



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Simon McLone: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

June 2026

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

Teacher:	Mr Simon McLone
Teacher ref number:	0055418
Teacher date of birth:	30 September 1978
TRA reference:	20430
Date of determination:	5 June 2026
Former employer:	De Lisle College Loughborough, Leicestershire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 1 to 5 June 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Simon McLone.

The panel members were Mr Ian McKim (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Teresa Perry (lay panellist) and Ms Elizabeth Tongue (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr James Corrish of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Mark Millin of Kingsley Napley LLP solicitors.

Mr McLone was present and was represented by Mr Nicholas Kennan of Cornwall Street Barristers.

The hearing took place in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 18 March 2026.

It was alleged that Mr McLone was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as Assistant Head Teacher at De Lisle Catholic Voluntary Academy:

1. Between around September 2019 to January 2021, he engaged in an inappropriate relationship and/or failed to maintain professional boundaries with Person A.
2. Between around February 2021 and May 2021, he accessed and/or facilitated access to Person A of secure exam portal, Edexcel, by providing his log in details to Person A or failing to ensure the security of his login details.
3. His conduct at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated.
4. His conduct at paragraph 2 was dishonest.

Mr McLone admitted allegations 1 and 3, as set out in his witness statement dated 12 May 2026, and, whilst recognising the decision to be within the panel's judgement, admitted that those admitted facts were capable of constituting unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. Mr McLone denied allegations 2 and 4.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 8 to 11

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 13 to 27

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 29 to 65

Section 4: TRA exhibits – pages 67 to 783

Section 5: Teacher's documents – pages 785 to 1160

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

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Witness C – [REDACTED]

Witness D – [REDACTED]

Mr McLone also attended the hearing and gave evidence.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In August 2014, Mr McLone commenced employment at De Lisle College (‘the School’) as a [REDACTED]. He was promoted to assistant headteacher in August 2017 and became director of sixth form in September 2018.

In September [REDACTED], Person A, who was already at the School, started Year [REDACTED]. Her subjects included [REDACTED] where she was taught by two teachers including Mr McLone.

Between September 2019 and January 2021, it was alleged that Mr McLone developed an inappropriate relationship with Person A, shared details about his personal life, and met her outside of school, including for overnight hotel stays.

On 12 January 2021, a report was made to the police regarding suspicions of a relationship between Mr McLone and Person A. On 26 January 2021, Mr McLone was arrested at the School by Leicestershire Police. On or around 28 to 29 January 2021, he was suspended by the School.

On 7 February 2021, while suspended, Mr McLone allegedly attended Witness B’s home and disclosed details of his relationship with Person A, including that he loved her, had spent time with her outside of school, and had engaged in a sexual relationship with her after she had turned 18. On 8 February 2021, Witness B reported this conversation to the School.

Between February and May 2021, Mr McLone's Edexcel account, a secure exam portal, was accessed approximately 67 times. During this period, Person A completed [REDACTED] assessments and her teachers had concerns about the responses she provided and the high attainment level which she reached. It was alleged that Mr McLone had accessed or facilitated access to the online secure exam portal.

On 16 March 2022, Mr McLone was dismissed from his position at the School.

On 26 November 2021, Person A disclosed to [REDACTED] that she had engaged in sexual contact with Mr McLone, stating that this occurred after her 18th birthday.

On 13 June 2022, the matter was referred to the TRA.

Criminal proceedings were subsequently envisaged against Mr McLone. However, they were not progressed and the current allegations have not been subject to a criminal hearing.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel carefully considered all the evidence before it, including the full content of the bundle. The panel noted that there was evidence within the bundle which was hearsay and it carefully considered the weight to be placed upon the same in each case.

The panel noted that the statement provided by Person A on 12 May 2026 was a relatively recent statement and that Person A had chosen not to participate in proceedings. Whilst the panel recognised the relevance and admissibility of the statement, it was conscious of the nature of the allegations and the fact that the TRA would have no opportunity to test the evidence of Person A. The panel therefore placed little weight on this statement.

1. Between around September 2019 to January 2021, you engaged in an inappropriate relationship and/or failed to maintain professional boundaries with Person A.

The panel noted that Mr McLone admitted allegation 1, as set out in his witness statement and by his representative at the hearing. Nevertheless, the panel proceeded to consider the evidence before it in relation to this allegation.

The panel considered the written statement of Mr McLone. In his statement Mr McLone accepted that he *“entered into a personal relationship with Person A after she turned 18 years”*.

Mr McLone also stated that, irrespective of her age at the time, the relationship became personal and that he failed to maintain the appropriate professional boundaries expected

of a teacher. Mr McLone acknowledged the inherent power imbalance between a teacher and a student and that he should have maintained clear professional distance at all times and that his actions fell short of the standards expected of him.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B. Witness B was the [REDACTED] in the period with which these allegations are concerned and, with Mr McLone, taught Person A [REDACTED].

Witness B described in evidence how, on 7 February 2021, Mr McLone came to her house without any prior warning. They went for a walk and Mr McLone told her that [REDACTED] and that he had been seeing Person A. Mr McLone disclosed to her that he had been away with Person A and they had stayed in a hotel in Oxford together in October 2020 and slept in the same room. He told her that he and Person A had visited Nottingham for an evening out before the Oxford trip. He informed her that he and Person A had also stayed in Nottingham together, but in separate beds.

Witness B described how Mr McLone had told her that he and Person A had visited Ikea and Dunelm to look for furnishings for his house and that Person A had picked out his bed. He informed her that Person A and he had prepared “mood boards” on Pinterest to work out how best to furnish the rooms for [REDACTED].

Mr McLone informed Witness B that he had been buying gifts for Person A, but they had agreed between them not to exchange gifts so as not to draw suspicion to each other. Witness B recalled Mr McLone saying that he had purchased an [REDACTED] style bracelet for Person A, however she had given it back to him. He commented that he felt bad about not being able to give her presents. He also commented that Person A was upset that they could not take any pictures together as they could not risk anyone finding out about their relationship.

Mr McLone mentioned that he would meet up with Person A at a car park at [REDACTED] after school. Mr McLone told Witness B that he loved Person A, that she meant so much to him and that he had never felt that way before. He said that he had slept with Person A, however only after she turned 18 years old. Witness B recalled that Mr McLone kept repeating “*It’s not what you think, we are very serious*”.

Witness B informed the panel that Mr McLone had told him that the police were involved and that they had spoken to Person A. He informed her that the police were trying to treat Person A as a victim when, in his view, she was not. He stated that had the police not got involved then no one would know about their relationship. He told her that he and Person A had agreed a story between them to legitimise their relationship, by stating that they had bumped into each other after she had left School when attending university in order that it would appear that their relationship only began after she was a pupil at the School.

The panel found Witness B's oral evidence to be consistent with her witness statement and contemporaneous documents and found her to be a plausible witness.

The panel noted that Mr McLone's representative made clear that Mr McLone accepted the "*thrust*" of Witness B's evidence.

The panel carefully considered Witness B's statement of 14 December 2021 in which she also described the walk with Mr McLone. The panel found this statement to be consistent with her statement to the TRA.

The panel also considered Witness B's statement to the police of 11 February 2021. The panel again found the statement to be consistent with Witness B's oral and written evidence. The panel noted that Witness B further provided here that Mr McLone had said to her, regarding Person A, that it was the best relationship he had ever had, that he had never had a relationship like that and that it was genuinely not about going for a younger girl. She stated that Mr McLone said he had been exchanging emails and this graduated to messaging. He told her that he had had sex with her after she was 18 years old. He said that he felt the situation was unfair that he and Person A were in a loving relationship and that he treated her well compared to the way her friends' boyfriends treated them. He stated that he did not want to come across as having groomed her by buying things but that Person A bought him some things for his recent birthday. He stated that he knew that the police would treat Person A like a victim but that she wanted the relationship and that he was worried about how she was.

Witness B recorded within her evidence that after they had met Mr McLone sent her a few messages including, on 9 February 2021, a message stating "*I'm still not allowed to contact you know who which is absolutely killing me! (2.5 more months crying face emoji / broken heart emoji)*".

The panel considered the wider documentation and information which it had been provided with in the bundle. The panel noted that at the time to which the allegations related Mr McLone was a deputy headmaster and the head of sixth form. The panel was informed that Mr McLone would have had annual safeguarding updates and Mr McLone confirmed this in evidence.

The panel had various evidence in the bundle relating to the safeguarding training which Mr McLone had undertaken and noted a mid-year safeguarding and child protection refresher document of 6 May 2020 in which he confirmed he had read, understood and would comply with the expectations of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the School's Behaviour Policy and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 ("KCSIE").

Mr McLone also confirmed in oral evidence that he was familiar with the safeguarding disclosure requirements of the School and that he believed the School used CPOMS safeguarding disclosure software at the relevant time.

The panel noted and considered the School documents it had including the School's Staff Code of Conduct for 2021 to 2022. The panel noted the requirements therein in relation to low level concerns which was stated to include inappropriate conduct inside or outside work. The Code of Conduct stated "*all staff should share any low level concerns they have with the headteacher we also encourage staff to self refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour it would be deemed a low level concern we encourage staff to report it*".

The panel noted an investigation interview note between Mr McLone and the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust relating to a meeting of 5 January 2022 in which Mr McLone described having raised safeguarding concerns concerning Person A in January 2019.

The panel considered a statement of 25 March 2021 from the [REDACTED] of the school. The panel noted this was hearsay and placed appropriate weight on it. The [REDACTED] recalled that on [REDACTED], Mr McLone rang him to tell him that Person A had sent him an e-mail as she was anxious about [REDACTED]. Mr McLone stated that he wanted the [REDACTED] to know he was communicating with her as it was a very unusual situation for a pupil to be contacting their subject leader rather than a pastoral lead.

The [REDACTED] recorded that the following Monday he spoke to Mr McLone and advised him to be careful because he was a male teacher being approached by a female student and he didn't want him to be in a position where an allegation could potentially be made.

The panel noted that within Mr McLone's statement to the disciplinary hearing of 7 March 2022, he referred to having had a conversation with [REDACTED] at the end of year [REDACTED] after Person A had left a [REDACTED] and note on Mr McLone's desk. Mr McLone recorded that the headteacher told him to be careful to have minimum interactions with Person A and to allow a deputy headteacher to deal with anything pastoral needed.

Mr McLone went on to describe how, on the year [REDACTED] induction day, he asked another teacher to go into the room with him and suggested that Person A might make a beeline for him and that this other teacher could divert Person A, which she then proceeded to do. Mr McLone confirmed this in oral evidence.

The panel considered that it was established from the evidence that, by the summer of [REDACTED], Person A had a concerning attachment to Mr McLone which he was aware of and had been warned about the potential implications of.

In oral evidence, Mr McLone was asked about a birthday present given to him in September [REDACTED] by Person A, a passport holder. Mr McLone stated that they had been talking to each other more than they should have been doing at this point and they had been discussing things they should not have been discussing. Mr McLone acknowledged that he did not report this present, stating that he did not want to draw attention to it and embarrass Person A.

Mr McLone was also asked about a birthday present he was said to have purchased for Person A for her 17th birthday in [REDACTED]. Whilst Mr McLone's recollections were not clear as to when he purchased this bracelet, Mr McLone was referred to evidence that the purchase occurred at the end of October [REDACTED]. Mr McLone indicated that the confusion may have arisen from the fact that he purchased it for her birthday but may not have given it to her at that point but that he could not specifically recall. In response to the suggestion that a £75 [REDACTED] bracelet represented significant escalation in their relationship to an inappropriate level, Mr McLone responded that it was a big error of judgement and that he did feel bad at the time that Person A had bought him a gift and he was unable to reciprocate and that he recognised it was the wrong decision.

The panel had sight of various evidence in connection with accommodation booked by Mr McLone during the course of [REDACTED]. The panel noted a summary of key evidence document from the police which it had within its bundle and, whilst not treating this document itself as evidence, noted that it contained a list of 11 occasions when the police suspected that Mr McLone and Person A had shared apartments or hotel rooms together when she was still 17 years old.

Mr McLone was asked about these trips in his witness evidence and accepted that the bookings themselves were accurate. Mr McLone accepted that there were occasions within that list when Person A was at those properties with him but that was not the case on all occasions, citing an example of a hotel at East Midlands Airport when he had been alone.

Mr McLone accepted that there were one or two occasions when Person A stayed overnight but that on some of them she just stayed late in the evening and then she left. Mr McLone provided that a number of these bookings were to [REDACTED].

Mr McLone was taken in oral evidence to a booking of [REDACTED], a booking made for two adults at [REDACTED]. Mr McLone confirmed that he could not recall whether Person A actually stayed overnight but she was present at the property with him for a period of time.

Mr McLone was then taken to a hotel booking in Stockton on Tees which was said to relate to a trip made to his parents to discuss his marriage difficulties. Mr McLone confirmed that Person A had asked to come on that trip to support him and that they had

slept in separate beds. Mr McLone stated that this was inappropriate and that it was a *“massive error of judgement”*.

Mr McLone was also asked in oral evidence about a trip to the [REDACTED] in Oxford in [REDACTED]. It was put to him that, on that occasion, he and Person A slept in the same bed together and Mr McLone acknowledged that this was correct. The panel noted that this would have been before Person A's 18th birthday.

Mr McLone acknowledged that he and Person A went shopping together on one occasion for items for his new home and that he gave her a set of his house keys. Mr McLone denied having any knowledge of Person A's postings on Pinterest at the time saying that their accounts had linked automatically and that he did not review her account and he only became aware of the detail of it in the course of the police investigation. He stated that he was not aware that she was making these plans.

Mr McLone was drawn to a birthday card to him from Person A in [REDACTED] in which she referred to starting their proper journey together and stated that she loved him unconditionally. Mr McLone stated that he accepted that, at that stage, their relationship was beginning to progress from a supportive relationship into more.

Mr McLone was drawn to a birthday card which he sent Person A in [REDACTED] in which he indicated that he was going to stand by her side sharing that day and he hoped *“many, many more”* and that he loved her. Mr McLone stated again that he accepted that the relationship was *“moving in only one direction”*.

Mr McLone was read an excerpt from Witness B's statement referring to the fact that he told her he loved Person A and that she meant so much to him that he had never felt that way before and that he had slept with Person A but only after she turned 18 and that it was *“not what she thought”* but that they were very serious. Mr McLone acknowledged that this was an accurate reflection of where his feelings were.

The panel considered a witness statement of [REDACTED] of 24 February 2021 relating to his interview with Person A. The panel noted that this interview was hearsay and it was cautious therefore as to the weight it applied to it though it also kept in mind that it was the statement of a police officer taken in the course of his duty.

Within this statement, Person A was recorded as having said that she had gone to a hotel in Oxford with Mr McLone in [REDACTED] and that they had slept in the same bed together but she denied that any sexual activity other than kisses on the cheek, the forehead and hugging had taken place. She also gave evidence that they had visited a hotel in Stockton in [REDACTED] when Mr McLone had slept on the sofa in the same room and that they had visited the same hotel in Stockton in [REDACTED] when she went to support him on his visit to tell [REDACTED]. Person A was recorded as having detailed that they stayed at [REDACTED] in Ruddington on two occasions but had

separate bedrooms. She stated that on the second occasion they stayed there in [REDACTED] they had feelings for each other but did not act on them.

Person A recorded that there was a period when Mr McLone was spending a few nights a week away from the family home and that she would meet him at whatever place he was staying, telling her mother or father that she was going to school. She stated that they would spend the days at this apartment with her doing her schoolwork and him doing his and that they would have dinner together and then he would drive her home parking at the bottom of the road so as not to be seen.

In this note, Person A was recorded as acknowledging that she had received a [REDACTED] pendant from Mr McLone and that Mr McLone had provided her with the keys for his house. Mr McLone agreed in oral evidence that Person A had been given the keys for his house indicating he needed someone to have a spare set.

Person A was recorded as saying in the statement that Mr McLone had bought her the bracelet with [REDACTED] as a birthday present for her 17th birthday.

Person A stated that occasionally from [REDACTED] but otherwise during the academic year [REDACTED], Mr McLone would pick her up from the bottom of the street and take her to School in the mornings and then drop her off after School and that they would stop at a car park near the School for about 10 minutes in the mornings. Person A said that Mr McLone would sometimes get into the back with her and they would sit close to each other and hold hands but that they did not kiss.

Person A stated that she and Mr McLone had made plans for the future and the plan would be to *“bump into each other”* in the summer holidays whilst she was at [REDACTED] school in [REDACTED] and start a relationship from there.

The panel considered a note of a disciplinary panel meeting of 7 March 2022. The panel noted that within this meeting Mr McLone described as false accusations that he had discussions with Person A about his [REDACTED], or about mood board planning, or about sleeping together once Person A turned 18, or about legitimising the relationship once Person A left school or that he gifted her a bracelet. The panel noted that this appeared inconsistent with some of evidence including the disclosures which Mr McLone had apparently made to Witness B.

The panel carefully considered all the evidence available to it. The panel considered that it had been demonstrated that Mr McLone had engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Person A from, at least, [REDACTED] onwards. The panel noted that this relationship came at a time when Mr McLone had already been cautioned to minimise his time with Person A given her apparent feelings towards him.

The panel considered that it had been proven that Mr McLone and Person A had spent substantial time together outside of school during her years [REDACTED] including in

hotel rooms and, at least on some occasions, overnight. The panel also considered that the evidence demonstrated repeated, wholly inappropriate actions including the giving of presents and the giving of keys to his house, the sharing of a bed on at least one occasion and cuddling between them and overnight trips together. The panel noted that Mr McLone accepted this allegation and that he accepted that his actions as described in the allegation were wholly inappropriate.

Although the panel had no direct evidence that sexual intercourse had occurred between Mr McLone and Person A before Person A turned 18 the panel did consider that there was evidence of a long course of repeated behaviour whilst Person A was in years [REDACTED] at School which demonstrated the progression of a personal, intimate and wholly inappropriate relationship which, as Mr McLone himself repeatedly commented in evidence, was “*only going one way*”.

The panel did not accept the spirit of Mr McLone’s written evidence that he had “*entered into a personal relationship with Person A after she turned 18 years*”. Rather, the panel considered it clearly demonstrated on the evidence that an inappropriate personal relationship had existed for a long time prior to that, noting the significant number of occasions prior to this date which Mr McLone had spent with Person A in hotel rooms when she remained under 18 and in full time education under his care. In oral evidence Mr McLone appeared to accept that the relationship was consistently developing during 2019 to 2020 and was significantly over the line of any professional boundary.

The panel noted that over the course of a year and a half, Mr McLone would have had almost limitless occasions to report his behaviour and Person A’s behaviour to the School using the appropriate safeguarding software, and by disclosures to the headteacher, but that there was no evidence that he had taken these steps at any point.

The panel considered that it had been evidenced by the TRA that between September 2019 and January 2021 Mr McLone developed a clearly inappropriate relationship with Person A and he had entirely failed to maintain professional boundaries.

The panel found allegation 1 proved.

2. Between around February 2021 and May 2021, you accessed and/or facilitated access to Person A of secure exam portal, Edexcel, by providing your log in details to Person A or failing to ensure the security of your login details.

The panel noted that Mr McLone denied allegation 2, as set out in his witness statement.

The panel carefully considered a record of tracked log-ins to the Edexcel secure portal in the name of Mr McLone. The panel observed that the log-in records showed repeated access to the Edexcel system using Mr McLone’s username between February 2021 and May 2021. The entries recorded a large number of log-ins across this period. The panel

noted that it was not evidenced in this document or elsewhere in evidence what had been downloaded from the portal, what had been accessed, the location from which the portal was accessed, the individual by whom the portal was accessed (save that it was Mr McLone's login) or the identity of the device from which it had been accessed.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness C. Witness C confirmed that she taught Person A [REDACTED] in Year [REDACTED]. She described that she was responsible for devising the mock and final examinations for [REDACTED] in the school year [REDACTED]. She stated she used previously unused questions from Pearson and obtained the paper from the secure Edexcel portal online which was a resource only accessible to staff and which pupils could not access.

Witness C stated that the questions had not been used previously and were only available for download from the password protected online portal, not online. Witness C did though acknowledge in oral evidence that whilst she was not able to find them online, through a few Google searches, it was conceivable that other teachers at other schools may have released them even though they were expressed to be "locked" on the Edexcel website.

Witness C explained that Person A was expected to obtain a mark in her mock that was lower than the A* pass mark of 66% but that she actually achieved 90%. She described that on reviewing the "scale" question in Person A's exam result Person A gave the model answer as opposed to the one that would have been obtained by measuring the actual exam paper with which she had been provided. She stated that, on speaking to her, Person A denied having had access to any of the questions or information connected within the model answers.

In respect of her devised [REDACTED] exam on [REDACTED], Witness C described that she had again prepared the paper using a Pearson paper from 2020 which had not been used by students previously and was obtained through the secure portal. Witness C described how another pupil had come to her before the exam was due to take place asking her if there was a question about [REDACTED] on the exam paper and informed her that she had seen that question on Person A's laptop.

Person A again achieved a very high mark in this exam and provided the model answer in relation to a question regarding [REDACTED].

Witness C said she again questioned Person A about this and Person A maintained that she had never had access to any of the exam papers or model answers, although on being confronted with the fact that the [REDACTED] question had been seen on her laptop Person A did disclose that she had found the questions online.

The panel also considered a contemporary statement from Witness C dated 14 December 2021 and considered it to be consistent with her evidence to the panel.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness D who was a peer of Person A at the School and described herself as having been a friend. Witness D was also studying [REDACTED]. She described how once, when sitting in the library with Person A, Person A asked her for advice in respect of a past exam paper and showed her that past paper. Witness D described herself as surprised as she had completed every single past paper, so far as she was aware, and had not seen this paper. She stated that there was one particular section which stood out in relation to [REDACTED]. She stated that she asked Pupil A how she obtained this question and her response was to take the laptop off her, brush it off and that she appeared panicked. She stated that Person A had said she found it somewhere.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr McLone. Mr McLone stated that he did not, at any point, provide his login credentials for the Edexcel portal to Person A or to any other student. He further added that he did not access the system during the relevant period, during which he was suspended from School and his laptop with the login details was with the police and he did not facilitate or knowingly permit access by any other individual. He stated that he had not been aware of any unauthorised access to his account at the time.

Mr McLone explained that his login credentials for the Edexcel portal were stored in the browser of his school laptop which the police had at the relevant time, and that the password was a randomly generated password provided to him via email when he first joined the School in 2014. He stated that he did not commit the password to memory and initially accessed it through his School email account and later via the stored browser details.

Mr McLone then explained that he had only ever accessed the Edexcel portal using School computers, including desktop computers and his school laptop and that prior to his suspension on 26 January 2021, his account had not been accessed for a significant period. He stated that, following his suspension, he no longer had access to his school email account or his work laptop, which had been confiscated by Leicestershire Police on 26 January 2021 and was not returned to him.

Mr McLone added that without access to his email account or laptop, he no longer had the login credentials required to access the Edexcel portal and was therefore not in a position to access or monitor the account from that date onwards. He then stated that, between 26 January 2021 and November 2021, he was subject to bail conditions which prohibited any contact with Person A, and that any such contact to facilitate access to exam materials would have constituted a breach of those conditions. Mr McLone acknowledged that the evidence showed that his account had been accessed a number of times following his suspension but stated that he was not responsible for that activity. He stated that, given his absence from the School and lack of access to his devices, he was unable to identify who had accessed the account but suggested that others within

the organisation may have had the opportunity and legitimate operational reasons to do so.

Mr McLone then stated that no direct evidence had been produced to demonstrate that Person A accessed the Edexcel system using his login credentials and that, to his understanding, no technical data capable of identifying who accessed the account had been provided.

In relation to the examination material, Mr McLone stated that he understood that relevant past papers and assessment materials were available through legitimate means, including publicly accessible sources. He stated that the [REDACTED] question in issue had been published as part of Pearson's Additional Assessment Materials on 19 April 2021, and that it had therefore been in the public domain prior to the examination which he stated undermined any suggestion that the Edexcel portal was the sole source of the material. Mr McLone also suggested that by the time Person A was alleged to have had access to this material it would have, in accordance with Pearson's own procedures, been published online.

The panel considered the written statement of Person A, albeit that it applied very limited weight to the same noting it was hearsay. The statement provided that Person A sat a [REDACTED] mock examination. She explained that, in preparation for this mock examination, she had reviewed and practised past Edexcel examination papers, consulted mark schemes, and used other revision materials obtained from Witness C, the open-source Edexcel website, the internet, including Reddit and other social media platforms, and fellow students. She stated that, as these materials were readily available, there had been no need to access them through a restricted account requiring another person's username and password.

Person A stated that she achieved approximately 90% in the mock examination and recalled that another student achieved approximately 94%. She explained that, following the mock examination, she was asked questions by Witness C about her answers and stated that she informed her that she had revised using papers downloaded from the "[REDACTED] *hard drive*" and/or the internet. She stated that some of the questions appeared familiar and that she considered she had practised similar questions beforehand. She further stated that she recalled similar papers being available on the "[REDACTED] *hard drive*" at some point, but that these were later removed.

Person A stated that, during a subsequent meeting, Witness C said that Person A may have seen some of the examination questions beforehand, although Person A was not the only student to whom this applied, and other students were also mentioned. Person A stated that she was not asked to provide a written statement at that time.

Person A further stated that, in [REDACTED], she sat a [REDACTED] examination (Paper 1) and prepared for it in a similar manner, using past papers, mark schemes, and

other revision materials obtained from the same sources. She reiterated that these materials were publicly accessible and that there was no need to obtain them through a restricted account. She stated that, following that examination, she was again asked questions by Witness C and [REDACTED] about a particular answer she had given and that she explained she had revised using materials downloaded from the “[REDACTED] *hard drive*” and the internet. She stated that some questions again appeared familiar, as similar questions had appeared across multiple sources she had used in preparation. She confirmed that she was not asked to provide a written statement. Person A stated that she went on to sit the remaining [REDACTED] examinations and achieved an overall grade A. She further stated that no concerns were raised with her regarding her performance in any other examinations in [REDACTED] during the [REDACTED] academic year.

Person A stated that shortly before the first [REDACTED] examination in [REDACTED], she was studying in the library when Witness D observed an exam question on Person A’s laptop screen. Person A explained that Witness D demanded to know where she had found it, and that she responded by stating she had recently found it online. Person A stated that Witness D then attempted to look more closely at her laptop screen in an abrupt and assertive manner. Person A explained that, in response, she asked Witness D what she was doing and closed the lid of the laptop. Person A further stated that Witness D did not raise the matter with her again following that incident.

The panel carefully considered all of the evidence which it had before it. The panel considered it likely, on the balance of probabilities, that Person A did have access to some documents which Witness C did not expect her to have and considered that it was likely that these documents were of benefit to Person A in her exams. The panel did not though consider that it had been proven on the balance of probabilities that Person A had obtained these documents from any particular source, or wrongfully.

The panel noted the extent of evidence it had heard that such documents may have been available online and that the documents being “locked” on Edexcel simply meant that they could only be accessed by teachers who had a passcode to the exam’s portal generally. It seemed, in general, problematic to the panel to conclude that such a potentially wide range of individuals having access to the documents would logically mean they were not at serious risk of being released on the internet. Indeed the panel noted that Witness C’s own evidence appeared to be that, whilst she had not found the documents on the internet, other teachers could have improperly downloaded or released this material. The panel considered that the TRA had not demonstrated that the documents which ultimately Witness C relied on in creating her mock and actual examinations were sufficiently secure not to have been simply accessed by Person A from some other source online as she suggests.

Regardless of whether or not Person A had such documents the panel did not consider that the TRA had adduced sufficient evidence that between around February 2021 and

May 2021, Mr McLone accessed and/or facilitated access to Person A of the Edexcel portal by providing his log in details to Person A or failing to ensure the security of his login details. The panel noted that it had no direct evidence that Mr McLone had access to his login details at this time and that it had no evidence that it was Mr McLone or Person A that logged into his account. It noted it had no evidence as to the nature of the documents which were accessed or downloaded by whomsoever did log on to Mr McLone's account.

The panel saw some logic in Mr McLone's representative's argument that it would be inherently unlikely that someone seeking to wrongly obtain confidential downloads of exam information would access a secure site over 60 times to do so, as opposed to simply downloading or photographing all of the relevant data on one occasion.

Ultimately, whilst recognising there were clearly questions to be answered in relation to who it was who accessed Mr McLone's account, the panel simply did not consider that it had been proven on the balance of the probabilities that it was Mr McLone or Person A who did so or that that this was a consequence of Mr McLone's direct actions or negligence.

The panel found allegation 2 not proven.

3. Your conduct at paragraph 1 was sexually motivated.

The panel noted that Mr McLone admitted allegation 3, as set out in his witness statement and by his representative at the hearing. The panel also noted that it had found allegation 1 proven.

The panel considered whether Mr McLone's conduct was sexually motivated. It noted the guidance from *Basson v General Medical Council [2018]* that: "*A sexual motive means that the conduct was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship*".

The panel carefully considered the definition in *Basson* and noted that it appeared uncontested that Mr McLone engaged in a sexual relationship with Person A whilst she was still a pupil on or soon after her 18th birthday. The panel noted that the pattern of behaviour leading up to that time included their spending time on trips and in hotel rooms together overnight.

The panel further noted that in *General Medical Council v Haris [2021]*, it was stated that: "*In the absence of a plausible innocent explanation for what he did, the facts spoke for themselves. A sexual motive was plainly more likely than not; I would go so far as to say that that inference was overwhelming*".

The panel considered whether there was a plausible innocent explanation for the conduct as found proven. The panel had regard to Mr McLone's admissions that his relationship

with Person A became personal and progressed to become intimate, and his acknowledgment that he had failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and had entered into a relationship while in a position of trust.

The panel found that there was no plausible innocent explanation for the conduct, given that it involved the development of an intimate personal relationship between a teacher and a pupil over a long period of time, in circumstances where Mr McLone remained in a position of trust and authority and in which he failed to take any meaningful steps to either address or report his behaviour.

The panel noted Mr McLone's repeated oral submissions in evidence that the relationship was "*only going one way*".

The panel found proven on the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr McLone's actions in pursuing and engaging in an intimate personal relationship with Person A and in particular as found in allegation 1 were, conduct either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 3 proved.

4. Your conduct at paragraph 2 was dishonest.

The panel noted that Mr McLone denied allegation 4, as set out in his witness statement.

Having found allegation 2 not proven the panel did not go on to consider allegation 4.

The panel found allegation 4 not proven.

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

Having found allegations 1 and 3 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 McLone in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr McLone 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, 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 McLone, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the relevant version/s of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

The panel considered that Mr McLone was in breach of the following provisions: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 28, 41, 42, 43 and 46.

The panel found that Mr McLone's actions as found proven were also in breach of multiple sections of the School's Staff Code of Conduct (2021 – 2022).

The panel noted in particular the statement that ***"All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's mental and physical health and/or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. De Lisle is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all its staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At all times staff must act in the best interests of the child. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection, or Deputy DSL(s) in their absence"***.

The panel also considered whether Mr McLone'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 types of sexual activity and sexual communication with a child were relevant.

The panel carefully considered what it had found proven based on the evidence.

The panel had identified that between September 2019 to January 2021 Mr McLone had actively progressed a relationship with a child under his care (Person A having been a child until [REDACTED]) and that his actions were sexually motivated.

The panel noted that it had identified that Mr McLone had been cautioned regarding his contact with Person A in the summer of 2019 given her apparent strong feelings towards him.

Notwithstanding this, Mr McLone had proceeded to have extensive personal interactions with Person A outside school including travelling away with her at a weekend and sharing hotel rooms with her and including sharing a bed on at least one occasion before she turned 18. He exchanged gifts and cards with her and provided her with the keys to his house. After she had turned 18, but was still a pupil within his care, it appears not to be contested, and appears clear from the contemporaneous evidence of Person A and from the evidence of Witness B, their relationship was a sexual one.

The panel considered this to be incredibly serious misconduct and considered that the course of conduct it had seen demonstrated would unquestionably have had the impact for the child of normalising the behaviour of Mr McLone. The panel considered this behaviour to be indicative of grooming.

Mr McLone provided no evidence that he sought to escalate or report any concern about his own, or Person A's, actions. The panel had no doubt that he would have been fully aware of his obligations in this regard, and indeed he did not deny that he was. Given this the panel could only conclude that he deliberately chose to progress a relationship which he knew was in breach of a large number of safeguarding and statutory rules and to keep it secret.

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

To the extent to which the conduct took place outside of the education setting, the panel was fully satisfied that Mr McLone's conduct affected the way he fulfilled his teaching role and could have led to pupils being exposed to or influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way.

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

In relation to whether Mr McLone'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 Mr McLone's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offence types in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr McLone was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that sexual activity and sexual communication with a child were relevant.

The panel noted that Witness B had recorded that she had been made sick by Mr McLone's revelations. The panel considered that this would have been a likely reaction from any parent or member of the public who was concerned for child welfare. The panel considered that the public would expect teachers to act at all times in accordance with safeguarding requirements and to place a child at the centre of all of their considerations. The panel considered the public would view Mr McLone's actions in engaging in sexually motivated conduct in the continuance of a personal relationship with a child in breach of professional boundaries to be wholly inappropriate and indeed the very antithesis of a teacher's pastoral role.

The findings of misconduct are extremely serious, and the panel had no doubt that the conduct found proven would be likely to have a negative impact on the public's perception of a teacher as well as a negative impact on the public's perception of Mr McLone as a teacher, therefore bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr McLone'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 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 the declaring and upholding of proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr McLone which involved a highly inappropriate and sexually motivated relationship with a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

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

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr McLone was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated on any basis.

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

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

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

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;

- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- 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 to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk e.g. failed to notify the designated safeguarding lead and/or make a referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies when abuse, neglect and/or harmful cultural practices were identified;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);

The panel was concerned to note that there was evidence that Mr McLone was well aware his behaviour was wrong and sought to conceal it and failed to disclose it over a prolonged period. The panel also noted with concern evidence that Mr McLone had sought to raise, within the original processes, unfounded challenges towards the integrity of witnesses and others involved in progressing investigations concerning him.

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 McLone's actions were not deliberate.

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

There was no evidence that Mr McLone demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct, indeed the conduct as found proven was clearly directly opposed to this concept. Though it appeared he had been viewed as a good teacher there was no evidence that he had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character, especially noting it took place over a prolonged period and showed a complete disregard for all School policy and professional standards.

The panel considered whether Mr McLone demonstrated any insight or remorse in relation to his actions. The panel noted that Mr McLone had acknowledged in his witness statement that he had failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and

recognised the seriousness of entering into a personal relationship with a pupil while in a position of trust. The panel also noted that Mr McLone stated that he had reflected on the impact of his conduct, including the potential effect on Person A, other students, colleagues, and the wider school community, as well as the risk of undermining public confidence in the profession.

The panel noted Mr McLone's statement that he had recognised that he should have maintained clear professional boundaries, exercised greater professional judgement, and sought advice or removed himself from situations where boundaries were becoming blurred and that he stated he regretted his actions.

Whilst the panel noted it was to Mr McLone's credit that he attended and cooperated with the professional conduct panel hearing, the panel considered that, in reality, it had extremely limited evidence of insight on his part and no meaningful evidence of regret or remorse for his actions.

The panel noted that Mr McLone had provided no explanation whatsoever for his consistent disregard of Teachers' Standards and a large number of the provisions of KCSIE. Rather Mr McLone, even at this stage, did not seem to appreciate the incredibly serious potential consequences of his actions for the child involved, or for children generally, or for the School, or for the teaching profession.

The panel had no substantive evidence of Mr McLone endeavouring to take lessons from his actions or seek to address his behaviour on ongoing basis or identify the triggers for his behaviour. The panel heard repeated evidence from Mr McLone as to the seemingly inevitability and sincerity of his relationship, [REDACTED], but no recognition as to the origins of that relationship, specifically the infatuations of a teenage girl, infatuations which he was aware of and in respect of which he was obliged to demonstrate the highest standard of care and integrity. Instead, the panel noted he had proceeded to ignore the warnings and all of the safeguarding provisions intended to protect the child and instead chose to further, in a manner he gave no recognition in the hearing of recognising as grooming behaviour, a sexually motivated relationship with that child.

The panel was not convinced that Mr McLone, in reality, regretted his actions.

The panel was very conscious of the limited nature of Mr McLone's admissions within his evidence and the apparent attempt to limit those admissions to his commencement of his relationship with Person A after the age of 18.

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 McLone 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 McLone. Mr McLone's serious breaches of the Teachers' Standards and KCSIE, his abuse of a position of trust and his forming a wholly inappropriate and sexually motivated relationship with a child under his care and continuing that relationship from September 2019 to January 2021, were all significant factors in forming that opinion.

Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

These 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;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

The panel noted that it had found limited, if any, evidence of meaningful insight and remorse on Mr McLone's part. The panel noted Mr McLone's evidence as to his [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Mr McLone did not seek to rely on these matters as a defence to the allegations and the panel did not consider that these matters meaningfully mitigated the seriousness of the behaviour as found proven.

Whilst the panel also noted Mr McLone's representative's submissions as to the low risk of any repetition of this behaviour, the panel did not concur. Specifically, the panel found Mr McLone to be, demonstrably, an intelligent man fully aware of safeguarding requirements and fully aware of the vulnerability of a child in the circumstances like those of Person A (and, in fact, fully aware of the vulnerability of Person A herself). Nevertheless, he had proceeded to engage in a long-term, sexually motivated

relationship with her treating all professional conduct requirements, boundaries, and safeguarding requirements as subsidiary to his desired aims.

The mentality which the panel considered this demonstrated, combined with the lack of meaningful remorse and insight, led the panel to conclude that the risk of repetition of this behaviour were Mr McLone ever allowed to teach again would be extremely high.

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 provision 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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In this case, the panel has found allegations 2 and 4 not proven and I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

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

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, 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 McLone involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel has found that the conduct of Mr McLone fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of engaging in a sexually motivated relationship with a pupil.

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 Mr McLone, 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 light of the panel’s findings against Mr McLone which involved a highly inappropriate and sexually motivated relationship with a child, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.”

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 and its conclusion that:

“Whilst the panel noted it was to Mr McLone’s credit that he attended and cooperated with the professional conduct panel hearing, the panel considered that, in reality, it had extremely limited evidence of insight on his part and no meaningful evidence of regret or remorse for his actions.”

The panel has also commented that:

“The panel had no substantive evidence of Mr McLone endeavouring to take lessons from his actions or seek to address his behaviour on ongoing basis or identify the triggers for his behaviour.”

In my judgement, the lack of evidence of full 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 the public would view Mr McLone's actions in engaging in sexually motivated conduct in the continuance of a personal relationship with a child in breach of professional boundaries to be wholly inappropriate and indeed the very antithesis of a teacher's pastoral role.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct 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 Mr McLone himself. The panel has commented:

“There was no evidence that Mr McLone demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct, indeed the conduct as found proven was clearly directly opposed to this concept. Though it appeared he had been viewed as a good teacher there was no evidence that he had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel did not accept that the incident was out of character, especially noting it took place over a prolonged period and showed a complete disregard for all School policy and professional standards.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the seriousness of the proven misconduct. The panel has said:

“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 McLone. Mr McLone’s serious breaches of the Teachers’ Standards and KCSIE, his abuse of a position of trust and his forming a wholly inappropriate and sexually motivated relationship with a child under his care and continuing that relationship from September 2019 to January 2021, were all significant factors in forming that opinion.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s findings that Mr McLone’s actions were deliberate and that his insight and remorse were very limited. The panel has said:

“The panel noted that Mr McLone had provided no explanation whatsoever for his consistent disregard of Teachers’ Standards and a large number of the provisions of KCSIE. Rather Mr McLone, even at this stage, did not seem to appreciate the incredibly serious potential consequences of his actions for the child involved, or for children generally, or for the School, or for the teaching profession.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr McLone 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.

I have considered the panel’s comments:

“The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

These 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;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

The panel noted that it had found limited, if any, evidence of meaningful insight and remorse on Mr McLone’s part. The panel noted Mr McLone’s evidence as to

his [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Mr McLone did not seek to rely on these matters as a defence to the allegations and the panel did not consider that these matters meaningfully mitigated the seriousness of the behaviour as found proven.

Whilst the panel also noted Mr McLone's representative's submissions as to the low risk of any repetition of this behaviour, the panel did not concur. Specifically, the panel found Mr McLone to be, demonstrably, an intelligent man fully aware of safeguarding requirements and fully aware of the vulnerability of a child in the circumstances like those of Person A (and, in fact, fully aware of the vulnerability of Person A herself). Nevertheless, he had proceeded to engage in a long-term, sexually motivated relationship with her treating all professional conduct requirements, boundaries, and safeguarding requirements as subsidiary to his desired aims.

The mentality which the panel considered this demonstrated, combined with the lack of meaningful remorse and insight, led the panel to conclude that the risk of repetition of this behaviour were Mr McLone ever allowed to teach again would be extremely high."

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 misconduct, the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse, and the high risk of repetition.

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 Simon McLone 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 McLone 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 Simon McLone 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 be 'S. McLone', written in a cursive style.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 10 June 2026

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