



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Miss Harriet Brown: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

February 2026

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Allegations | 4 |
| Summary of evidence | 4 |
| Documents | 4 |
| Witnesses | 5 |
| Decision and reasons | 5 |
| Findings of fact | 6 |
| Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State | 15 |
| Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State | 18 |

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

Teacher: Miss Harriet Brown
Teacher ref number: 1273658
Teacher date of birth: 14 October 1994
TRA reference: 23777
Date of determination: 20 February 2026
Former employer: St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 19 to 20 February 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Miss Harriet Brown.

The panel members were Ms Gill Lyon (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Emma Hendry (lay panellist) and Miss Amanda Johnston (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lara Small of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Kiera Riddy of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Miss Brown was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Hearing dated 13 November 2025.

It was alleged that Miss Brown was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that, while working as Assistant Headteacher and SENDCO at St. Patrick's Primary School ('the School'):

1. Between February 2020 and October 2023, she failed to disclose her relationship with Individual X, a convicted sex offender, to the School.
2. On one, or more, occasions, she provided information about Individual X that was false or misleading to the School, in that:
 - a. When asked, following Individual X's arrest, if she was still in a relationship with him, she said she was not;
 - b. During the School's investigation process, she informed the School's Investigation Officer that she had not been aware of Individual X's arrest.
3. Her conduct at allegation 1 and/or allegation 2 above was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

Miss Brown did not admit to the facts of allegation 1, 2(a), 2(b) or 3. She made no admission as to whether her conduct amounted to unacceptable professional or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Correspondence – pages 5 to 36

Section 2: TRA documents – pages 38 to 229

Section 3: Teacher documents– pages 232 to 255

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- A written statement from Miss Brown to the panel dated 16 February 2026 (4 pages in length)
- A letter from Miss Brown to the panel and the Secretary of State containing her application for [REDACTED]
- A letter from Individual A, [REDACTED] dated 2 February 2026 (1 page in length)
- An email chain between 17 February 2026 to 18 February 2026 between Miss Brown and the presenting officer with the subject line "Statement".

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

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

On 1 September 2016, Miss Brown commenced employment at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School ('the School').

In late March 2019, Miss Brown entered into a relationship with Individual X. At this time, the School were aware of this relationship.

In September 2019, Miss Brown ended her relationship with Individual X.

In October 2019, Miss Brown restarted her relationship with Individual X.

In November 2019, Individual X told Miss Brown that an allegation had been made against him. Individual X was arrested, charged and a court date set. Miss Brown then ended the relationship.

In November 2019, Miss Brown made a disclosure to the School about Individual X, allegedly in relation to the offences he had been charged with.

In January 2020, regular contact was re-established between Miss Brown and Individual X.

On 4 February 2020, Individual X was found guilty at trial for sexual offences against children under the age of 13.

From July 2020 to October 2023, Miss Brown regularly visited Individual X in prison.

On 24 October 2023, following a home visit to Individual X's parents, probation officer Individual B spoke with Miss Brown, who initially denied and then admitted her relationship with Individual X, including regular phone calls and visits to see him in prison. Individual B recorded that Miss Brown had resumed the relationship and had not disclosed this to the School.

On 25 October 2023, Individual B referred the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO") and contacted [REDACTED], Witness A. The LADO advised the same day that Miss Brown must disclose the situation to the Headteacher. Miss Brown then

telephoned Witness A and informed him about her contact and relationship with Individual X. Witness A notified Trust HR and the LADO.

On 27 October 2023, Miss Brown was asked to remain at home, pending investigation.

On 30 October 2023, the School held an initial fact-finding meeting with Miss Brown.

On 8 November 2023, a formal LADO meeting took place in relation to Miss Brown. The meeting confirmed the non-disclosure of an ongoing relationship and regular prison visits and calls.

On 11 December 2023, Miss Brown attended an investigatory interview, during which she admitted having visited Individual X regularly and [REDACTED].

On 26 February 2024, Miss Brown was dismissed by the School.

On 25 April 2024, a referral was said to be made to the TRA and the DBS.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you proved, for these reasons:

- 1. Between February 2020 and October 2023, you failed to disclose your relationship with Individual X, a convicted sex offender, to the School.**

The panel had sight of HMP Northumberland visitor logs dated 13 January 2025, which showed a large number of regular visits Miss Brown made to HMP Northumberland to see Individual X spanning from July 2020 to October 2023.

The panel considered the contents of the LADO referral form dated 25 October 2023 in which probation officer Individual B stated that on 24 October 2023 she spoke with Miss Brown during a home visit to Individual X's parents. Individual B recorded that during this conversation, Miss Brown "*admitted the relationship with [X]*", despite initially denying this. Individual B recorded that Individual X is a registered sex offender convicted of sexual offences against children under 13. Individual B stated that Miss Brown told her she had initially shared these offences with the Headteacher but had informed him that the relationship had ended. Individual B stated that during this discussion Miss Brown described the extent of her contact with Individual X, which included "*regular phone call and visits*". Individual B recorded that she told Miss Brown she would be confirming this information through Probation and prison security.

The LADO referral document recorded that on 25 October 2023 Individual B made these enquiries, and that prison security confirmed Miss Brown had had "*regular fortnightly visits to [X] and daily phone calls*".

The panel also considered the LADO meeting notes of 8 November 2023, which reviewed concerns about Miss Brown's ongoing contact with Individual X. Individual B

stated that she had reviewed prison records which showed that Miss Brown had been visiting Individual X twice a month whilst he had been in prison and that there had also been regular telephone contact between them. Individual B stated that Miss Brown had initially been “*vague*” about the relationship and was not “*open and honest*”, and had denied contact, and that she was not aware that Individual B had printouts and records of all of their telephone conversations and prison visits. Individual B stated that when confronted with this information, Miss Brown accepted that the visits and phone contact had happened.

[REDACTED].

The meeting notes stated that Miss Brown advised that since speaking to Individual B and Witness A, she has had no contact with Individual X and has contacted the prison herself via a confidential email to ask them to stop all unwanted calls and emails from Individual X. When Miss Brown first spoke to Witness A about her relationship with Individual X, she did not divulge that she had been visiting Individual X as often as she had been and also said that she had been visiting due to the “*financial ties*”, as he had given her £6000 to set up a house.

The panel considered the notes of the meeting with Miss Brown on 11 December 2023. In this meeting, Miss Brown stated that she had “*tried to end the relationship multiple times*” and that after the relationship had ended it had started back up again in “*January 2020*”.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A dated 13 May 2025. Witness A stated that until October 2023, he had understood that Miss Brown’s relationship with Individual X had ended in 2019, and that she had not disclosed any further contact with him in the period that followed. In his oral evidence, when Witness A was asked if he had been aware at the time of the continued relationship between Miss Brown and Individual X after their relationship had rekindled, he stated that he had not.

Witness A stated that on 25 October 2023, Miss Brown telephoned him in a distressed state and disclosed that she had been in ongoing contact with Individual X. He explained that he asked Miss Brown for the contact details of Individual X’s Probation Officer, Individual B, and that he spoke with Individual B later that same day. He stated that during that call Individual B informed him that Miss Brown had been visiting Individual X in prison on a regular basis and that there had been frequent telephone contact between them during his prison sentence. Witness A stated that following this conversation he immediately contacted the Trust’s central team and the LADO, Individual D, in line with safeguarding procedures.

The panel considered the notes of the fact-finding meeting on 30 October 2023, attended by Witness A, Miss Brown, and Individual C. In this meeting, Miss Brown was asked whether she was in a relationship with Individual X and she responded that “*there was no*

relationship. (She) stated that she was in a relationship with the offender but not one she wanted to be in. She rang him on Wednesday 25th (October 2023) to say she didn't want to be in a relationship." During this meeting Miss Brown confirmed that although the relationship had ended in 2019, Individual X had resumed contact with her approximately two months later. [REDACTED].

The panel considered the meeting notes from Witness A's interview with the Investigating Officer dated 28 November 2023 and the notes from a further interview dated 14 December 2023. In these interviews, Witness A stated that he had not received any safeguarding disclosure from Miss Brown indicating that she had resumed contact with Individual X at any time between 2020 and 2023 until 25 October 2023. He stated that on a previous occasion, when he had asked Miss Brown whether she was still in contact with Individual X, she told him that she was not. Witness A stated that the steps he took on 25 October 2023 were taken only after Miss Brown telephoned him and disclosed her contact with Individual X, and after his subsequent conversation with Individual B, and that prior to those events he had been unaware that Miss Brown had maintained any contact with Individual X during the period in question.

The panel considered Miss Brown's written response to the TRA's investigation dated 30 August 2024 in which she says *"I completely refute that I failed to disclose a relationship with Individual X, as there was no relationship to disclose between the dates of February 2020 and October 2023....As far as I was concerned the relationship was over, despite Individual X repeatedly trying to resume contact and reform the relationship....since November 2019 there has been no reciprocated feelings or any form of an intimate relationship with Individual X [REDACTED]."*

The panel took legal advice around the definition of "relationship" in this context, and the panel's attention was brought to the Supreme Court case of *Reilly v Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council [2018] UKSC 16* which dealt with similar facts to those alleged here. In that case, the relationship between the teacher and the man convicted of sexual offences towards children was not a sexual relationship and they did not live together. Nevertheless, the court found that there was a close relationship between them which should have been disclosed to the school. The panel also considered the ordinary definition of a "relationship" which is defined in the Collins Dictionary as "a close connection between two people".

In light of the evidence provided, the panel was satisfied that there was a relationship between Miss Brown and Individual X in the period between February 2020 and October 2023. The panel considered that the frequency of Miss Brown's visits to see Individual X in prison and the frequency of the phone calls evidenced a close relationship of some kind between them, whether the relationship was sexual or not. [REDACTED]. Nevertheless, the frequency of contact between Miss Brown and Individual X during February 2020 and October 2023, the fact Miss Brown stated that her "relationship" had restarted in January 2020 and that she *"had tried to end the relationship multiple times"*

suggested to the panel that there had been a relationship of some form between them during that period of time.

Based on the evidence before it, the panel found that Miss Brown had failed to disclose the level of contact that she had been having with Individual X, and therefore the extent of her relationship with Individual X, to the School between February 2020 and October 2023. The panel considered that, even if Miss Brown had considered Individual X to be her ex-boyfriend during this period of time, the closeness of their relationship, as evidenced by their continued contact between February 2020 and October 2023, was something that Miss Brown failed to disclose to the School until 25 October 2023.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 proven.

2. On one, or more, occasions, you provided information about Individual X that was false or misleading to the School, in that:

a. When asked, following Individual X's arrest, if you were still in a relationship with him, you said you were not;

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A. In his statement, Witness A stated that on a previous occasion, when he had asked Miss Brown directly whether she had continued to have any contact with Individual X, she told him that she had not. Witness A stated that he had been of the understanding that the relationship between Miss Brown and Individual X had ended in 2019, and that Miss Brown had not given him any indication at any time between 2020 and October 2023 that the relationship had resumed. He stated that the first time he became aware that Miss Brown had been in continuing contact with Individual X was on 25 October 2023, when Miss Brown telephoned him during half-term and told him that she had been in contact with Individual X and had been visiting him in prison. Witness A stated that this information contradicted what Miss Brown had previously told him when he had asked her directly about ongoing contact.

The panel further considered the meeting notes of Witness A's interview with the investigating officer. In these notes, Witness A stated that Miss Brown had denied ongoing contact when he had previously asked her whether she was still in a relationship with Individual X, and that he had received no safeguarding disclosure from her indicating that she had resumed the relationship or maintained contact at any point between 2020 and 2023. Witness A stated that the steps he took on 25 October 2023 were taken only after Miss Brown disclosed that she had been in contact with Individual X, and after his subsequent conversation with Individual B. He stated that prior to those events, he had been unaware that Miss Brown had been visiting Individual X or communicating with him.

In Witness A's oral evidence, he stated that the School have an annual safeguarding declaration form on which there is a section for teachers to state where they need a conversation about any potential safeguarding concerns, and that Miss Brown had not flagged this on any of the School's annual safeguarding declarations.

The panel considered the LADO meeting minutes which recorded that “*when this first came to light*”, Miss Brown had said that she had finished the relationship with Individual X and had told her employer that this was the case. The minutes also recorded that Miss Brown had initially denied contact with Individual X when speaking to his probation officer.

The panel further considered the notes of a discussion with Individual C, dated 4 December 2023. Individual C had stated that during her meeting with Miss Brown, she asked Miss Brown directly about the nature of her relationship with Individual X. Individual C recorded that Miss Brown said, “*there was no relationship.*”

Individual C stated that Miss Brown told her that she had been in a relationship with Individual X previously, but that Miss Brown said this relationship had ended in 2019 and that it was not one she had wanted to be in. Individual C recorded that Miss Brown did not describe the relationship as ongoing and did not tell her that she remained in a relationship with Individual X at the time she was asked. Instead, Miss Brown stated that the relationship had ended and that, although it “*started back up*” two months later, she did not present it as a continuing relationship at the time of their discussion.

The panel considered Miss Brown’s written response to the TRA’s investigation dated 30 August 2024 (as extracted above) and in particular Miss Brown’s contention that she had not considered herself to be in a relationship with Individual X between February 2020 and October 2023. The panel had found on the balance of probabilities that Miss Brown was in a relationship with Individual X at the relevant time. The panel concluded that it was false and misleading for Miss Brown to say to the School, as it found she had, that she was not in a relationship with Individual X when she was expressly asked about this following his arrest.

The panel therefore found allegation 2(a) proven.

b. During the School’s investigation process, you informed the School’s investigation Officer that you had not been aware of the reasons for Individual X’s arrest.

The panel considered the notes of the investigatory meeting held with Miss Brown on 11 December 2023, as recorded by the Investigating Officer. During the meeting, Miss Brown was recorded as stating that she had not been aware of the details of what Individual X had been convicted of. The notes recorded that Miss Brown told the Investigating Officer that she did not know the specifics of the allegations against him and that she had not investigated the circumstances of his arrest or conviction. The notes recorded that she stated that Individual X had prevented her from accessing information by restricting her access to social media and news, and that she only became aware of certain reporting after seeing “*some press coverage at work.*”

The notes further recorded that Miss Brown stated she had been unaware of the details of the offences and had not familiarised herself with the nature of the charges. When

asked expressly when she became aware of the allegations against Individual X, she said *“only recently, can’t remember exactly when but not long ago.”* Miss Brown alleged that she had not undertaken any steps to make enquiries about the offences for which he had been arrested and later convicted.

The panel noted the School’s disciplinary outcome letter which recorded that, in her written submissions, Miss Brown stated that she was aware that Individual X had been arrested for offences against a child, and that in the statement she gave to the investigating officer, she said she was not aware of the nature of the arrest or conviction.

The panel considered the contents of Individual A’s letter dated 2 February 2026 in which he stated *“In late November 2019... Individual E was advised by Witness A, [REDACTED] at which Harriet was teaching, that Harriet had made an immediate and honest declaration to him after becoming aware that her boyfriend, X, had been accused of and charged with offences against children.”* The panel considered that if Miss Brown had made an open and honest declaration about this in November 2019, she must have been aware that Individual X had been accused of and charged with offences against children at that time.

The panel considered the disciplinary hearing minutes dated 26 February 2024 in which Miss Brown was asked *“in 2019 were you aware or not aware of the allegations against [X]?”* and Miss Brown was recorded as replying *“I didn’t find the details I only knew it had gone to court with an allegation against children.”*

The panel concluded on the balance of probabilities that Miss Brown did know the reasons for Individual X’s arrest when she was asked this on 11 December 2023 in the Investigation Meeting.

In light of the evidence provided, the panel was satisfied that Miss Brown provided information to the School about Individual X that was false or misleading, by stating that to the School’s Investigating officer during the School’s investigation process that she had not been aware of the reasons for Individual X’s arrest.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 2(b) proven.

3. Your conduct at allegations 1 and/or allegation 2 above was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

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

The panel first considered Miss Brown’s actual knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel noted that in his oral evidence, Witness A stated that, sometime after Individual X was imprisoned, he directly asked Miss Brown whether she continued to have any contact with Individual X. In response, Miss Brown told him that she had not, despite the

evidence that she had been visiting Individual X regularly while he was in prison and communicating with him frequently by telephone throughout that period.

The panel also noted the LADO meeting notes, which recorded that when Miss Brown first spoke to Individual B, Miss Brown denied contact with Individual X and was described by Individual B as “*not open and honest*” and “*vague*” about the relationship. The panel noted that when Individual B provided to her the evidence of Miss Brown’s telephone calls and prison visits, which contradicted Miss Brown’s denials, Miss Brown then accepted that the visits and contact had continued.

The panel also had sight of the notes of discussion with Individual C, in which Miss Brown stated that “*there was no relationship*”. Miss Brown also told Individual C that the relationship had ended in 2019 and did not tell her that the relationship or contact had continued. Individual C recorded that Miss Brown acknowledged visiting Individual X twice a month while he was in prison but had not described this as evidence of an ongoing relationship when initially asked.

The panel further considered the investigatory meeting notes dated 11 December 2023, which recorded Miss Brown as stating that she had “*not been aware of what [Individual X] had been convicted of*”, did not know the specifics of the allegations, and had not investigated the circumstances of his arrest. The panel contrasted this with the disciplinary outcome letter dated 1 March 2024, which recorded that in her later written submission Miss Brown stated she was aware that Individual X had been arrested for offences against a child. The panel had found this to be inconsistent with the account she had given to the investigating officer.

This evidence and the panel’s findings established that Miss Brown had been continuing regular and frequent contact with Individual X, had been visiting him frequently and was aware of the arrest and nature of his offences to a greater sense than she stated in the investigatory meeting.

Applying the second limb in *Ivey*, the panel considered whether Miss Brown’s conduct would be regarded as dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people. The panel was satisfied that ordinary decent people would regard a teacher denying ongoing contact with a convicted child sex offender, when asked directly, while continuing to undertake regular prison visits and receive frequent telephone calls, as dishonest. The panel further considered that ordinary decent people would also view as dishonest Miss Brown’s conduct in denying knowledge of Individual X’s arrest or offences to the Investigating Officer, while later stating in writing that she had known he had been arrested for offences against a child, and in providing inconsistent accounts to senior leaders and investigators at times when she knew various of her accounts were untrue.

The panel therefore concluded that Miss Brown’s conduct, as found proved in relation to allegations 1 and 2, was dishonest.

The panel then considered whether Miss Brown's conduct demonstrated a lack of integrity. In doing so, the panel had regard to the principles set out in *Wingate & Anor v The Solicitors Regulation Authority* and was mindful that professionals are not expected to be "*paragons of virtue*".

The panel noted that Miss Brown's role as a senior leader, Deputy DSL, and SENDCO required a high standard of candour and transparency in all safeguarding matters.

The panel considered the allegations which it had found proven and considered that repeatedly denying contact with a convicted child sex offender when evidence showed ongoing involvement, providing inconsistent accounts regarding her knowledge of the arrest and offences, and failing to give truthful information to senior leaders and investigators amounted to conduct falling significantly below the standards expected of a teacher responsible for safeguarding and upholding public confidence in the profession.

The panel therefore concluded that Miss Brown's conduct, as found proved in relation to allegations 1 and 2, demonstrated a lack of integrity.

Accordingly, allegation 3 was found proved.

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

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

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

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Miss Brown, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Miss Brown was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Miss Brown, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

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

- KCSIE (2021) Part 4: Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors – Section one ‘Allegations that may meet the harms threshold’ – specifically bullet point 4: that a teacher “*behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*”
- Paragraph 339 of KCSIE (2021) makes clear that this includes “*behaviour that may have happened outside of school or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk*”.
- Paragraph 340 states that “*Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO).*”
- The above sections of KCSIE were included in the 2021 versions of KCSIE and thereafter.

The panel also considered whether Miss Brown’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 none of these factors were relevant.

In light of the panel’s findings of fact above, the panel considered that Miss Brown’s actions in repeatedly denying contact with Individual X when evidence showed ongoing involvement, providing inconsistent accounts regarding her knowledge of the arrest and offences, and failing to give truthful information to senior leaders and investigators amounted to conduct which would be considered misconduct of a serious nature.

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

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Miss Brown was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Miss Brown’s actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils’ lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Miss Brown’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 Miss Brown was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the none of these factors were relevant.

However, the panel considered that Miss Brown's dishonesty and concealment of her ongoing interactions with Individual X, a convicted child sex offender, noting she had express annual opportunities to self-disclose any such matter, were key factors in the panel's decision.

The panel therefore considered that Miss Brown's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

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

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct within the teaching profession;
- that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

In the light of the panel's findings against Miss Brown, which involved failing to disclose an ongoing relationship with a convicted child sex offender, providing false or misleading information to the School by denying ongoing contact when asked directly, and giving inconsistent accounts regarding her knowledge of the offender's arrest and offences, there was a strong public interest consideration in declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct in the teaching profession. The evidence showed sustained contact by way of regular prison visits and frequent telephone calls while the School had not been informed; denials of ongoing contact when asked by the Headteacher; and denials of knowledge of the arrest/offences during the investigation that were later inconsistent with her written submission.

There was also a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given that Miss Brown was a Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCO and senior leader with responsibility for the protection of children. The panel considered that a safeguarding professional denying contact with an individual convicted

of sexual offences against children, whilst privately maintaining that contact, created a serious safeguarding concern.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Miss Brown were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. The evidence recorded that Miss Brown (a senior leader, SENDCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead) denied having contact with Individual X to the headteacher and to the probation officer in circumstances where official records showed extensive visits and calls to Individual X in prison and later provided inconsistent accounts regarding her knowledge of the arrest and offences.

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 Miss Brown 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 Miss Brown in the profession.

Whilst there is some evidence that Miss Brown had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Miss Brown in the profession, since her behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

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 Miss Brown.

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;
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences.

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.

In the light of the panel's findings, the panel considered whether any of the mitigating factors set out in the Advice were present.

The panel considered there was evidence that Miss Brown's actions were deliberate. In particular the panel noted that she had had opportunities to disclose her ongoing regular contact with Individual X across a period of three years, which she chose not to do. The panel considered that the evidence suggested her actions were not accidental and that she had knowledge at the time of the requirements of her position.

[REDACTED].

The panel did not have evidence that Miss Brown demonstrated exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel noted that Miss Brown did appear to have a previously good history, she had been employed since 2016, promoted to SENDCO, served as acting deputy headteacher and made assistant headteacher from September 2023, with no previous disciplinary concerns recorded. The panel noted that in the Investigation Report Miss Brown was described as *"a well-respected and trusted colleague."* The panel considered the oral evidence of Witness A who described Miss Brown as being *"earmarked as somebody who had strong potential to be a school leader, and with that regard she had a number of promotions to suit those skills."*

The panel considered the deliberate denials and inconsistent accounts and, given the period of time between 2020 and 2023 in which she did not disclose to the School her regular contact with Individual X, the panel considered this was not a momentary lapse of judgment and considered it was a sustained period of behaviour.

The panel considered whether there was any evidence of Miss Brown's good character. The bundle contained one character reference, namely a letter from Individual A, dated 8 April 2024. In his letter, Individual A confirmed that Miss Brown was known to him through her involvement in the parish community and described her personal qualities positively. Individual A's letter spoke to Miss Brown's personal character and honesty as he had experienced it within the parish. However, the panel noted that no other character statements had been provided by colleagues, senior leaders, or other professionals who could attest to her conduct in a school setting or her abilities as a teacher.

The panel considered whether there was any evidence that Miss Brown had demonstrated insight or remorse. The panel noted that she was described as *"crying uncontrollably"* during the meeting with Individual B and that Witness A described her as being in a distressed state when she rang him on 25 October 2023, saying that she had made a mistake. However, the panel also noted that, despite this distress, Miss Brown had continued to provide inconsistent accounts regarding her contact with Individual X and her knowledge of his arrest and offences. The investigatory meeting notes recorded that Miss Brown attributed her lack of disclosure to feelings of embarrassment and discomfort, and to concerns that she did not feel supported by the headteacher.

The panel considered Miss Brown's statement dated 16 February 2026 in which she stated, *"I recognise that, as a teacher and the designated Safeguarding Lead at the time, I had a professional responsibility to disclose any information that could give rise to a safeguarding or transferable risk."* *"I remain committed to reflecting on these matters and understanding the importance of safeguarding obligations within both my professional and personal conduct."* However, the panel also noted that in her statement, Miss Brown did not seem to recognise the fundamental issue with this case; that she failed to report her ongoing contact and relationship with Individual X to the School, thereby suggesting a lack of insight and a risk of repetition in this case.

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 or 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 Miss Brown 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 Miss Brown. The panel's findings of facts of dishonesty, the lack of disclosure and conflicting accounts she provided to the School and the fact she was a Deputy DSL and SENDCO were significant factors in forming that opinion. The panel was not convinced there was sufficient insight to avoid repetition in the future. 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.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings. The panel did consider whether serious dishonesty was engaged or not in this case, but on balance decided that it was not engaged, given the mitigating factors that applied in this case.

The panel considered the extent to which any mitigating circumstances were present. [REDACTED].

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period. The panel considered in this case that given the mitigating circumstances that were present, a review period of two years would be appropriate to allow Miss Brown an opportunity to demonstrate greater insight into her actions to avoid the risk of repetition.

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 all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Miss Harriet Brown should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Miss Brown is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The panel finds that the conduct of Miss Brown fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of dishonesty and also involves a course of conduct whereby Miss Brown *"...had opportunities to disclose her ongoing regular contact with Individual X across a period of three years, which she chose not to do"*.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Miss Brown, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, *"Miss Brown was a Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCO and senior leader with responsibility for the protection of children. The panel considered that a safeguarding professional denying contact with an individual convicted of sexual offences against children, whilst privately maintaining that contact, created a*

serious safeguarding concern.” 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 sets out as follows, *“The panel noted that she was described as “crying uncontrollably” during the meeting with Individual B and that Witness A described her as being in a distressed state when she rang him on 25 October 2023, saying that she had made a mistake. However, the panel also noted that, despite this distress, Miss Brown had continued to provide inconsistent accounts regarding her contact with Individual X and her knowledge of his arrest and offences.”*

The panel has also commented that Miss Brown *“...did not seem to recognise the fundamental issue with this case; that she failed to report her ongoing contact and relationship with Individual X to the School, thereby suggesting a lack of insight and a risk of repetition in this case”*. In my judgement, the lack of full insight 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 observe, *“...that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Miss Brown were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”* I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Miss Brown herself. The panel comment *“...Miss Brown did appear to have a previously good history, she had been employed since 2016, promoted to SENDCO, served as acting deputy headteacher and made assistant headteacher from September 2023, with no previous disciplinary concerns recorded. The panel noted that in the Investigation Report Miss Brown was described as “a well-respected and trusted colleague.” The panel considered the oral evidence of Witness A who described Miss Brown as being “earmarked as somebody who had strong potential to be a school leader, and with that regard she had a number of promotions to suit those skills”.*”

I have also considered the account of the character reference provided to the panel.

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that *"The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Miss Brown. The panel's findings of facts of dishonesty, the lack of disclosure and conflicting accounts she provided to the School and the fact she was a Deputy DSL and SENDCO were significant factors in forming that opinion. The panel was not convinced there was sufficient insight to avoid repetition in the future"*.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Miss Brown has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full remorse or insight, 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 two-year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments *"The panel did consider whether serious dishonesty was engaged or not in this case, but on balance decided that it was not engaged, given the mitigating factors that applied in this case"* The panel has also said that a two year review period would *"would be appropriate to allow Miss Brown an opportunity to demonstrate greater insight into her actions to avoid the risk of repetition."*

However, I have weighed this against the seriousness of the proven conduct. I have considered the panel's findings that Miss Brown was engaged in a relationship with Individual X over a period of more than three years and had annual opportunities to self-disclose the relationship but failed to do so. Further, the panel has assessed that, based on information currently available, Miss Brown has yet to evidence full insight and remorse for her conduct and that there remains a risk of repetition in this case.

I have considered whether a two-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 a two-year review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the dishonesty found, and the continued lack of full insight or remorse.

In my view, Miss Brown requires an extended review period in which to develop full insight and remorse into her proven conduct. I consider therefore that a three-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Miss Harriet Brown is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 8 April 2029, three years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Miss Brown remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Blomfield".

Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 6 March 2026

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