurred without Learn Northwest's consent or knowledge. The panel noted that, in her oral evidence, Witness C explained that she was not aware that Mr Denton had visited Pupil A in [REDACTED]. She stated that, following her conversation with Mr Denton on 16 November 2023, during which she confirmed that Pupil A would no longer be engaging in tuition with Learn Northwest, she understood that there would be no further contact with Pupil A and no reason for any such contact to continue. Witness C further explained that it was not until she received an email from Pupil A's [REDACTED] on 19 December 2023 that she became aware that Mr Denton had visited Pupil A. She confirmed to the panel that she had not given Mr Denton consent to visit Pupil A, nor had anyone else at Learn Northwest. The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Denton's visit to Pupil A on 25 November 2023 took place without the consent or knowledge of Learn Northwest.

The panel noted that, while the visit took place in a public, regulated, and controlled [REDACTED] environment and with the consent of Pupil A's [REDACTED], Mr Denton's conduct was nonetheless inappropriate and unprofessional. Given Pupil A's vulnerability, the panel considered that Mr Denton ought to have exercised his professional judgement and contacted Learn Northwest to seek consent and guidance. The panel further noted that Mr Denton did not possess any specialist [REDACTED] expertise and, accordingly, should not have initiated a visit to Pupil A in [REDACTED] without appropriate authorisation or safeguarding arrangements being in place.

In addition, the panel considered that Mr Denton's [REDACTED], of which he was aware at the time, placed a further responsibility on him to maintain clear professional boundaries and heightened the inappropriateness of the visit.

The panel therefore found allegation 1d proven.

d. Suggesting to Pupil A you could cover up the CCTV camera with your blazer or using words to that effect on or around 25 November 2023;

The panel considered paragraph 4 of Witness A's statement, [REDACTED] which Pupil A was admitted, which stated: *"On 12 December 2023, I was in the student lounge with Pupil A and other children. The student lounge can be quite loud and Pupil A wanted to be in a private room on this occasion. There were more quiet rooms available but someone needed to supervise Pupil A so I offered to sit with her. Pupil A was watching a TV show called 'the End of the F***ing World'. There was a scene within the show with CCTV and Pupil A said that she did not like CCTV. I asked her what she told that during the visit with her tutor, who I now know to be Mr Denton, Mr Denton was asking questions about the CCTV in the room and asking if he could cover it with his blazer. Pupil A said that she did not like the visit and it made her feel uncomfortable. When I tried to question her further about this, Pupil A did not want to talk about it."*

Witness A explained in her oral evidence that the information disclosed by Pupil A was unsolicited and that, in her experience, Pupil A was not a child who would readily disclose information unless there was a purpose in doing so. Witness A further explained that, when she asked Pupil A additional questions about the incident, Pupil A became dismissive and no longer wished to engage in any further discussion about the visit. Witness A stated that she was concerned by what Pupil A had told her and, as a result, she made a [REDACTED] and reported the matter to her supervisor.

The panel considered the [REDACTED] notes from the [REDACTED] dated 25 November 2023, which recorded an entry made by Witness A following Mr Denton's visit stating: *"She told me the tutor was quite fixated on this and suggested covering the CCTV up with his blazer."*

The panel also noted paragraph 13 of Witness C's statement, which stated: *"Mr Denton asked if we [REDACTED] could access the CCTV footage for the teenage lounge. I asked if there was something specific he felt we should see, but he said no. I do not believe he was requesting the footage for himself, but rather asking If the [REDACTED] could access it."*

The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Denton suggested to Pupil A that he could cover up the CCTV with his blazer.

The panel considered that Mr Denton's behaviour was both inappropriate and unprofessional. In the absence of Mr Denton at the hearing, the panel was unable to

consider any explanation for the suggestion that the CCTV be covered, and accordingly regarded this behaviour as concerning. The panel further noted that this suggestion had a clear adverse impact on Pupil A's wellbeing at a time when Pupil A was already in a vulnerable state. The panel noted that CCTV within the [REDACTED] setting was in place for Pupil A's protection, and considered that Mr Denton, given his professional standing, ought to have understood this and should not have sought to undermine an established safeguarding measure.

The panel therefore found allegation 1e proved.

e. Asking your [REDACTED] to send a letter to Pupil A's [REDDACTED].

The panel noted paragraph 23 of Witness C's statement which stated: "*Mr Denton concluded the conversation by discussing a letter he had asked [REDACTED] to send to [Pupil A's [REDACTED]], so that she ([REDACTED]) could share her experience regarding [REDACTED] of a child. He described feeling a [REDACTED]connection to Pupil A and [Pupil A's [REDACTED]].*"

The panel considered the safeguarding report dated 23 December 2023 at Exhibit 7 of Witness C's statement and noted that the call log between [REDACTED] and Mr Denton recorded: "*RD also explained that he had asked [REDACTED] to write a letter to [REDACTED] explaining what it is likely having [REDACTED] who has [REDACTED]. The letter was sent from [REDACTED]*".

The panel considered that there was less evidence in respect of allegation 1f in comparison to the other allegations. However, applying the balance of probabilities, the panel concluded that there was sufficient evidence to find that it was more likely than not that Mr Denton asked [REDACTED] to send [REDACTED] a letter.

While the panel recognised that Mr Denton may have been attempting to support Pupil A's [REDACTED], and to create some distance by arranging for his own [REDACTED] to correspond with her, the panel nonetheless considered that this conduct was inappropriate and unprofessional. In doing so, Mr Denton would have disclosed confidential information about Pupil A to his [REDACTED], thereby breaching his professional duties.

The panel further considered that, as a professional, Mr Denton ought to have known that it was inappropriate to provide unsolicited advice on sensitive matters relating to a pupil, particularly where that advice was relayed through a third party who had no medical or professional expertise.

The panel therefore found allegation 1f proven.

2. Your conduct as may be found proven in Allegation 1d was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

The panel considered whether Mr Denton's conduct, in relation to allegation 1d amounted to dishonesty. In reaching their decision, the panel had regard to the legal test for dishonesty as set out in *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd*.

The panel first sought to establish Mr Denton's actual knowledge and belief in relation to the relevant facts. In doing so, the panel noted that the visit to the [REDACTED] was carried out with the consent and support of Pupil A's [REDACTED]. The panel further noted that there was no explicit provision within Learn Northwest's policies or codes of conduct addressing visits to pupils outside the tutoring setting. Instead, the policies required tutors to "*make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of children in their charge*" and to share such judgements with senior management.

The panel also considered that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Denton had developed a friendly relationship with Pupil A's [REDACTED], who did not express any concerns regarding his behaviour. In addition, the panel noted from the call log with Witness C that, given Mr Denton's [REDACTED], he was likely to have empathised with Pupil A and had disclosed that he was aware Pupil A was in [REDACTED]. The panel considered it relevant that, at the time of the visit, Mr Denton was no longer tutoring Pupil A. The panel accepted that this may have been a genuine reason why he did not inform Learn Northwest of the visit, particularly in light of the fact that he had obtained parental consent and that Pupil A's [REDACTED] had indicated she was content for the visit to proceed.

In light of these factors, the panel was satisfied that Mr Denton's actual knowledge and belief in visiting Pupil A in [REDACTED], and in not informing Learn Northwest, was not dishonest.

The panel then went on to consider whether Mr Denton's belief, assessed against the standards of ordinary decent people, amounted to dishonest conduct. Having considered the evidence, and in particular the parental consent Mr Denton had received to proceed with the visit, the panel concluded that, in visiting Pupil A in [REDACTED] without the consent of Learn Northwest, Mr Denton was not acting dishonestly. While the panel acknowledged that Mr Denton failed to exercise the appropriate level of professional judgement expected of a teacher in safeguarding matters, it did not consider that his conduct fell below the standard of honesty expected by ordinary decent people. Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Denton acted dishonestly.

The panel then went on to consider if Mr Denton's conduct in respect of allegation 1d lacked integrity.

The panel considered the decision in *Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority*, noting that dishonesty and lacking integrity are distinct concepts, and that

integrity connotes adherence to the ethical standards of one's profession, involving more than mere honesty.

The panel considered that Mr Denton ought to have exercised his professional judgement when deciding whether to visit Pupil A, particularly given Pupil A's vulnerability at the relevant time. Drawing on its own professional expertise, the panel considered that Mr Denton should have acted with greater caution and given appropriate consideration to safeguarding Pupil A's welfare. This was especially so given Mr Denton's awareness of his [REDACTED] and the fact that he had no [REDACTED] expertise, which created a risk that his involvement could adversely affect Pupil A. In any event, the panel considered that Mr Denton should have consulted Learn Northwest prior to the visit, in order to determine whether the visit was appropriate and whether any safeguarding measures ought to have been put in place.

The panel was mindful that professionals are not expected to be "paragons of virtue". However, the panel was satisfied that Mr Denton failed to meet the higher standards of integrity expected of a teacher, in that he did not properly exercise his professional judgement or sufficiently prioritise the welfare and safeguarding of Pupil A.

The panel was therefore satisfied that Mr Denton's conduct in respect of allegation 1d lacked integrity.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel first considered whether the conduct of the teacher, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, the teacher 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 proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 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 the teacher, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE") September 2023.

The panel considered that the teacher was in breach of the following provisions:

Paragraph 6: School and college staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns escalating.

Paragraph 24: All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.

Paragraph 25: In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

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

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

The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel noted that the allegations concerned conduct which took place outside the formal education setting. The panel considered that Mr Denton's conduct in contacting Pupil A via WhatsApp, telephone and facetime, and in visiting her [REDACTED], particularly in light of her vulnerability [REDACTED], amounted to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel found that Mr Denton failed to exercise appropriate professional judgement in safeguarding Pupil A and in maintaining clear professional boundaries. Instead, he prioritised his personal affiliation with Pupil A's circumstances, [REDACTED]. The panel further noted that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Denton's interactions with Pupil A caused her discomfort at a time when she was in need of [REDACTED]. The panel considered that such conduct had the potential to expose pupils to, or influence them

through, behaviour that could be harmful when Mr Denton carried out his supply teaching duties at the School.

Drawing on its own professional experience, the panel noted that, under no circumstances, would a school permit personal contact with a pupil without proper authorisation, particularly where the pupil is vulnerable.

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

In relation to whether the teacher'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, [REDACTED] 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 the teacher'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 the teacher was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute".

The panel considered that Mr Denton breached the professional boundaries designed to protect the pupil-teacher relationship and to maintain public confidence in the profession. By failing to disclose his contact with Pupil A to Learn Northwest, and by deciding to visit Pupil A without consultation with Learn Northwest, Mr Denton demonstrated a lack of clarity, transparency and appropriate risk assessment in his decision-making.

The panel also had regard to the fact that Mr Denton developed a relationship of trust with Pupil A's [REDACTED] that the panel considered went beyond an appropriate professional relationship. The panel considered the professional relationship should have focused on Pupil A's tuition and any additional support to be sought through Learn Northwest and the relevant designated safeguarding leads.

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 the teacher's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely, as many as are relevant: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; 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, given the serious findings of an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A. This included repeated contact by way of telephone calls, facetime, and WhatsApp messages, as well a visit to Pupil A while they were in [REDACTED].

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against the teacher 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 the teacher was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Denton in the profession.

Whilst there is evidence that Mr Denton had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Denton in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he sought to exploit his position of trust.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Denton.

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;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- 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).

The panel also noted that the incidents involved serious online behaviours, which resulted in Mr Denton forming an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A. Although the relationship initially took place online, it subsequently developed into a direct contact relationship when Mr Denton visited Pupil A in [REDACTED].

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

There was evidence that Mr Denton's actions were deliberate.

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

The panel was aware from evidence provide in the bundle that Mr Denton had been [REDACTED] around the time of the incident. However, it was Mr Denton's personal responsibility to decide if he was fit to contact and visit Pupil A. There was no evidence

to suggest that Mr Denton was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation when he took those decisions.

Mr Denton did not provide any testimonial statements evidencing his character or his teaching ability.

The panel noted that the bundle contained various references for Mr Denton, including one from his mentor describing him as a “*reflective teacher*” and a “*committed professional who willingly went the extra mile for students*”, as well as a reference from a university he attended stating that his approach to behaviour management was good and that he created clear boundaries. The panel observed that both references dated from 2018, whereas the incidents involving Pupil A occurred in 2023.

There was also no documentation or evidence in the bundle to demonstrate Mr Denton had any insight and remorse. The panel noted that Mr Denton had stopped his contact with Pupil A when he was directed to do so by Learn Northwest. The panel also considered that Mr Denton did initially engage with TRA upon receipt of the Notice of Proceedings.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Denton 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 Denton. Mr Denton’s breach of his professional boundaries with Pupil A, who he knew to be vulnerable, 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 cases where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

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

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

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

There were indications from his early teaching career in 2018 that he had the capacity to understand and reflect upon his actions, that he was capable of developing insight into what he ought to have done differently, albeit he has not yet done so. The panel also noted that Mr Denton immediately stopped his contact with Pupil A when directed to do so by Learn Northwest and there has been no suggestion of any other or further misconduct. The panel also considered that from the evidence before it that the content of the communications between Mr Denton and Pupil A were described as "bland". The panel is also not aware of any previous regulatory decisions or disciplinary findings. Mr Denton did engage with the TRA albeit to a limited extent.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period of two years.

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 Allegation 2 proven in respect of conduct that lacked integrity but not conduct that was dishonest, and I have therefore put the latter matter entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Reece Denton should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of 2 years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Denton 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 proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 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 Denton 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 Mr Denton fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with a pupil including by social media communications and by visits outside a formal education setting.

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 or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Denton, 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:

“There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the serious findings of an inappropriate relationship with Pupil A. This included repeated contact by way of telephone calls, facetime, and WhatsApp messages, as well a visit to Pupil A while they were in [REDACTED].”

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:

“There was also no documentation or evidence in the bundle to demonstrate Mr Denton had any insight and remorse. The panel noted that Mr Denton had stopped his contact with Pupil A when he was directed to do so by Learn Northwest. The panel also considered that Mr Denton did initially engage with TRA upon receipt of the Notice of Proceedings.”

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

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

“Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against the teacher were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding that a teacher had made personal contact with a vulnerable pupil without proper authorisation 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 or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Denton himself. The panel has commented that there is evidence that Mr Denton had ability as an educator and that:

“The panel noted that the bundle contained various references for Mr Denton, including one from his mentor describing him as a “*reflective teacher*” and a “*committed professional who willingly went the extra mile for students*”, as well as a reference from a university he attended stating that his approach to behaviour management was good and that he created clear boundaries. The panel observed

that both references dated from 2018, whereas the incidents involving Pupil A occurred in 2023.”

I have also noted the panel’s comment:

“The panel was aware from evidence provide in the bundle that Mr Denton had been [REDACTED] around the time of the incident. However, it was Mr Denton’s personal responsibility to decide if he was fit to contact and visit Pupil A. There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Denton was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation when he took those decisions.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Denton 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 Mr Denton’s breach of professional boundaries with a pupil whom he knew to be vulnerable. The panel has said:

“The panel found that Mr Denton failed to exercise appropriate professional judgement in safeguarding Pupil A and in maintaining clear professional boundaries. Instead, he prioritised his personal affiliation with Pupil A’s circumstances, [REDACTED]. The panel further noted that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Denton’s interactions with Pupil A caused her discomfort at a time when she was in need of [REDACTED]. The panel considered that such conduct had the potential to expose pupils to, or influence them through, behaviour that could be harmful when Mr Denton carried out his supply teaching duties at the School.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s finding on the lack of evidence of insight and remorse on the part of Mr Denton.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Denton 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, that is not backed up by evidence of insight and remorse, 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 a 2-year review period.

The panel has noted that none of the characteristics which the Advice indicates would weigh in favour of no review period or a longer review period were engaged by its findings.

I have considered the panel's comments:

“There were indications from his early teaching career in 2018 that he had the capacity to understand and reflect upon his actions, that he was capable of developing insight into what he ought to have done differently, albeit he has not yet done so. The panel also noted that Mr Denton immediately stopped his contact with Pupil A when directed to do so by Learn Northwest and there has been no suggestion of any other or further misconduct. The panel also considered that from the evidence before it that the content of the communications between Mr Denton and Pupil A were described as “bland”. The panel is also not aware of any previous regulatory decisions or disciplinary findings. Mr Denton did engage with the TRA albeit to a limited extent.”

I have considered whether 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. In this case, factors mean that I agree with the panel that allowing a two-year review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In my judgement, a 2-year review period will provide adequate time for Mr Denton to demonstrate that he has developed insight into, and remorse for, his behaviour and the steps he has taken to avoid repeating this behaviour in future.

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 30 January 2026

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