



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Neil Cornmell (also known as Mr Neil Woods): 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 Neil Cornmell (also known as Mr Neil Woods)
Teacher ref number: 0114961
Teacher date of birth: 21 March 1972
TRA reference: 20496
Date of determination: 20 March 2026
Former employer: Tendring Technology College, Frinton-on-Sea

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 18 to 20 March 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Neil Cornmell (the ‘PCPH’).

The panel members were Mrs Melissa West (teacher panellist – in the chair), Dr Andrew Harries (lay panellist) and Miss Faye Darlington (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lucy Churchill of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Brittany Buckell of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Cornmell (also known as Mr Woods) was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public by way of a virtual hearing and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 19 December 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Cornmell was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that:

1. Between June 2010 and February 2012, whilst employed as a Teacher at Ramsden Hall Academy, he failed to observe proper professional boundaries by using his personal Facebook social networking page to communicate and become “friends” with one or more pupils;
2. Between 24 November 2011 and 13 December 2011, he failed to follow management instruction from Ramsden Hall Academy to remove one or more current and former pupils from his personal Facebook account;
3. On or around 6 December 2011, he informed Ramsden Hall Academy that he had deleted his Facebook account when that was not the case;
4. In or around September 2012, he did not disclose previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall Academy in his application for a supply teaching role;
5. In or around September 2012, he did not disclose his reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall Academy in his application for a supply teaching role;
6. On or around 24 January 2013, he did not disclose previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall Academy in his application for a permanent position at Tendring Technology College;
7. On or around 24 January 2013, within his application form for a permanent position at Tendring Technology College he completed his reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall Academy as ‘resignation – personal reasons’, when that did not fully and/or accurately reflect the circumstances of his resignation;
8. He caused or allowed inaccurate and/or inconsistent dates for his employment history to be provided within his application and/or CV(s) for the period between September 2012 and February 2013;
9. Any or all of his conduct as may be proven at Allegations 3 – 8 was dishonest.
10. Between May 2020 and September 2020 he failed to observe a proper professional boundary appropriate to a teacher’s professional position, by:-

- a. communicating with Child A via mobile phone;
- b. sharing personal information about his family and/or personal life, with Child A;
- c. exchanging photographs with Child A which were of a personal nature;
- d. maintaining contact with Child A after he had ceased being a pupil of the School on 12 June 2020;
- e. visiting Child A at [REDACTED] on one or more occasions;
- f. buying a takeaway for Child A on 14 July 2020;
- g. buying McDonalds for Child A on one or more occasions;
- h. taking Child A on a day trip to Chipping Ongar and/or Pets at Home on 21 August 2020, without any other adults present;
- i. transporting Child A in his personal car, unaccompanied without any other adults present and/or without the knowledge of the School

Mr Cornmell did not provide a formal response to the allegations. The panel treated the allegations as contested.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 6

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 7 to 34

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements and exhibits – pages 35 to 123

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 124 to 391

Section 5: Communications with the teacher – pages 392 to 399

Section 6: Teacher documents – pages 400 to 403

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 Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession May 2020 (the '2020 Procedures').

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Cornmell was initially employed by Ramsden Hall Academy ("Ramsden Hall") from June 2010 as an assistant headteacher, resigning from the role in May 2011, transferring to another site of the academy from September 2011 as an ICT teacher.

During his time at Ramsden Hall, he was subject to a disciplinary investigation into his use of social media. In November 2011, it was alleged that he was "friends" with a pupil and ex-pupils of Ramsden Hall on his personal Facebook account.

Mr Cornmell resigned from his position at Ramsden Hall on 10 February 2012. Ramsden Hall continued with the disciplinary process and concluded that Mr Cornmell would have been dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct if he had remained in employment.

Mr Cornmell was then engaged via a supply agency, Strategy Education ("SE"), to work as a teacher of Drama at Tendring Technology College ("the School") within Academies Enterprise Trust ("AET"), from 30 September 2012. He then successfully applied for a permanent position at the School in January 2013 and was later promoted to designated safeguarding lead and director of learning.

During the application process for the permanent role at the School, Mr Cornmell said that he had left Ramsden Hall for 'personal issues' and allegedly did not disclose that he had been subject to a disciplinary process at the time of his resignation.

As part of Mr Cornmell's role as designated safeguarding lead at the School, he was involved in supporting vulnerable children, including Child A. It was alleged that Mr Cornmell developed a particularly close relationship with Child A and continued to stay in contact with Child A even after he had ceased to be a pupil at the School.

Concerns regarding the appropriateness of Mr Cornmell's relationship with Child A were raised in December 2020. The School became aware of the historic concerns relating to Mr Cornmell's use of social media at Ramsden Hall in June 2021.

Mr Cornmell was suspended by the School on 17 June 2021 and a referral to the TRA was made on 11 January 2022.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

- 1. Between June 2010 and February 2012, whilst employed as a Teacher at Ramsden Hall Academy, you failed to observe proper professional boundaries by using your personal Facebook social networking page to communicate and become "friends" with one or more pupils;**

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cornmell in regard to this allegation.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A who stated that Ramsden Hall had first become aware of Mr Cornmell's social media activity when Pupil M asked if teachers were supposed to add pupils on social media. Witness A explained that Pupil M told her that he had received a Facebook friend request from Mr Cornmell. Witness A confirmed that following Pupil M raising the issue she accessed Mr Cornmell's personal Facebook account and identified pupils from Ramsden Hall as Mr Cornmell's "friends" and hundreds of his former pupils at Sandon School. She stated that due to Mr Cornmell's privacy settings being set to "public" she was able to view the profiles of his Facebook friends and verify that there were a number of current and former pupils of Mr Cornmell.

The panel considered the notes of an investigatory meeting held on 13 December 2011, during which Mr Cornmell admitted to being Facebook friends with former pupils of Ramsden Hall. He stated that he did not know how he added them as friends, suggesting he did so accidentally when on Ramsden Hall's pupil data site, and may have hit the wrong button.

The panel also noted Witness A's written and oral evidence that Mr Cornmell, as an experienced teacher who was also a former assistant headteacher of Ramsden Hall,

would have been aware that teachers should not communicate or be “friends” with pupils on social media. She stated that Mr Cornmell would have been provided with Ramsden Hall’s safeguarding and behaviour policies and code of conduct as part of his induction. Further, she stated that annual safeguarding training was delivered on the first day of the autumn term, and staff would have to sign the aforementioned policies to confirm that they had read them.

The panel noted the content of Ramsden Hall’s code of conduct which stated at paragraph 8.3.3 titled social interaction with pupils past and present: “Employees should not engage in conversation with pupils, past or present, irrespective of their age, on any social networking site. Offers of assistance to a pupil with their studies via any social networking site are inappropriate and also leaves the employee vulnerable to allegations being made. It would be very rare for employees to need to interact with pupils outside of school/academy in a social setting and by communicating with them on social networking sites, is tantamount to the same.

Adults should ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and that pupils are never listed as approved contacts. Adults should not use or access social networking sites of pupils.”

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell would have had to “communicate” with pupils past or present via Facebook for them to become his “friends”. The panel further considered that the process of becoming friends with pupils on Facebook would involve several steps to be taken by Mr Cornmell and was unlikely to have occurred accidentally.

The panel concluded that as an ICT teacher his explanation of accidentally adding pupils to his Facebook account was implausible, and that he had failed to observe proper professional boundaries in inviting and allowing pupils and former pupils to be his “friends” on social media.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 1 proved.

2. Between 24 November 2011 and 13 December 2011, you failed to follow management instruction from Ramsden Hall Academy to remove one or more current and former pupils from your personal Facebook account;

The panel noted that it did not have a response from Mr Cornmell in relation to this allegation.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A, who stated that during a meeting with Mr Cornmell on 24 November 2011 he was asked to remove all pupils, past and present, from his Facebook account. She explained that following this meeting, Pupil M informed them that Mr Cornmell had not removed him as a “friend” on Facebook.

The panel noted Witness A's evidence that when she went to check Mr Cornmell's Facebook account on a second occasion, following the management instruction to delete friends who were pupils, she was no longer able to view his personal Facebook account. She believed that Mr Cornmell had changed the privacy settings of his Facebook account. Witness A explained that on 5 December 2011, she used a Ramsden Hall computer, and with the assistance of Pupil M, was able to view Mr Cornmell's Facebook account via Pupil M's Facebook account. She stated that she saw that Pupil M was still listed as a friend of Mr Cornmell's.

The panel considered the notes of an investigatory meeting held on 13 December 2011, where Mr Cornmell stated that he had removed former pupils from his Facebook account, but was unaware Pupil M was on there as his friend and said that he had deleted his entire Facebook account.

The panel noted that Mr Cornmell is not recorded in the notes of the investigatory meeting as disputing that a management instruction was given to delete all his Facebook friends who were past or present pupils.

The panel noted that following the management instruction, Ramsden Hall met with Mr Cornmell on 6 and 13 December 2011 to address the matter of pupils still being listed as "friends" on his Facebook account.

The panel concluded that, based on the available evidence, an instruction had been given to Mr Cornmell on 24 November 2011 to delete all past and present pupils from his personal Facebook account, and he had not followed that instruction.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 2 proved.

3. On or around 6 December 2011, you informed Ramsden Hall Academy that you had deleted your Facebook account when that was not the case;

The panel noted that it did not have a response from Mr Cornmell in relation to this allegation.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A. She stated that during a meeting with Ramsden Hall's Acting Headteacher on 6 December 2011, Mr Cornmell stated that he had deleted his Facebook account, but she knew he had not.

The panel considered the notes of an investigatory meeting held on 13 December 2011, in which Mr Cornmell stated that he had deleted his Facebook account, but it would take 14 days to be completed.

The panel noted that it had not been provided with any notes of the meeting on 6 December 2011, or evidence as to the dates when Ramsden Hall accessed his Facebook account to check if his Facebook account had been deleted.

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence before it that Mr Cornmell had not deleted his Facebook account as of 6 December 2011.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 3 not proved.

4. In or around September 2012, you did not disclose previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall Academy in your application for a supply teaching role;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cornmell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the evidence before it of Mr Cornmell's application for the supply teaching role at the School which comprised of:

- a CV which appeared to be prepared by the supply agency SE;
- SE's vetting check; and
- a CV which appeared to be prepared by Mr Cornmell.

The panel noted that these documents did not contain references to the previous disciplinary proceedings at Ramsden Hall.

The panel noted that it was not provided with an application form or any other documentation relating to the recruitment process which would enable it to consider whether Mr Cornmell had disclosed his previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall during the application process.

The panel was unable to determine if the above documents were the full extent of the information provided during Mr Cornmell's application for the supply role.

The panel did not hear any witness evidence from either SE, the School or AET in relation to Mr Cornmell's application for the supply teaching role and was therefore unable to test the documentary evidence which appeared relevant to the allegation.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 4 not proved.

5. In or around September 2012, you did not disclose your reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall Academy in your application for a supply teaching role;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cormell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the evidence before it of Mr Cormell's application for the supply teaching role at the School which comprised of the documents set out at allegation 4 above.

The panel had sight of a CV that appeared to have been prepared by Mr Cormell (dated 2012), based on its content and provided to SE. It included his reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall as "personal".

The panel also had sight of a CV received from AET, which was titled in the bundle as "SE CV" (dated September 2012). It did not contain any reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall or any previous employers. However, the panel noted, drawing upon its experience of the education sector, that this CV appeared to have been prepared by SE. It appeared to be consistent with the format typically used by supply agencies and would not usually include the teacher's reasons for leaving their previous employment.

The panel noted that it had not been provided with any evidence to support that Mr Cormell had authored or authorised the content of the SE CV.

The panel did not receive any witness evidence from either SE, the School or AET in relation to Mr Cormell's application for the supply teaching role and was therefore unable to test the documentary evidence which appeared relevant to the allegation.

The panel considered based on the available evidence that SE chose not to disclose Mr Cormell's reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall, and that Mr Cormell had disclosed his reasons for leaving to SE as "personal".

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 5 not proved.

6. On or around 24 January 2013, you did not disclose previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall Academy in your application for a permanent position at Tendring Technology College;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cormell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the teacher application form in the bundle dated 24 January 2013 in which Mr Cornmell did not disclose previous disciplinary proceedings at Ramsden Hall.

The panel noted that the teacher application form did not provide any opportunity for Mr Cornmell to include details of the previous disciplinary proceedings with Ramsden Hall. The teacher application form did not include any direct questions regarding the applicant's disciplinary record or whether they had been subject to any disciplinary investigation.

The panel further noted the reference provided by SE in respect of the application which stated that Mr Cornmell had been the subject of a disciplinary investigation and that the "Issue at the Ramsden heath school, which has been explained to the principle [sic]".

The panel noted that it was not provided with any other documentation relating to the recruitment process which would enable it to consider whether Mr Cornmell had disclosed his previous disciplinary proceedings from Ramsden Hall during the application process.

The panel did not receive any witness evidence from either SE, the School or AET in relation to Mr Cornmell's application for the permanent teaching role and was therefore unable to test the documentary evidence which appeared relevant to the allegation.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 6 not proved.

7. On or around 24 January 2013, within your application form for a permanent position at Tendring Technology College you completed your reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall Academy as 'resignation – personal reasons', when that did not fully and/or accurately reflect the circumstances of your resignation;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cornmell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the teacher application form in the bundle, where Mr Cornmell gave his reason for leaving Ramsden Hall as "resignation – personal issues".

The panel noted the written statement of Witness A who confirmed that Mr Cornmell had resigned from Ramsden Hall pending a disciplinary hearing. The panel further noted the documentation provided by Ramsden Hall in respect of the disciplinary hearing held on 23 February 2012, which confirmed the disciplinary panel's decision that had Mr Cornmell not resigned he would have been dismissed for gross misconduct. The outcome letter referred to Mr Cornmell providing written representations to the disciplinary panel.

Based on the evidence, the panel considered that Mr Cornmell was aware of the disciplinary case against him, and that if he had remained in employment one potential outcome of the disciplinary hearing was his dismissal for gross misconduct. He resigned less than 2 weeks before his disciplinary hearing was scheduled to take place.

The panel concluded that the reasons for leaving provided by Mr Cornmell in his application were not full or accurate bearing in mind the circumstances at the time of his decision to resign on 10 February 2012.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 7 proved.

8. You caused or allowed inaccurate and/or inconsistent dates for your employment history to be provided within your application and/or CV(s) for in the period between September 2012 and February 2013;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cornmell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the following documents in the bundle:

- Teacher CV (dated 2012) received from SE (pages 161 – 164);
- Teacher application form dated 24 January 2013 received from AET (pages 146 – 152); and
- SE CV which appeared to have been prepared by SE in September 2012 (pages 140 – 142)

The panel noted that in respect of Mr Cornmell's CV and application form the information provided was consistent. The panel considered that these dates were generally consistent with other verifiable evidence.

The panel noted that inconsistency arose in the SE CV, which had different dates of employment for Ramsden Hall. The panel considered that it did not have any evidence before it to suggest that Mr Cornmell had seen or approved the SE CV.

Based on the evidence, the panel could not be satisfied that Mr Cornmell had caused or allowed the provision of inaccurate or inconsistent dates of his employment history to the School.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 8 not proved.

9. Any or all of your conduct as may be proven at Allegations 3 – 8 was dishonest.

The panel found allegation 7 proven and therefore went on to consider dishonesty in relation to this allegation.

The panel considered the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford and Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority* and considered all of the evidence before it.

The panel first sought to ascertain the actual state of Mr Cornmell's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel considered that Mr Cornmell had knowingly misrepresented his reasons for leaving Ramsden Hall, purposely failing to disclose that he was subject to a disciplinary process due to safeguarding concerns at the time of his resignation.

The panel noted that Mr Cornmell was an experienced teaching professional who had previously held a senior management role at Ramsden Hall and therefore would have been aware of the need to be honest and open with a future employer about the fact he was subject to a disciplinary process.

The panel considered that on balance Mr Cornmell failed to disclose the full circumstances of his resignation from Ramsden Hall as it would have been detrimental to his prospects of securing and/or retaining work.

The panel then considered whether Mr Cornmell's conduct was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel noted that professionals, whilst not expected to be paragons of virtue, were held to a higher standard and believed this included in a teacher's case an expectation of honesty and integrity.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell was aware at the relevant time that his actions were dishonest, and it concluded that Mr Cornmell's actions in relation to the proven facts had been dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel found allegation 9 proven.

10. Between May 2020 and September 2020 you failed to observe a proper professional boundary appropriate to a teacher's professional position, by:-

a. communicating with Child A via mobile phone;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025. Mr Cornmell stated that he was one of two members of staff

responsible for managing the School's safeguarding phone and he contacted students on this phone to ensure safety and access to resources.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness B, who stated that [REDACTED] had discovered that Child A and Mr Cormell had been communicating by mobile phone when Child A's phone was checked by [REDACTED]. She stated that she did not know whether this was on the School's or Mr Cormell's personal phone.

The panel considered the photos in the bundle which showed screenshots of text message conversations between Mr Cormell and Child A. The panel also noted the timeline of communication provided by Mr Cormell during the course of his disciplinary proceedings at the School.

The panel considered Mr Cormell's written statement and his disciplinary investigation witness statement in which he stated that the mobile phone used was the School's safeguarding phone. He also stated that "all phone contact was instigated by Child A and [REDACTED]". Mr Cormell had stated in the hearing of 7 December 2020 that all students and parents had access to the safeguarding phone number due to Covid-19.

The panel also noted that the Safeguard record of Child A included entries where other teachers communicated with Child A using the School safeguarding telephone, referred to as a "work mobile".

The panel considered that communication by the School's mobile telephone would not necessarily of itself constitute a failure by Mr Cormell to observe proper professional boundaries with Child A.

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the communications did not take place on the School's phone.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. a. not proved.

b. sharing personal information about your family and/or personal life, with Child A;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cormell in an email dated 5 September 2025, in which he stated that: "In supporting this child, I sent safeguarding messages and, on occasion, visited placements to confirm stability before withdrawing. These actions were taken solely in the child's best interests."

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness B, who gave evidence as to the personal nature of the communications between Mr Cornmell and Child A.

The panel considered the notes of a session between Child A and their key worker in the bundle which stated that Mr Cornmell and Child A messaged about “not much, mainly his cats and how Child A is” and Child A was aware of where Mr Cornmell lived and he had 14 cats. He was also aware of Mr Cornmell being caught speeding and having to undertake a speed awareness course.

The panel considered the photos in the bundle which showed screenshots of text message conversations between Mr Cornmell and Child A, and them sharing photographs of each other’s cats and Mr Cornmell sharing information about his personal life: “say [waving hand emoji] to [REDACTED] when you see him. I am on my way to Liverpool for [REDACTED]’s [cake emoji] birthday [streamer emoji]. Then off to [Welsh flag emoji] on Sunday. Have a good time with [REDACTED]”.

The panel noted that Child A’s evidence was hearsay and placed some weight on it, as that evidence was supported by the content of text messages with Mr Cornmell.

The panel also noted the timeline of communication provided by Mr Cornmell during the course of his disciplinary proceedings at the School. The conversations included messages regarding Mr Cornmell’s cats.

The panel considered the evidence demonstrated that Mr Cornmell had shared personal information with Child A about his personal life and had therefore failed to observe proper professional boundaries with Child A.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. b. proved.

c. exchanging photographs with Child A which were of a personal nature;

The panel noted that it did not have any response from Mr Cornmell addressing this allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness B, who gave evidence as to the personal nature of the communications between Mr Cornmell and Child A, which included photographs of their cats.

The panel considered the photos in the bundle which showed screenshots of text message conversations between Mr Cornmell and Child A. The panel also noted the timeline of communication provided by Mr Cornmell during the course of his disciplinary

proceedings at the School. These documents showed Child A and Mr Cornmell exchanging photographs including of their pet cats.

The panel considered Mr Cornmell's disciplinary investigation witness statement dated 4 September 2020 in which he accepted that he sent Child A photographs of his cats.

The panel considered that it was not appropriate for a teacher or former teacher of a vulnerable child to blur the professional boundaries by sharing photographs of their family pets.

The panel considered that he had failed to observe proper professional boundaries in exchanging personal photographs with Child A.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. c. proved.

d. maintaining contact with Child A after he had ceased being a pupil of the School on 12 June 2020;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10. b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B, who stated in her written evidence that she first met Mr Cornmell when Child A moved into [REDACTED]. Mr Cornmell was part of Child A's transition to another school and was there to support Child A through this period.

Witness B explained that it would be normal for a member of a [REDACTED] school to provide support until they were placed in a new school. She stated that she thought the transition process for Child A was longer due to the summer holidays.

The panel noted that Mr Cornmell was promoted to designated safeguarding lead ("DSL") in July 2018, and that the School's safeguarding records for Child A for the period 2019 to 2020 demonstrated that Mr Cornmell was heavily involved in safeguarding matters relating to Child A. The panel considered that the records demonstrated that Child A was a vulnerable child with complex needs and noted that Child A was a pupil at the School until [REDACTED].

The panel heard from Witness B that Child A did not start at a new school until the new autumn term in 2020.

The panel considered Mr Cornmell's disciplinary investigation witness statement dated 4 September 2020. The panel noted that Mr Cornmell stated that Witness B had agreed that Child A did not want to lose contact with him, and that Mr Cornmell wanted to be part

of being able to change Child A's life for the better. He had also stated that Child A's [REDACTED] had requested that he keep in touch with Child A during the transition to Child A's new school.

The panel noted that it took longer than normal for Child A to be placed in a new school, due to the summer holidays and the effects of the pandemic, and therefore Mr Cornmell had legitimate reasons for remaining in contact with Child A.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell maintaining contact with Child A after 12 June 2020, was not necessarily of itself a failure to observe a proper professional boundary appropriate to a teacher's professional position.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. d. not proved.

e. visiting Child A at his [REDACTED] on one or more occasions;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10. b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B, who stated in her written statement that "When Child 1 [REDACTED] [Mr Cornmell] came to visit a couple of times to support him with the transition including with the PEP meetings." She stated that during Child A's transition period Mr Cornmell attended [REDACTED] to handover Child A's education plan and records to assist the application for his new school.

The panel noted Witness B's oral evidence that Mr Cornmell was very supportive of Child A. She said he was very forthcoming with the provision of information and that he personally delivered the safeguarding file [REDACTED].

The panel considered the evidence and concluded that Mr Cornmell had legitimate reasons for attending the Home and therefore that he had not failed to observe proper professional boundaries in visiting Child A [REDACTED].

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. e. not proved.

f. buying a takeaway for Child A on 14 July 2020;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10. b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B, who gave evidence that Mr Cornmell had taken Child A for a takeaway at KFC. She stated that Child A's [REDACTED] who [REDACTED] for Child A were happy for this to take place. She explained that it was "an unusual arrangement that seemed strange."

The panel considered Mr Cornmell's disciplinary investigation witness statement dated 4 September 2020, in which he stated that he had asked Witness B whether he could take Child A out for something to eat "and this was agreed".

The panel concluded that this activity was not part of supporting Child A's transition to a new school.

Despite the activity being approved by Child A's [REDACTED], the panel considered that as a teacher, Mr Cornmell should have been aware that taking a pupil or former pupil out alone for a takeaway blurred the professional boundaries.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell failed to observe proper professional boundaries as a teacher by buying a takeaway for a former pupil.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. f. proved.

g. buying McDonalds for Child A on one or more occasions;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10. b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B, who stated in her written statement that she was "not aware of what occasions Mr Cornmell bought a McDonalds" but "when [Child A] was taken home for family contact, [REDACTED] would collect him at the McDonalds in that area. I am not aware if he was ever seen with [Mr Cornmell]".

The panel considered the notes of a session between Child A and their key worker in the bundle, in which Child A is recorded as stating that Mr Cornmell sometimes took him to school, had taken him on trips and that they went to McDonald's drive-through "almost always" before Mr Cornmell would drop him home.

The panel noted that the School's safeguarding records for Child A for the period 2019 to 2020 included an entry from Mr Cornmell on 26 February 2020 referring to Child A being disappointed but "the McDonalds cheered him up". The panel considered that it was unclear who had bought Child A the McDonalds and it had occurred outside of the timeframe of the allegation. However, the School's safeguarding records were supportive of Child A's evidence and allowed the panel to place some weight on it.

The panel considered that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Cornmell had on occasions purchased food/meals for Child A, and therefore on the balance of probabilities, the panel accepted the evidence of Child A.

As above in relation to allegation 10. f. Mr Cornmell should have been aware that buying food for a pupil or former pupil blurred professional boundaries.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell failed to observe proper professional boundaries as a teacher by buying Child A a McDonalds.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. g. proved.

h. taking Child A on a day trip to Chipping Ongar and/or Pets at Home on 21 August 2020, without any other adults present;

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10. b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B, who described the trip to [REDACTED]. The panel noted that the trip was pre-agreed with Child A's [REDACTED], and that [REDACTED] was "happy to support the trip, although we felt it was unusual".

The panel noted Witness B's evidence that Mr Cornmell declined the offer of a member of staff from [REDACTED] to accompany them on the trip.

The panel noted Mr Cornmell's disciplinary investigation witness statement dated 4 September 2020, in which he stated that: "On 21st August, I took [Child A] [REDACTED] and pets at home for cat food and then something to eat. I had told [REDACTED] about this before the school holidays".

The panel also considered the notes of Mr Cornmell's disciplinary hearing dated 7 December 2020 in which he stated that Witness A had offered him the use of a Merlin card to take Child A out for the day. He stated that he thought "someone coming with me" but "they didn't. Should have stopped the trip but I didn't."

The panel concluded on the evidence that Mr Cornmell took Child A on a day trip to Chipping Ongar and Pets at Home on 21 August 2020, without any other adults present. The panel concluded that this activity was not part of supporting Child A's transition to a new school.

Despite the activity being approved by Child A's mother and social worker, the panel considered that as a teacher and designated safeguarding lead Mr Cornmell was aware of Child A's particular vulnerabilities and propensity for making serious unsubstantiated safeguarding complaints against others, and therefore taking Child A out alone placed him and Child A at serious risk.

The panel concluded that Mr Cornmell failed to observe proper professional boundaries in taking Child A on a day trip without other adults present.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. h. proved.

i. Transporting Child A in your personal car, unaccompanied without any other adults present and/or without the knowledge of the School.

The panel noted the written response provided to the TRA by Mr Cornmell in an email dated 5 September 2025, as set out above in respect of allegation 10 .b.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B who gave evidence that the lifts given to Child A in Mr Cornmell's car were "risk assessed by A's [REDACTED], and it was deemed okay. We did think this was also unusual hence why we raised it with them and wanted further insight into this as we felt it crossed the line. The [REDACTED] was aware of the risks around [Child A], and it put [Mr Cornmell] and [Child A] at risk."

The panel considered the notes of a session between Child A and their key worker in the bundle, in which Child A stated that Mr Cornmell sometimes took him to school, had taken him on trips and that they went to McDonald's drive-through "almost always" before Mr Cornmell would drop him at home. Child A also said that Mr Cornmell's driving was "fast and always speeding and he only sometimes wore a seatbelt".

The panel also considered the notes of Mr Cornmell's disciplinary hearing dated 7 December 2020 in which he was recorded as accepting that he had "put himself in a car with a student" and that he wouldn't do it again.

The panel noted that Child A's evidence was hearsay and placed some weight on it as it was supported in part by Mr Cornmell's own admissions during the disciplinary process.

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence before it to determine whether Mr Cornmell transported Child A in his car without the knowledge of the School.

The panel concluded on the balance of probabilities that Mr Cornmell transported Child A in his car unaccompanied without any other adults present, and that this was contrary to well established safeguarding principles.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell had failed to observe proper professional boundaries in transporting Child A in his personal car unaccompanied.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found allegation 10. i. proved.

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

Having found allegations 1, 2, 7, 9 (in relation to 7 only), 10. b., 10. c., 10 .f. , 10. g., 10. h. and 10. i. proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Cornmell, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the standards expected of teachers which applied at the relevant time of the allegations.

In respect of allegation 1, the panel considered the applicable standards that Mr Cornmell was in breach of:

- The General Teaching Council for England’s Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers:
 - Failure to take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- The Teachers’ Standards July 2011, Part 2:
 - 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.
- In respect of allegation 2, the panel considered the applicable standards that Mr Cornmell was in breach of:
- the Teachers’ Standards 2011, Part 2:

- 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.
- In respect of allegations 7, 9 and 10, the panel considered that Mr Cornmell was in breach of the Teachers’ Standards (introduction updated as of 2013), by reference to Part 2:
- 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...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted the preamble to the Teachers’ Standards which provides that teachers act with honesty and integrity.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Cornmell’s conduct amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession in that he:

- deliberately ignored the specific guidance of Ramsden Hall in its code of conduct that prohibited him communicating with pupils and making “friend” requests on Facebook;
- failed to disclose that he was subject to a disciplinary process due to his prohibited social media use with pupils during a recruitment process; and

- failed to maintain professional boundaries with a pupil he knew to be vulnerable.

In respect of allegations 10.b., 10.c., 10.f., 10.g., 10.h. and 10.i., the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Cornmell, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”) in that he had failed to comply with paragraph 2 of the 2019 version: “Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.”

In respect of allegations 10. b., 10. c., 10. f., 10. g., 10. h. and 10. i., the panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Cornmell, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel also considered whether Mr Cornmell’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 considered that Mr Cornmell’s actions demonstrated a deliberate attempt to circumvent recruitment and safeguarding processes.

The panel noted that allegations 10. b., 10. c., 10. f., 10. g., 10. h. and 10. i. took place outside the education setting but related to Mr Cornmell’s profession as his conduct involved a former pupil and was linked to the teacher/pupil relationship.

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

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Cornmell was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Cornmell’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.

The panel considered that the public would not expect, and would be deeply concerned by, a teacher being unable to maintain professional boundaries with a vulnerable pupil and failing to be honest about their disciplinary record and thereby undermining vital safer recruitment practices and the safeguarding of pupils.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Cornmell's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Cornmell was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant.

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

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher, reasonably expecting them to act honestly and to be able to recognise and maintain professional boundaries particularly with vulnerable pupils.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Cornmell'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/or 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 protection of other members of the public;

- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Cornmell, which involved serious failures to maintain professional boundaries with vulnerable pupils, and being dishonest when deliberately failing to disclose a disciplinary process when applying for new employment in breach of established safeguarding protocols, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the protection of pupils.

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

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Cornmell 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 Cornmell in the profession.

The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Cornmell in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he had repeatedly acted in a way which undermined the safeguarding of pupils. The panel had found that Mr Cornmell had failed to maintain professional boundaries with vulnerable pupils in 2010, and did so again a decade later in respect of Child A.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times.

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

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 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);
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests;
- collusion or concealment including:
 - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing.

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 no evidence that Mr Cornmell's actions were not deliberate.

The panel noted the content of the written response provided by Mr Cornmell to the TRA in an email dated 5 September 2025 (the "Email"), but it did not consider that the matters raised in the Email amounted to evidence that Mr Cornmell was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.

The panel noted that Mr Cornmell had not provided any meaningful evidence within the Email or otherwise to attest as to his abilities as a teacher. The panel considered that Mr Cornmell did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector.

Mr Cornmell did not provide any character references. The panel noted that no references were provided for the purpose of these proceedings from any colleagues that could attest to his abilities as a teacher.

The panel considered Mr Cornmell's description contained in the Email of his role as DSL and the pressures of safeguarding responsibilities during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the particularly complex and distressing history in Child A's case. The panel noted that Mr Cornmell alleged that he [REDACTED] as a result of his experience. The panel noted that it had not received any medical evidence to corroborate this claim.

The panel noted in the Email that Mr Cornmell provided a qualified apology for his actions, and in the School's disciplinary process that he regretted some aspects of his conduct in respect of Child A.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell had not demonstrated any meaningful level of insight into or remorse for his behaviour.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, 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 Cornmell 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 Cornmell. The panel noted the allegations related to behaviour which was repeated a decade later in respect of failing to maintain professional boundaries with vulnerable pupils. The panel considered that this demonstrated a lack of insight and remorse by Mr Cornmell into his conduct and presented a continuing risk of repetition. The panel noted that it was not an isolated case of misconduct. Further, the need to adhere to strict safeguarding standards, particularly for vulnerable children, was a significant factor in forming the opinion that a prohibition was proportionate and appropriate.

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. 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. One of these behaviours include fraud and

serious dishonesty. The panel found that Mr Cornmell was responsible for being dishonest in failing to disclose he was subject to a disciplinary process when securing new employment, in an attempt to conceal his conduct, and this amounted to serious dishonesty.

As the panel had found that Mr Cornmell's behaviour was dishonest, this weighed in favour of a longer review period.

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 4 year 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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

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

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

- The General Teaching Council for England's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers:
 - Failure to take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- The Teachers' Standards July 2011, Part 2:
 - 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.

In respect of allegation 2, the panel considered the applicable standards that Mr Cornmell was in breach of:

- the Teachers' Standards 2011, Part 2:
 - 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.

In respect of allegations 7, 9 and 10, the panel considered that Mr Cornmell was in breach of the Teachers' Standards (introduction updated as of 2013), by reference to Part 2:

- 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...

- 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 Cornmell involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' and/or involved breaches of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include failures to maintain professional boundaries with vulnerable pupils, being dishonest when deliberately failing to disclose a disciplinary process when applying for new employment, and breaching established safeguarding protocols.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Cornmell, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

“The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Cornmell in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he had repeatedly acted in a way which undermined the safeguarding of pupils. The panel had found that Mr Cornmell had failed to maintain professional boundaries with vulnerable pupils in 2010, and did so again a decade later in respect of Child A.”

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

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

“The panel noted in the Email that Mr Cornmell provided a qualified apology for his actions, and in the School’s disciplinary process that he regretted some aspects of his conduct in respect of Child A.

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell had not demonstrated any meaningful level of insight into or remorse for his behaviour.”

In my judgement, the lack of evidence that Mr Cornmell has developed full insight into and remorse for his actions 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 comments as follows:

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

The panel considered that Mr Cornmell’s conduct could potentially damage the public’s perception of a teacher, reasonably expecting them to act honestly and to be able to recognise and maintain professional boundaries particularly with vulnerable pupils.”

I am particularly mindful of the findings of dishonesty and failure to follow proper safeguarding processes in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to have on the reputation of the profession.

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

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct 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 Mr Cornmell himself. The panel comments:

“The panel noted that Mr Cornmell had not provided any meaningful evidence within the Email or otherwise to attest as to his abilities as a teacher. The panel considered

that Mr Cornmell did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector.

Mr Cornmell did not provide any character references. The panel noted that no references were provided for the purpose of these proceedings from any colleagues that could attest to his abilities as a teacher.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Cornmell 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 serious nature of the misconduct found as well as the panel’s comments concerning the lack of evidence of insight or remorse. I have also placed weight on the panel’s findings that there was neither evidence that Mr Cornmell’s actions were not deliberate nor that they were committed under extreme duress.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Cornmell 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 a 4 year review period.

In doing so, the panel has referred to the Advice as follows:

“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. 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. One of these behaviours include fraud and serious dishonesty. The panel found that Mr Cornmell was responsible for being dishonest in failing to disclose he was subject to a disciplinary process when securing new employment, in an attempt to conceal his conduct, and this amounted to serious dishonesty.

As the panel had found that Mr Cornmell's behaviour was dishonest, this weighed in favour of a longer review period."

I have considered the panel's concluding comments:

"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 4 year review period."

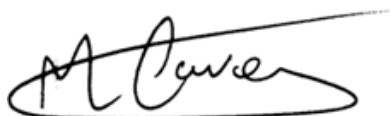
I have considered whether a 4 year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that, in my judgment, allowing such a review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the misconduct found, including dishonesty, and the lack evidence of either insight or remorse.

I consider therefore that a 4 year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr Neil Cornmell 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 27 March 2030, 4 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 Cornmell remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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



Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 23 March 2026

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