



Mr Ian Johnson: 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 Ian Johnson

Teacher ref number: 7949456

Teacher date of birth: 12 December 1958

TRA reference: 21048

Date of determination: 11 June 2026

Former employer: The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, North Yorkshire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 9 to 11 June by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Ian Johnson.

The panel members were Dr Martin Coles (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist) and Mr Tim Foy (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Abigail Hubert of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Caroline Collins of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Johnson was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 17 March 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Johnson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, while employed as a teacher at The Wensleydale School (“the School”), he:

1. On one or more occasions between September 2020 and May 2022:
 - a. Put his hand(s) on Pupil A’s hip(s); and/or
 - b. Put his hand(s) and/or arm(s) on or around Pupil A’s back; and/or
 - c. Pulled Pupil A’s hips towards him
2. On an unknown date in or before May 2022, whilst Pupil H was sat on a table, he stood in front of her and put his arms on either side of her legs
3. Commented on a pupil’s appearance, in that he referred to a Year 11 female pupil at his previous job as being “stunning” and/or “beautiful” or words to that effect
4. His conduct at any or all of allegations 1 to 2 above, as may be found proved, was sexually motivated.

Mr Johnson made a partial admission in relation to the facts of allegation 3, in that he acknowledged that he made the comments, but they had been taken out of context, as set out in his undated statement in response to the allegations. Mr Johnson made no admission in respect of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c) and 2, and made no admission as to whether his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. Mr Johnson denied allegation 4, as set out in his undated response to the allegations.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

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

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 28

Section 3: TRA witness statements and exhibits – pages 29 to 284

Section 4: Other relevant TRA documents – pages 285 to 299

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 300 to 305

The panel also received:

A further document titled 'Exhibit RL32 – video of teacher and Pupil B'

Proceeding in absence bundle totalling 44 pages

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 2020 Procedures.

Witnesses

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

Pupil A

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 4 November 2018, Mr Johnson commenced employment at the School as a Food, Hospitality and Catering Teacher.

On 23 March 2022, Pupil D and Pupil E raised concerns with [REDACTED] at the School alleging that Mr Johnson had put his hands on their waists and then said, "I shouldn't have done that".

On 1 April 2022, Pupil B and Pupil C reported further concerns regarding Mr Johnson that had made them feel uncomfortable including an allegation that Pupil B and Pupil C had seen Mr Johnson standing very close to Pupil H with his hands either side of Pupil H whilst she was sat on a table.

On 1 April 2022, the School made a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer ('LADO'), and an investigation was initiated.

On 7 April 2022, a LADO strategy meeting was held with [REDACTED], and the police. On the same date, a parent of Pupil A contacted the School separately to raise additional concerns that Mr Johnson had approached Pupil A and put his arm around her waist on a number of occasions.

On 8 April 2022, Mr Johnson was suspended from the School.

On 13 July 2022, a disciplinary hearing was held by the School and on 18 July 2022, Mr Johnson's employment at the School was terminated.

The School referred the matter to the TRA on 24 August 2022.

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. On one or more occasions between September 2020 and May 2022:

- a. Put your hand(s) on Pupil A's hip(s); and/or
- b. Put your hand(s) and/or arm(s) on or around Pupil A's back; and/or
- c. pulled Pupil A's hips towards you

The panel noted that Mr Johnson made no admission in respect of allegations 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) and proceeded to consider the evidence before it.

The panel first noted an email dated 7 April 2022, in which a parent of Pupil A wrote to Witness A outlining what Pupil A had told them. The email stated that Pupil A said "*Mr Johnson, on a number of occasions, has approached her and put his arm around her waist.*"

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Pupil A. Pupil A explained that she was taught by Mr Johnson when she was in [REDACTED] with lessons taking place a couple of times a week lasting one hour each in both [REDACTED].

Pupil A stated in their written statement that in every lesson Mr Johnson would "*grab my hips and my sides*". Pupil A went on to say that Mr Johnson "*sometimes used one hand but sometimes both. Sometimes, he put one hand behind me on my lower back and put his other hand on the side of my hip from behind me. On other occasions, he put his hands on each on my hips... whilst standing behind me*". During oral evidence, Pupil A stated that she could not recall any lesson in which Mr Johnson did not touch her.

Pupil A also stated that *“on other occasions he would have his arm around my waist whilst we were side by side. When he did this, his arm would be round the bottom of my back... Sometimes his arm and hand would be around my lower back just above my bottom.”* Pupil A confirmed during oral evidence that by “lower back” she meant just above her tailbone and upwards.

Pupil A further stated that Mr Johnson sometimes *“pulled my hips towards him”* and *“occasionally, if I stepped away, he pulled me back and kept hold of my hip with his whole hand. On other times if I stepped away, he put his arm around my back or grabbed my hip and pulled me closer to him.”* Pupil A confirmed that when Mr Johnson pulled her towards him, sometimes there would be no space between them and sometimes there might only be a little gap.

Pupil A confirmed during her oral evidence that the contact would last for as long as it took Mr Johnson to assist her with her work, likely for a couple of minutes, and that sufficient pressure would be applied such that she would not have been able to easily walk away.

Pupil A explained that this would occur whilst she was [REDACTED] in the corner of the classroom during practical sessions, or, if engaged [REDACTED], when she approached Mr Johnson to seek assistance with her work. Pupil A confirmed that although there were quite a few cupboards in the classroom this is not where the contact took place.

Pupil A confirmed that there was no logical reason or safety issue which meant that Mr Johnson would need to have physical contact with Pupil A in this way.

The panel also considered the incident statement taken from Pupil A dated 25 April 2022. The statement stated that *“there has been times where he has stood very close to me in an uncomfortable way”* and *“there has been times where he has put his arm around me just at the bottom of my spine and there has been times where hes done that and pulled me closer to him and there has been other times where hes grabbed my hips...”*. The statement provided that *“I cannot tell how many times hes done it but it a lot like multipul time in a lesson and it would happen every lesson.(sic)”*

The panel noted that this statement was taken contemporaneously with the issue being raised by a parent of Pupil A and aligned with the oral evidence and witness statement given by Pupil A as part of these proceedings.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A. During Witness A’s oral evidence, he described Mr Johnson as sociable in his interactions with other adults within the School. In terms of personal space, Witness A noted that Mr Johnson could, at times, stand closer than might be considered typical during conversations which occasionally meant that you would find yourself backing away. When asked by the panel whether Witness A had observed Mr Johnson teaching, he

confirmed that he had not and could not comment on his teaching style. Witness A also confirmed that he had not personally seen Mr Johnson touching a child.

The panel considered the undated written statement of Mr Johnson. Mr Johnson outlined the layout of the classroom, with reference to the [REDACTED]. Mr Johnson described that, due to the restricted space within the doorway, there were instances where he needed to pass pupils in close proximity. He explained that, in order to avoid bodily contact, he would place his hands out in front of him. Mr Johnson acknowledged that this action may have been misinterpreted and noted that the headteacher had previously raised this with him, following which he had taken steps to ensure that the situation did not arise again. He further maintained that, to the best of his knowledge, he could not recall any occasion where he had directly or indirectly touched or held a pupil, other than where he intended to guide a pupil away from him or direct them towards an appropriate area within the classroom.

The panel considered the disciplinary investigation meeting notes from the interview with Mr Johnson conducted as part of the School's investigation. During this interview, Mr Johnson was told that one pupil had stated that there had been occasions where he had placed his hands on their hips to either pass them or manoeuvre them in the classroom and he was asked whether he could explain any situations when this may have occurred. Mr Johnson stated "*[REDACTED]. Its tight area. If I don't get to the door first they are in there.*" Mr Johnson went on to say that "*at one point in the year some of them were [REDACTED]. If I place hands on anyone's hips, that is when it would have happened.*"

The panel noted a photograph of the [REDACTED] it had before it. The photograph showed a number of [REDACTED]. Several pupils were present and [REDACTED], the panel found Pupil A's evidence that the incidents occurred within the [REDACTED] itself more persuasive. Having seen evidence of the layout of the classroom, the panel was satisfied that the space was not so limited as to make Mr Johnson's account of events plausible.

The panel noted the lack of corroborating evidence with Pupil A's evidence, nevertheless the panel found that Pupil A was a credible and convincing witness. Pupil A's oral evidence was consistent with the original incident statement taken, which was made contemporaneously with the events alleged. The panel attached weight to this, noting that Pupil A was largely consistent throughout and was appropriately candid in stating where her recollection was limited.

The only deviation identified between Pupil A's written evidence and oral statement concerned the number of girls present in the class. Pupil A had said that she was the only girl in the class in her written statement and subsequently confirmed that there was one other girl in the class during her oral evidence. However, the panel considered her

explanation that she had effectively blanked out this particular individual, particularly as this individual had missed a number of lessons, to be plausible in the circumstances.

The panel also found Pupil A's description of the events to be very detailed and persuasive particularly when Pupil A explained that they had attempted to step away from Mr Johnson but was pulled back, and that the conduct occurred on a regular basis. The panel also noted that Pupil A seemed genuine when she said that that she felt "*scared that I might see him again*".

In respect of the lack of corroborating evidence from other pupils in Pupil A's class, the panel noted that that geographical layout, coupled with the small class size of approximately eight pupils and their likely dispersion, meant it was entirely plausible that other students did not observe the conduct. The panel also noted Witness A's evidence that Pupil A was a vulnerable and relatively isolated pupil, such that her peers may have been less likely to notice or intervene. Further, the panel noted that Witness A confirmed that no pupils in Pupil A's class were interviewed as part of the School's investigation.

The panel found, on the balance of probabilities, allegations 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) proven.

2. On an unknown date in or before May 2022, whilst Pupil H was sat on a table, you stood in front of her and put your arms on either side of her legs

The panel considered the short video, dated 1 April 2022, which showed Mr Johnson standing in front of Pupil H with both hands positioned on either side of her whilst she was seated on a table. The panel also noted that an undated still image had been captured from the footage, depicting the same scenario.

The panel considered the disciplinary investigation meeting notes from the interview with Mr Johnson conducted as part of the School's investigation. The panel noted that, when Mr Johnson was asked whether he recalled placing his hands on either side of a pupil's legs whilst she was sitting on the table and leaning towards her getting quite close, Mr Johnson denied that this would have taken place. Mr Johnson stated that where a student is seated on a table, he would typically advise them not to sit on a [REDACTED]. He further explained that he might say words to the effect of, "*I don't know where your bottom has been or when your clothes were last washed*". However, he maintained that he would not place his hands on either side of a pupil in the manner described.

The panel noted that on 17 May 2022, Mr Johnson was sent an undated still image taken from the short video referenced above. The panel further considered Mr Johnson's email of his response to the photo dated 23 May 2022. In his response, Mr Johnson said that he did not recall the incident within the photo happening, but it is quite obvious it did. He explained that he was aware of invading a student's personal space and, based on the photo, he lowered his stature to be in line with Pupil H's face. Mr Johnson further stated

that judging by the photo and Pupil H's body language, she did not appear to be displaying any signs of discomfort.

The panel considered the undated written statement of Mr Johnson. Mr Johnson stated that when he was originally asked about allegation 2, he answered that he would not have done that. Mr Johnson explained that, at the time he was first questioned, he had not been shown the photographic evidence relied upon. He outlined that, upon being provided with the photograph the following day, he knew the pupil involved, the situation and the outcome of the conversation taking place.

The panel considered both the oral evidence and the written statement of Witness A. Witness A confirmed that the pupil shown in the video was Pupil H and that the footage had been recorded by a pupil in the same class. Witness A stated that he considered Mr Johnson to have been standing too close to Pupil H. He further observed that, if Mr Johnson had been instructing Pupil H to get down from the table, his positioning would have impeded her ability to move away from him.

The panel also considered the incident statement forms contained within the bundle from Pupil B and Pupil C. Pupil B's statement recorded that "*Mr Johnson came over and leant over her with his arms at both side of her*". Pupil C's statement recorded that Mr Johnson "*was standing over REDACTED in a weird way with his hands either side of her as she was sat on the table*". The panel noted that the name of the pupil, who Pupil B and Pupil C were referencing, had been redacted from both statements. Notwithstanding this, the panel had regard to Pupil C's interview evidence, in which, when asked about the timing of the incident, Pupil C stated that the date would be shown on the video. In light of this, the panel concluded that Pupil C's statement was referring to Pupil H, who is the pupil shown in the video.

The panel noted that the incident statements from Pupil B and Pupil C were hearsay but determined that weight could be applied to this evidence when considering this allegation as the evidence aligned with what was shown in the short video dated 1 April 2022.

The panel considered all the evidence before it and found, on the balance of probabilities, allegation 2 proven.

3. Commented on a pupil's appearance, in that you referred to a Year 11 female pupil at your previous job as being "stunning" and/or "beautiful" or words to that effect

The panel noted that Mr Johnson made a partial admission in relation to the facts of allegation 3, in that he acknowledged that he made the comments, but they had been taken out of context, as set out in his undated statement in response to the allegations.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A. Witness A explained that during the investigatory interview with Mr Johnson he asked Mr Johnson whether he had described any pupils from his previous school as “*stunning and the prettiest*”. Witness A explained that Mr Johnson had initially denied this but then referred to a pupil and said to him in reference to that pupil that “*she was a stunningly beautiful girl*”.

The panel also considered the disciplinary investigation meeting notes from the interview with Mr Johnson conducted as part of the School’s investigation, which he had sight of and the opportunity to comment on. The panel noted that when Mr Johnson was asked about whether he had described girls from his previous schools as “*stunning and the prettiest*” he stated that there was one situation regarding a former pupil, and he knew what context he mentioned this in. He went on to say that “*she was a stunningly beautiful girl*”. When Mr Johnson was asked whether he had told students about this previous pupil, Mr Johnson said, “*I don’t think so. I may have done, but I don’t think so. Oh, I know the conversation which the pupils are referring to though*” He went on to say that he mentioned one girl who was “*stunningly beautiful*”.

The panel considered the incident statement form taken from Pupil D dated 25 April 2022 which stated that Mr Johnson had spoken about these [REDACTED] girls in an inappropriate way. Further, the panel noted the notes of the interview with Pupil D where they stated that Mr Johnson had said that [REDACTED] girls from another school were stunning and the prettiest. The panel noted that this evidence was hearsay however, it considered that it could attach some weight to it as it aligned with what Mr Johnson had explained during the School’s disciplinary investigation meeting.

The panel considered the undated written statement of Mr Johnson. Mr Johnson stated that the comment regarding a pupil’s appearance at his previous school had been taken out of context. He expressed the view that it would have made no difference how he had described the pupil. Mr Johnson explained that the discussion formed part of a lesson on teaching different cultures and diversity, in which the pupils had limited knowledge. He stated that his comments had been made in an attempt to incorporate equality and diversity into the lesson, but acknowledged that, on this occasion, this approach had not been successful.

The panel considered all the evidence before it and found, on the balance of probabilities, allegation 3 proven.

4. Your conduct at any or all of allegations 1 to 2 above, as may be found proved, was sexually motivated.

The panel noted that Mr Johnson denied allegation 4, as set out in his response to the allegations dated 1 January 2024.

The panel considered whether Mr Johnson's conduct, as may be found proved at allegation 1 and 2, 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 further had regard to *General Medical Council v Haris* [2021], in which 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."

The panel considered whether there was a plausible innocent explanation for Mr Johnson's conduct as was found proved at allegation 1 and 2.

In respect of allegation 1, the panel noted that Mr Johnson repeatedly touched Pupil A on their hips and lower back and, most significantly, pulled her towards him, sometimes with both hands. The panel did not consider that this was a neutral or incidental touch. The panel considered that the use of both hands on the hips, coupled with pulling the pupil closer when she attempted to move away, involved a degree of control and physical intimacy.

The panel noted that Pupil A had stated that "I do not think it was an appropriate way for a Teacher to behave and I just thought it was weird". When asked during oral evidence what Pupil A meant by weird, she explained that it just felt wrong for Mr Johnson to be touching her like that.

The panel also considered Mr Johnson's statement dated 1 January 2024, in which he denied any sexual motivation and suggested that the physical proximity was unavoidable due to the confined and busy nature of the teaching environment, particularly [REDACTED]. However, the panel did not find this explanation persuasive. It also concluded, based on the evidence before it, that the relevant contact with Pupil A occurred in the main [REDACTED] setting.

The panel further noted that the class size was small and that the photographic evidence did not support the contention that the space was so restricted as to make close physical contact of this nature unavoidable. Instead, the panel considered that the contact went beyond what could reasonably be explained by spatial constraints or the ordinary conduct of lessons.

The panel considered alternative innocent explanations for the contact such as comforting or guiding. It observed that, had it been Mr Johnson's intention to comfort or guide, a more limited and appropriate form of contact would have been expected. The repeated nature and length of the conduct over a prolonged period, the focus on intimate areas of the body such as Pupil A's hips and lower back and, most importantly, the fact that Mr Johnson had pulled Pupil A back towards him when she stepped away reinforced

the inference that the conduct was wholly inappropriate and strongly suggestive of sexual gratification being Mr Johnson's motive.

The panel also placed weight on Pupil A's known vulnerabilities. The panel noted that Pupil A had a support plan in place which Witness A confirmed that Mr Johnson would have been aware of. The panel also noted Witness A's oral evidence that explained Pupil A had a variety of challenges in respect of [REDACTED]. Witness A explained that Pupil A had an "*amazingly expressive face*" when it came to showing people what she did or did not like he stated that "*she would make it incredibly clear if you were doing something that she did not want*".

The panel also noted the disciplinary investigation meeting notes from the interview with Mr Johnson conducted as part of the School's investigation where when asked whether he had ever felt a response in a student's body language to his hand on their shoulder, Mr Johnson stated "*No, the only one is Pupil A, I have to very careful around keeping my distance with Pupil A, if I get within 2 feet she will back off...*"

The panel considered that Mr Johnson's decision to continue such contact in these circumstances was particularly concerning and inconsistent with any innocent explanation. Taken cumulatively, these factors led the panel to conclude that there was no plausible innocent explanation and, on the balance of probabilities Mr Johnson's conduct at allegation 1 was sexually motivated.

In respect of allegation 2, the panel took into account Mr Johnson's explanation that upon reviewing the photograph taken from the video dated 1 April 2022 that he recognised the context, which he described as a supportive interaction with a pupil who was anxious about an upcoming [REDACTED] examination.

The panel noted Mr Johnson's position that the photograph did not capture the full context of the interaction and also noted that there was no evidence from Pupil H in this regard.

Whilst the panel considered that Mr Johnson standing in front of Pupil H and placing his arms on either side of her legs was inappropriate and unprofessional, the panel noted that the conduct lacked the repetition and pattern seen in allegation 1, and there was no evidence of additional behaviour suggestive of sexual intent, such as physical contact with intimate body parts, pulling the pupil closer, or persistence in the face of resistance. The panel also considered the absence of evidence regarding the surrounding context seriously limited its ability to draw firm inferences.

Accordingly, although the panel was critical of Mr Johnson's behaviour towards Pupil H, it considered that there may potentially be an innocent explanation for the conduct and it was not satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Johnson's actions in this instance were undertaken in pursuit of sexual gratification or a sexual relationship.

Therefore, the panel concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, Mr Johnson's conduct as may be found proved at allegation 1, but not allegation 2, was proven to be sexually motivated.

The panel found allegation 4 proven.

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

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

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Johnson 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;
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- 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 also considered whether Mr Johnson's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel had sight of the School's Code of Conduct and took into account the oral evidence of Witness A, who confirmed that Mr Johnson would have been required to sign

to acknowledge that he had read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the School's Code of Conduct, and that he would also have been expected to complete relevant online training. The panel noted, however, that there was no evidence before it to confirm that Mr Johnson had in fact signed such acknowledgements or completed any online training. Witness A further confirmed that he delivered an annual update session covering safeguarding and any amendments to relevant policies and recalled that Mr Johnson had attended this session.

The panel considered all the evidence, in particular Pupil A's account that she had attempted to step away from Mr Johnson but that he had pulled her back towards him. The panel noted the importance of observing proper professional boundaries and the safeguarding obligations owed to pupils which, the panel concluded, Mr Johnson had failed to observe.

The panel noted that the behaviour in question was persistent and formed a pattern over time. The panel considered that the evidence indicated that this conduct occurred regularly, with Pupil A unable to identify any lesson in which it did not take place. As a result, Pupil A confirmed in oral evidence that she began avoiding lessons altogether to escape Mr Johnson's behaviour, which the panel concluded could have had a negative impact on her education. The panel also noted that the conduct involved actions that should reasonably have been understood as inappropriate, particularly where Pupil A attempted to disengage and step away.

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

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

In relation to whether Mr Johnson'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 noted that Pupil A, Pupil B and Pupil C had appropriately raised their concerns with their parents. It further noted the potential wider impact of such issues on the teaching profession, emphasising that parents are entitled to expect that their children will be safe and treated with appropriate respect and care whilst at school.

The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

The Panel again considered Pupil A's oral evidence, in which she stated that she felt "*scared that I might see him again*". The Panel regarded this as a clear indication of the impact of the conduct on a vulnerable pupil by a teacher that Pupil A should have been able to view and regard as a role model.

The panel also considered Witness A's evidence that touching by adults in this way can make this type of contact normalised and can make individuals more vulnerable when they get into the workplace.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Johnson's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Johnson was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher potentially damaging the public perception of the teaching profession.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Johnson'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. The panel noted that 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; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Johnson, which included inappropriate physical contact with a pupil that was considered to be sexually motivated and making comments about a pupil's appearance, the panel considered that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

The Panel considered the potential consequences of a teacher, who ought to act as a role model, engaging in contact of this nature with a pupil. It also had regard to the inappropriateness of making a comment about a pupil's appearance, particularly given that the pupils that heard the comment were at a formative stage of development.

The Panel noted that Mr Johnson was in a position of trust and Witness A had confirmed in his oral evidence that Mr Johnson would have been aware of Pupil A's vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding this, Mr Johnson proceeded to engage in the conduct described, demonstrating a lack of regard for Pupil A's wellbeing.

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 Johnson was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Johnson in the profession. Although Mr Johnson had confirmed in his written statement that he had been in the teaching profession for over 40 years, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Johnson 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.

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 Johnson.

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;
- 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; and
- violation of the rights of pupils.

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 Johnson's actions were not deliberate. The panel considered that, particularly in relation to Mr Johnson's contact with Pupil A, his conduct was deliberate, noting that he pulled Pupil A towards him after she had stepped away.

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

Whilst the panel considered Mr Johnson's assertion that he had not been subject to any disciplinary proceedings during his 40 years of teaching, the panel noted that there was no evidence before it to show that he had demonstrated exceptionally high standards of personal and professional conduct or that he had made a significant contribution to the education sector. The panel also did not accept that the incident was out of character.

The panel acknowledged the narrative provided by Mr Johnson regarding his [REDACTED]. However, the panel considered that this information was not relevant to the specific allegations under consideration. The panel also noted the absence of any supporting [REDACTED] to substantiate the position advanced by Mr Johnson.

The panel considered, based on the evidence before it, that Mr Johnson had also shown very limited remorse for his conduct. The panel noted that during the disciplinary investigation meeting Mr Johnson had said "*if I've put them in a situation where they feel threatened, I sincerely apologise.*" The panel found this to be a conditional apology, insofar as it was premised on whether his conduct had caused the pupils to feel threatened, rather than constituting an acceptance that his actions had in fact done so.

Mr Johnson further stated in his undated statement "*if I am guilty of anything it's being guilty of not amending my persona in a classroom with regards to safeguarding*". The panel did not consider this amounted to a genuine apology or acceptance of wrongdoing.

The panel noted that Mr Johnson demonstrated limited insight into his conduct. Although he acknowledged that some of his actions may have been misinterpreted, this fell short of a clear recognition of the seriousness of his behaviour or its potential impact on pupils. Mr Johnson continued to assert that a number of the allegations had been taken out of context and offered alternative explanations for his conduct.

The panel noted that from the outset of the allegations being raised, Mr Johnson consistently sought to justify his behaviour, for example by asserting that any physical contact he may have had with pupils would have been in the [REDACTED] and would

have been down to spatial constraints when the panel had accepted the oral evidence from Pupil A that the contact with Pupil A had taken place in the [REDACTED].

Mr Johnson also stated that he would not place himself in an inappropriate position with a pupil. Only when he was confronted with photographic evidence demonstrating that he had done so did he admit that this had happened. The panel concluded that these responses amounted to attempts to excuse his conduct, rather than to acknowledge that it had occurred.

The panel also noted that, in his undated statement, Mr Johnson sought to advance possible explanations as to why pupils may have come forward with these allegations when they did. The panel considered this to be a further attempt to deflect responsibility for his actions, rather than to take accountability. The panel concluded that Mr Johnson had demonstrated no meaningful insight into the wrongfulness of his actions, nor any proper recognition of the concerns arising from his conduct or its impact on others.

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 Johnson 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 Johnson. Inappropriate physical contact with pupils which the panel determined to be sexually motivated was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. The panel's attention was drawn to one of these factors by the presenting officer, namely, 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. The panel considered this guidance carefully. Whilst it found that Mr Johnson's conduct in relation to allegation 1 was sexually motivated, it concluded that it fell at the lower end of the spectrum of sexual misconduct and did not amount to serious sexual misconduct.

The panel was however mindful of the impact of Mr Johnson's behaviour on Pupil A, noting in particular that she became visibly upset during her oral evidence and stated that she was "*scared that I might see him again*".

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 noted that these lists are not intended to be exhaustive and panels should consider each case on its individual merits taking into account all the circumstances involved.

The panel concluded that, although Mr Johnson's conduct was sexually motivated, it did not fall within the category of serious sexual misconduct for which a review period would ordinarily be inappropriate. However, the panel attached significant weight to the impact on Pupil A, who was left distressed and fearful, and to the fact that the conduct occurred over a sustained period of time during which she was vulnerable. The panel also noted Mr Johnson's current lack of insight or remorse, which led it to conclude that there may be a risk of repetition.

Notwithstanding this, the panel considered that there is scope for Mr Johnson to address his behaviour particularly as it did not regard the conduct as indicative of entrenched traits. In those circumstances, the panel determined that a review period would be proportionate, as it allows sufficient time for meaningful reflection and remediation.

Therefore, 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 five-year review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found 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 Mr Ian Johnson should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of five years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Johnson 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;
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- 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 finds that the conduct of Mr Johnson fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a teacher exhibiting behaviour towards a pupil that was sexually motivated.

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

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

“In the light of the panel’s findings against Mr Johnson, which included inappropriate physical contact with a pupil that was considered to be sexually motivated and making comments about a pupil’s appearance, the panel considered that 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, which it sets out as follows:

“The panel considered, based on the evidence before it, that Mr Johnson had also shown very limited remorse for his conduct. The panel noted that during the disciplinary investigation meeting Mr Johnson had said *“if I’ve put them in a situation where they feel threatened, I sincerely apologise.”* The panel found this to be a conditional apology, insofar as it was premised on whether his conduct had caused the pupils to feel threatened, rather than constituting an acceptance that his actions had in fact done so.

Mr Johnson further stated in his undated statement *“if I am guilty of anything it’s being guilty of not amending my persona in a classroom with regards to safeguarding”*. The panel did not consider this amounted to a genuine apology or acceptance of wrongdoing.

The panel noted that Mr Johnson demonstrated limited insight into his conduct. Although he acknowledged that some of his actions may have been misinterpreted, this fell short of a clear recognition of the seriousness of his behaviour or its potential impact on pupils. Mr Johnson continued to assert that a number of the allegations had been taken out of context and offered alternative explanations for his conduct.

The panel noted that from the outset of the allegations being raised, Mr Johnson consistently sought to justify his behaviour, for example by asserting that any physical contact he may have had with pupils would have been in the [REDACTED] and would have been down to spatial constraints when the panel had accepted the oral evidence from Pupil A that the contact with Pupil A had taken place in the [REDACTED].

Mr Johnson also stated that he would not place himself in an inappropriate position with a pupil. Only when he was confronted with photographic evidence demonstrating that he had done so did he admit that this had happened. The panel concluded that these responses amounted to attempts to excuse his conduct, rather than to acknowledge that it had occurred.

The panel also noted that, in his undated statement, Mr Johnson sought to advance possible explanations as to why pupils may have come forward with these allegations when they did. The panel considered this to be a further attempt to deflect

responsibility for his actions, rather than to take accountability. The panel concluded that Mr Johnson had demonstrated no meaningful insight into the wrongfulness of his actions, nor any proper recognition of the concerns arising from his conduct or its impact on others.”

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

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

“The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher potentially damaging the public perception of the teaching profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher exhibiting sexually motivated behaviour towards a pupil in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to have on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Johnson himself. The panel comments as follows:

“Whilst the panel considered Mr Johnson’s assertion that he had not been subject to any disciplinary proceedings during his 40 years of teaching, the panel noted that there was no evidence before it to show that he had demonstrated exceptionally high standards of personal and professional conduct or that he had made a significant contribution to the education sector. The panel also did not accept that the incident was out of character.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the serious nature of the panel's findings, which include an experienced teacher exhibiting sexually motivated behaviour towards a pupil with known vulnerabilities. I have also placed weight on the panel's findings in regard to insight and remorse.

I have noted that the panel makes reference to some evidence of mitigating factors in this case, but I have also taken account of its findings that Mr Johnson's actions were both deliberate and committed free of extreme duress.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Johnson has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a five-year review period.

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

"The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. The panel's attention was drawn to one of these factors by the presenting officer, namely, 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. The panel considered this guidance carefully. Whilst it found that Mr Johnson's conduct in relation to allegation 1 was sexually motivated, it concluded that it fell at the lower end of the spectrum of sexual misconduct and did not amount to serious sexual misconduct."

I have considered the panel's concluding comments:

"The panel concluded that, although Mr Johnson's conduct was sexually motivated, it did not fall within the category of serious sexual misconduct for which a review period would ordinarily be inappropriate. However, the panel attached significant weight to the impact on Pupil A, who was left distressed and fearful, and to the fact that the conduct occurred over a sustained period of time during which she was vulnerable. The panel also noted Mr Johnson's current lack of insight or remorse, which led it to conclude that there may be a risk of repetition.

Notwithstanding this, the panel considered that there is scope for Mr Johnson to address his behaviour particularly as it did not regard the conduct as indicative of entrenched traits. In those circumstances, the panel determined that a review period would be proportionate, as it allows sufficient time for meaningful reflection and remediation.

Therefore, 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 five-year review period.”

I have considered whether allowing a 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 making my assessment I have noted that the Advice indicates that in cases featuring any sexual misconduct involving a child the public interest is likely to weigh in favour of not offering a review period. While I note the panel’s assessment that the sexual misconduct it found in this case was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum, in my judgment this is balanced by the fact that the pupil who was subject to this behaviour had known vulnerabilities. I have also taken into account the panel’s findings as to the very negative impact of Mr Johnson’s behaviour, which occurred over a sustained period of time, on that pupil.

I have also placed considerable weight on the likely negative impact of Mr Johnson’s actions on the reputation of the profession, and the panel’s findings in regard to the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse.

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

This means that Mr Ian Johnson 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 Johnson 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 Johnson has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. C. C. C.', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 17 June 2026

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