



Mr David Eccott: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

July 2026

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

Teacher: Mr David Eccott

Teacher ref number: 2362229

Teacher date of birth: 11 October 1950

TRA reference: 21597

Date of determination: 9 July 2026

Former employer: Bromley Youth Music Trust, Bromley

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 9 July 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr David Eccott.

The panel members were Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Nigel Shock (lay panellist) and Mrs Sharon Bhogal (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Amy Tinsley of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Wen Yeap of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mr Eccott 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 hearing dated 23 March 2026, as amended pursuant to the application to amend the allegation.

It was alleged that Mr Eccott was guilty of having been convicted, at any time, of a relevant offence, in that:

1. He was convicted at Central Kent Magistrates Court of distributing indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs of children on 12 January 2020 contrary to the Protection of Children act 1978 s.1
2. He was convicted at Central Kent Magistrates Court of two counts of the offence of Making indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs of children on or around 28 January 2021 contrary to the Protection of Children act 1978 s.1

Mr Eccott provided no admission.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of hearing – pages 4 to 15

Section 2: TRA documents – pages 17 to 73

Section 3: Teacher documents – pages 75 to 265

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

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

Witnesses

No witnesses were called to give oral evidence at the hearing.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Eccott was engaged by Bromley Youth Music Trust ('the Trust') as a licensed, self-employed peripatetic piano teacher since 1988.

On 28 January 2021, Mr Eccott was arrested at his home for taking, making or distributing indecent photograph or pseudo photographs of children contrary to the Children Protection Act 1978.

On 18 January 2022, after being asked by the Trust to renew his DBS check, Mr Eccott disclosed to the Trust that he had been arrested, and he was subsequently advised by [REDACTED] that he would not be able to teach in schools until his enhanced DBS check was completed. Mr Eccott subsequently advised the Trust that he wished to retire and would not be returning to teaching in schools.

On 15 September 2022, Mr Eccott pleaded guilty to, and was convicted of: 1) one count of distributing an indecent photograph, namely two category C images of a child; and 2) two counts of making indecent photographs, namely nine category B indecent images of a child and twelve category C images of a child.

On 17 October 2022, Mr Eccott was sentenced in relation to the offences to a community order with a rehabilitation activity requirement until 16 April 2024. In relation to the offence of distributing an indecent photograph, he was also fined £220 and ordered to pay a surcharge to fund victim services of £90, and to pay costs of £85 to the Crown Prosecution Service. In addition, he was placed on the Sex Offenders Register for five years.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 10 March 2023.

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. You were convicted at Central Kent Magistrates Court of distributing indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs of children on 12 January 2020 contrary to the Protection of Children act 1978 s.1**

The panel noted that Mr Eccott provided no admission to the facts of allegation 1. However, in Mr Eccott's written statement dated 12 April 2026, he stated that he had pleaded guilty to the offences in 2022 without sufficient legal advice and that in retrospect

he felt he should have pleaded not guilty as he did not recognise some of the descriptions of the images he had allegedly posted.

The panel considered the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as 'the Advice'. Page 8 of the Advice states that where there has been a conviction at any time of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate or memorandum of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel had been provided with a copy of the memorandum of conviction from Central Kent Magistrates' Court, which detailed that Mr Eccott had been convicted on 15 September 2022 of one count of distributing an indecent photograph, namely two category C images of a child, on 12 January 2020. The panel noted the memorandum stated that Mr Eccott had pleaded guilty to this offence.

In respect of this allegation, Mr Eccott was sentenced to a community order with a rehabilitation activity requirement until 16 April 2024. He was also fined £220 and ordered to pay a surcharge to fund victim services of £90, and to pay costs of £85 to the Crown Prosecution Service. In addition, he was placed on the Sex Offenders Register for five years from 17 October 2022.

Having considered the evidence before it, including the memorandum of conviction, the panel found allegation 1 proved.

2. You were convicted at Central Kent Magistrates Court of two counts of the offence of Making indecent photographs or pseudo- photographs of children on or around 28 January 2021 contrary to the Protection of Children act 1978 s.1

The panel noted that Mr Eccott provided no admission to the facts of the allegation. However, in Mr Eccott's written statement dated 12 April 2026, he stated that he had pleaded guilty to the offences in 2022 without sufficient legal advice and that in retrospect he felt he should have pleaded not guilty as he did not recognise some of the descriptions of the images he had allegedly posted.

The panel considered the Advice. Page 8 of the Advice states that where there has been a conviction at any time of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate or memorandum of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel had been provided with a copy of the memorandum of conviction from Central Kent Magistrates' Court, which detailed that Mr Eccott had been convicted on 15 September 2022 of two counts of making indecent images, namely nine category B indecent images of a child and twelve category C images of a child, on 28 January 2021. The panel noted the memorandum stated that Mr Eccott had pleaded guilty to the offence.

In respect of this allegation, Mr Eccott was sentenced on 17 October 2022 to a community order with a rehabilitation activity requirement until 16 April 2024.

Having considered the evidence before it, including the memorandum of conviction, the panel found allegation 2 proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

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

In doing so, the panel had regard to the Advice.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Eccott 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:
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including the rule of law and mutual respect.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that Mr Eccott's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting, as the offences involved making and distributing indecent images of children.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils and/or members of the public.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Eccott's behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Eccott's behaviour did not lead to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative that the offence was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

This was a case concerning an offence involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or pseudo photograph or image of a child, or permitting any such activity, including one-off incidents, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel considered the seriousness of the offence, as reflected in the sentence imposed. In particular, it noted that Mr Eccott had received a community order at the higher end of the scale, despite there being no evidence that he had any previous convictions.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper

standards of conduct; and ensuring prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Eccott, which involved a criminal conviction for making and distributing indecent images of children, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Eccott 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 Eccott 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 Eccott in the profession.

Whilst the Panel took account of Mr Eccott's submission that he had enjoyed an otherwise unblemished career, no evidence was provided to substantiate that assertion. The Panel also considered the screenshots of messages from parents expressing shock at Mr Eccott's departure from the teaching profession. However, there was no indication that those parents were aware of Mr Eccott's convictions when expressing their views. Accordingly, the Panel placed limited weight on that evidence. Having balanced all relevant factors, the Panel concluded that the significant public interest concerns identified above outweighed any public interest in Mr Eccott remaining in the profession. In reaching that conclusion, the Panel considered that Mr Eccott's conduct represented a fundamental departure from the standards of behaviour expected of a teacher.

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

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

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;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk; and
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing, or publishing any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents.

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 Eccott's actions were not deliberate.

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

There was no evidence to demonstrate that Mr Eccott had exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel saw no evidence that showed Mr Eccott was previously subject to disciplinary proceedings/warnings.

As noted above, the Panel took into account Mr Eccott's submission that he had enjoyed a lengthy and otherwise unblemished career. However, there was no evidence before the panel to substantiate that assertion.

The panel noted that in an email to the TRA from Mr Eccott's [REDACTED] on 17 July 2024, the [REDACTED] disclosed that Mr Eccott had been continuing to provide piano lessons to 16 children and had ignored all contact with the TRA as "*he does not feel as though he is a risk*". The Panel concluded that Mr Eccott's evidence demonstrated no insight into the misconduct itself. In reaching that view, the Panel noted that Mr Eccott's representations focused primarily on his previous good character, his disagreement with aspects of the process, and the personal impact of the proceedings upon him, rather than accepting responsibility or expressing clear remorse for the conduct that gave rise to the proceedings. The panel considered this demonstrated a lack of insight. The panel

concluded that his lack of insight and the absence of clear remediation indicated an ongoing risk of repetition.

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 Eccott 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 Eccott. Mr Eccott's lack of insight or remorse into his conduct 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. One of these is any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents. Mr Eccott's convictions, to which he pleaded guilty, were for offences involving making and distributing indecent images of children.

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

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Eccott 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:
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including the rule of law and mutual respect.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include convictions for making and distributing indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children.

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

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

“In the light of the panel’s findings against Mr Eccott, which involved a criminal conviction for making and distributing indecent images of children, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of members of the public.”

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

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel has set out as follows:

“The panel noted that in an email to the TRA from Mr Eccott’s [REDACTED] on 17 July 2024, the [REDACTED] disclosed that Mr Eccott had been continuing to provide piano lessons to 16 children and had ignored all contact with the TRA as *“he does not feel as though he is a risk”*. The Panel concluded that Mr Eccott’s evidence demonstrated no insight into the misconduct itself. In reaching that view, the Panel noted that Mr Eccott’s representations focused primarily on his previous good character, his disagreement with aspects of the process, and the personal impact of the proceedings upon him, rather than accepting responsibility or expressing clear remorse for the conduct that gave rise to the proceedings. The panel considered this demonstrated a lack of insight. The panel concluded that his lack of insight and the absence of clear remediation indicated an ongoing risk of repetition.”

In my judgement, the lack of insight and remorse means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of children. 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:

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding of convictions for making and distributing indecent images of children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to

consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

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

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

“There was no evidence to demonstrate that Mr Eccott had exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

Although the panel took into account Mr Eccott’s submission that he had enjoyed a lengthy and otherwise unblemished career, it found no evidence to substantiate that assertion.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Eccott 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 offences of which Mr Eccott was convicted, and on the lack of insight and remorse on the part of Mr Eccott.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Eccott 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. One of these is any activity involving viewing, taking, making,

possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents. Mr Eccott's convictions, to which he pleaded guilty, were for offences involving making and distributing indecent images of children."

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offences of which Mr Eccott was convicted, the lack of insight and remorse, and the 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 David Eccott 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 Eccott 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 David Eccott has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', with a large loop at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 13 July 2026

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