



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Ian Garforth: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

March 2026

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Statement of agreed facts	5
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	5
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	8
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	12

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

Teacher:	Mr Ian Garforth
Teacher ref number:	96/61398
Teacher date of birth:	21 April 1974
TRA reference:	22511
Date of determination:	25 March 2026
Former employer:	Winterstoke Hundred Academy, Somerset

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened virtually on 25 March 2026, to consider the case of Mr Ian Garforth.

The panel members were Ms Gill Lyon (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Jack Davies (lay panellist) and Mr Adnan Qureshi (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Rachel Phillips of Blake Morgan LLP.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Garforth that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Garforth provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, or Mr Garforth.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation(s) set out in the notice of proceedings dated 12 December 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Garforth was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

He had been convicted at any time, of the following relevant offence:

1. On or around 20 December 2024, he was convicted at Weymouth Magistrates' Court of the offence of:
 - a) Had sexual intercourse with person under age of 18 at a time when he was in a position of trust on [REDACTED] contrary to s.3(1) and 3(4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.
 - b) Engaged in sexual activity other than sexual intercourse with a person under 18 when in a position of trust on [REDACTED] contrary to s.3(1) and 3(4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology – page 4.

Section 2: Notice of Meeting and Response – pages 6 to 24b.

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts and Presenting Officer Representations – pages 25 to 30.

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 32 to 132.

Section 5: Teacher's Documents – page 134 to 138.

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

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

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Garforth on 17 November 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Garforth for the allegations to be considered without a hearing.

The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

The panel proceeded to consider the case carefully, having read all of the documents, and reached a decision. It accepted the legal advice provided.

Mr Garforth was previously employed as a Teacher of Mathematics at Bristol Metropolitan Academy, which was part of the Cabot Learning Federation (“the Trust”) from 1 September 2009. Mr Garforth was then employed as Principal of Winterstoke Hundred Academy (“the Academy”), also part of the Trust from 1 April 2020.

On 15 August 2023, the Academy were informed by the Police that Mr Garforth had been taken in for questioning and admitted to entering into a sexual relationship with a 16-year-old female between [REDACTED], whilst he was her teacher.

Mr Garforth was invited to attend a disciplinary hearing on 12 September 2023. Before the hearing took place, Mr Garforth resigned from his role on 11 September 2023.

Mr Garforth appeared at Weymouth Magistrates’ Court on 20 December 2024, when he pleaded guilty to i) having sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 18 whilst in a position of trust between [REDACTED]; and ii) engaging in sexual activity other than sexual intercourse whilst in a position of trust between [REDACTED]. On 28 March 2025, Mr Garforth was sentenced for those offences at Bristol Magistrates’ Court.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation(s) against you proved, for these reasons:

You have been convicted at any time, of the following relevant offences:

- 1. On or around 20 December 2024, you were convicted at Weymouth Magistrates' Court of the offence of:**
 - a) Had sexual intercourse with person under age of 18 at a time when you were in a position of trust on [REDACTED] contrary to s3(1) and 3(4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.**
 - b) Engaged in sexual activity other than sexual intercourse with a person under 18 when in a position of trust on [REDACTED] contrary to s3(1) and 3(4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.**

The panel was presented with a statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Garforth, in which this allegation was admitted.

The panel was also presented with a certificate of conviction from Bristol Magistrates' Court ("the Court"), confirming that Mr Garforth was convicted on 20 December 2024 of the following:

- Sex offences – abuse position of trust – have sexual intercourse

Contrary to section 3(1) and (4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.

Between [REDACTED] being a person aged eighteen years or over, had sexual intercourse (whether vaginal or anal) with Individual A, a person under that age and at the time you were in a position of trust in relation to that person.

- Sex offences – abuse position of trust – engage in sexual activity

Contrary to section 3(1) and (4) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.

Between [REDACTED], being a person aged eighteen years or over, engaged in sexual activity other than sexual intercourse with, or directed towards Individual A, a person under that age and at the time you were in a position of trust in relation to that person.

The certificate also confirmed that the sentence imposed by the Court on 28 March 2025 was six months imprisonment suspended for 12 months with a rehabilitation activity requirement of 20 days, 150 hours of unpaid work and a requirement to register on the Sex Offenders register for seven years in accordance with the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of the commission of the offences by Mr Garforth.

In light of this and Mr Garforth's admission, the panel found particulars 1(a) and 1 (b) proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proved allegation amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Garforth in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Garforth 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.

In addition, the panel noted that, pursuant to the Advice a "relevant offence" includes:

- A conviction for any offence that led to a term of imprisonment, including any suspended sentence will be considered "a relevant offence".
- Sexual activity

The panel considered that the nature of the alleged conduct relates directly to the conduct expected of those within the teaching profession and the standards which they are expected to uphold. Given the significance of these findings, and the fact that the behaviour concerned related to a student, who he taught, the panel determined that Mr Garforth's actions were clearly relevant to his teaching role and working in an education setting.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Garforth's behaviour in committing these offences would undoubtedly affect public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. His conduct ran counter to what should be at the very core of the practice of a teacher with a duty of care towards children.

Mr Garforth's behaviour ultimately led to a custodial sentence, which demonstrated the public and child protection issues raised by his actions together with the other aspects of the sentence imposed.

The panel did not consider there to be any relevant mitigating circumstances in relation to the commission of the offence.

For all these reasons, the panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was directly relevant to Mr Garforth's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely:

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils/the protection of other members of the public;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the nature of the offence for which Mr Garforth was convicted there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public. Mr Garforth's actions raised obvious and significant public and child protection concerns.

The panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Garforth was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the profession. This was conduct that was, in the panel's view, at the most serious end of the spectrum, amounting to an egregious breach of the trust placed in him as a teacher.

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 Garforth was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

Given the nature of the allegations in this case and absence of any evidence that Mr Garforth ought to be regarded as an exceptional teacher, the panel concluded there was not a strong public interest consideration in retaining him in the profession.

Notwithstanding 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 Garforth.

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Garforth. 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 are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;

- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- 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);
- violation of the rights of pupils.

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

The panel considered that the following mitigating factors are present in this case:

- Mr Garforth made full admissions to the allegation against him.
- Mr Garforth pleaded guilty to the offences at an early stage for which he was given credit in sentencing.

Weighed against this, the aggravating features in this case included that:

- Mr Garforth's actions were pre-meditated and deliberate.
- There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Garforth was acting under duress.
- Mr Garforth's actions amounted to a clear breach of the Teachers' Standards and raised serious public and child protection concerns.
- Mr Garforth has been convicted of and sentenced for serious offences involving a child.
- Mr Garforth was in a position of trust and responsibility. He had fallen significantly short of the standards expected of him in that regard.

- Mr Garforth had undergone and delivered safeguarding training throughout his career as a teacher and would have known that his actions were wrong.
- Mr Garforth did not report the relationship, or the full extent of the relationship, with the student at any stage. It was only when the student reported it many years later that it came to light.

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 was sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Garforth of prohibition.

Mr Garforth's actions were fundamentally incompatible with his being a teacher. This was conduct of the most serious nature. The nature and gravity of the offence was a matter of significant concern. Accordingly, there were particularly strong public interest considerations in this case in terms of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protecting the public, public confidence in the teaching profession and the declaring of proper standards of conduct in this case.

The panel was therefore of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Garforth.

When balancing the aggravating and mitigating circumstances present in this case, its overall seriousness called for a higher regulatory sanction to protect the wider public interest factors.

Accordingly, it 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 behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

These behaviours include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; and
- any sexual misconduct involving a child.

The panel found Mr Garforth had engaged in sexual activity and had sexual intercourse with a student, which has clearly had a significant, enduring impact on the student. The panel considered that this behaviour was on par with the specific circumstances listed in the Advice that would militate against a review period.

Furthermore, the panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Garforth had shown any insight or remorse regarding his actions and subsequent conviction, nor had he engaged with the severity of his actions or the impact they had on the student involved.

Accordingly, the panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would not be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate in all the circumstances for the prohibition order to be recommended without provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Garforth 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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a conviction for engaging in sexual intercourse and other sexual activity with a person under 18, which resulted in the imposition of a suspended sentence of imprisonment.

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

“In the light of the nature of the offence for which Mr Garforth was convicted there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public. Mr Garforth's actions raised obvious and significant public and child protection concerns.”

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:

“Furthermore, the panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Garforth had shown any insight or remorse regarding his actions and subsequent conviction, nor had he engaged with the severity of his actions or the impact they had on the student involved.”

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:

“The panel considered that public confidence in the profession would be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Garforth was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the profession. This was conduct that was, in the panel’s view, at the most serious end of the spectrum, amounting to an egregious breach of the trust placed in him as a teacher.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for offences involving sexual intercourse and other sexual activity with a person aged under 18 in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of a relevant conviction, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Garforth himself. The panel has commented:

“Given the nature of the allegations in this case and absence of any evidence that Mr Garforth ought to be regarded as an exceptional teacher, the panel concluded there was not a strong public interest consideration in retaining him in the profession.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Garforth 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 extremely serious nature of the offences of which Mr Garforth was convicted. The panel has found that Mr Garforth’s actions were pre-meditated and deliberate, and that he did not report the relationship with the student at any stage. The panel has said:

“Mr Garforth's actions were fundamentally incompatible with his being a teacher. This was conduct of the most serious nature. The nature and gravity of the offence was a matter of significant concern. Accordingly, there were particularly strong public interest considerations in this case in terms of the safeguarding and

wellbeing of pupils and protecting the public, public confidence in the teaching profession and the declaring of proper standards of conduct in this case.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that there was no evidence of insight and remorse on the part of Mr Garforth.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Garforth 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 that no provision should be made for a review period.

The panel has noted that the Advice indicates that the public interest will weigh in favour of not offering a review period where cases involve serious sexual misconduct or any sexual misconduct involving a child.

I have considered the panel’s comments:

“The panel found Mr Garforth had engaged in sexual activity and had sexual intercourse with a student, which has clearly had a significant, enduring impact on the student. The panel considered that this behaviour was on par with the specific circumstances listed in the Advice that would militate against a review period.

Furthermore, the panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Garforth had shown any insight or remorse regarding his actions and subsequent conviction, nor had he engaged with the severity of his actions or the impact they had on the student involved.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offences of which Mr Garforth was convicted and received a suspended custodial sentence, the lack of evidence of insight or remorse, and the harm caused to the victim of his actions.

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

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

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

Mr Ian Garforth 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', written in a cursive style.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 26 March 2026

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