

Mr Rafiqul Islam: 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 Rafiqul Islam

Teacher ref number: 1757563

Teacher date of birth: 17 March 1992

TRA reference: 21158

Date of determination: 26 June 2026

Former employer: Friern Barnet School, London

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 24 to 26 February 2026 and again on 13 April 2026 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT, to consider the case of Mr Rafiqul Islam. The panel also met online on 26 June 2026.

The panel members were Miss Louisa Munton (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr David Boyle (teacher panellist) and Ms Amy Barron (lay panellist).

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

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Alex Barnfield of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Islam was 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 16 December 2025 (as amended further to that part of Mr Islam's application to amend allegations which was granted).

It was alleged that Mr Islam was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that, while employed as a teacher at Friern Barnet School ('the School') between 2 July 2020 and 15 July 2022:

1. On or around 13 June 2022 he sent a message to Pupil A on social media as set out in Schedule 1 or words to that effect;
2. On one or more occasions he called Pupil A "cute" or words to that effect;
3. On one or more occasions he said he loved Pupil A or words to that effect;
4. He failed to follow the School's safeguarding process when he believed or had cause to believe that Pupil A liked him and/or had feelings for him.
5. His conduct at any or all of allegations 1 to 3, as may be found proved, was sexually motivated.

[REDACTED]

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, list of key people and anonymised pupil list – pages 3 to 5

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 6 to 45

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 46 to 139

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 140 to 288

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

Section 5: Additional Teacher documents pages 289 to 351

Section 6: Additional Teacher documents (day 2) pages 252 to 256

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

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Mr Islam also gave live 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.

Mr Islam was employed at all material times as a maths teacher at Friern Barnet School (‘the School’).

During a [REDACTED] assembly, Mr Islam allegedly called a [REDACTED] student; Pupil A, ‘cute’.

On or around 13 June 2022, Mr Islam allegedly sent a message to Pupil A, [REDACTED]. Within this message, Mr Islam allegedly said that he loved Pupil A.

On 14 June 2022, Pupil A reported an Instagram message, purportedly from Mr Islam, to the School.

On 15 July 2022 Mr Islam resigned.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 13 October 2022.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

In respect of all the allegations:

The panel scrutinised the oral and written witness evidence and exhibits of all witnesses who attended the hearing.

The panel scrutinised the entire bundle including the TRA's documents concerning the investigations and the meetings of the School and the Teacher's various documents (and additional documents) submitted in his defence. The panel noted that the evidence within a lot of these documents, in particular the interview statements gathered as part of the School's investigations, was hearsay, but considered that it was relevant and formed part of the official investigations and was largely contemporaneous on the events within the allegations. The panel therefore admitted those documents but noted that the evidence should be considered carefully and cautiously, including in relation to the weight placed on them.

The panel noted that it was not in issue, and found it proven, that Mr Islam had been employed as a teacher at Friern Barnet School ('the School') at all relevant times for the purposes of all allegations which it was considering.

It noted that Mr Islam's submission was that his employment started on 1 September 2020 and made no finding regarding this.

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

1. On or around 13 June 2022 you sent a message to Pupil A on social media as set out in Schedule 1 or words to that effect;

The panel had sight of screenshots of the messages Mr Islam allegedly sent to Pupil A on Instagram on or around 13 June 2022. The panel noted that the message in those screenshots contained the words set out in Schedule 1 or words to that effect.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Witness A, [REDACTED]. Witness A described that he first met Mr Islam when Mr Islam was appointed to the School as a maths teacher and that their professional relationship was fine. He stated that Mr Islam worked hard and was very willing.

Witness A stated that on 14 June 2022, Pupil A, who was in the middle of her [REDACTED] exams, came to see him, with her mother, in a distressed state. Pupil A had shown Witness A the Instagram message which Mr Islam had sent to her the night before. He stated Pupil A had said that prior to receipt of this message she had not had any private messages from Mr Islam so it came unexpectedly.

The panel noted the undated notes of a meeting with Pupil A taken by the School during its investigations, in which Pupil A was recorded as saying that she saw a message from Mr Islam on Instagram at 8am on 14 June 2022 when looking at her phone for the first time that day. She stated that it came out of the blue. She was recorded as stating that

she felt physically sick, screamed, and told her mother. She stated that the message had been sent during the previous night, around 4-6 hours earlier. The panel noted that the contents of this document were hearsay and placed appropriate weight on it, noting its relevance as part of the School's investigation and its consistency with the evidence of Witness A.

The panel noted an undated letter apparently written by Mr Islam to Witness A during the School's investigation in which he wrote *"I'm sorry for falling deeply in love with Pupil A in your school and I thought she felt the same way as she was [REDACTED] and used to [REDACTED]. It was a natural love and I couldn't hide my feelings as things were natural my eyes always focused on her and lit up"*.

The panel noted an undated record of an investigatory meeting held by the School with Mr Islam in which he was recorded as acknowledging that he sent the message to Pupil A. Mr Islam was also recorded as indicating that initially he had intended to give the message, in the form of a printed letter, to Pupil A or [REDACTED] but that he could not build up the courage and ultimately sent the message in several individual components due to character limit.

Mr Islam was recorded as stating that he strongly felt he had fallen in love with Pupil A and sent the message as he wanted to know how she felt so he would be able to move on if he needed to. He was recorded as stating that he felt there was a genuine connection which she had felt too, until recently, that he knew this was inappropriate but he could not help his feelings and as he had genuinely fallen in love.

The panel noted the first paragraph of Mr Islam's witness statement in which he stated *"I have sent a message to a 16-year pupil whilst working at [the School] telling her I love her and want to spend the rest of my life with her if she felt the same and I was under the impression she felt the same way due to [REDACTED] on a daily basis which led me to develop feelings for her"*.

The panel noted that Mr Islam's evidence in general terms was that he had sent this message but that his basis for doing so was that he loved Pupil A and wanted to establish whether she loved him.

The panel noted that the message had been sent in several parts and carefully considered, but ultimately rejected, Mr Islam's submissions that re-inserting the line spacing between the constituent parts of the message made any material difference to its interpretation.

The panel carefully considered the evidence before it. The panel noted that it had seen the Instagram message and had various supporting evidence including the written and live evidence of Witness A and Mr Islam. The panel noted that it had also had sight of seemingly contemporary records of investigatory meetings with Mr Islam and Pupil A

which indicated that the message had been sent by Mr Islam. The panel noted that Mr Islam acknowledged that it had been sent by him.

The panel considered that it had been proven to the standard of the balance of probabilities that the message had been sent by Mr Islam to Pupil A on or around 13 June 2022 using the words set out in Schedule 1 (or words to that effect) whilst he was employed as a teacher at the School.

The panel found allegation 1 proven.

2. On one or more occasions you called Pupil A “cute” or words to that effect;

The panel noted that Mr Islam denied allegation 2.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Witness B. Witness B stated that she had been present at a [REDACTED] assembly [REDACTED] at which Mr Islam had called Pupil A cute.

Witness B stated that Pupil A was, factually, ‘cute’ and Mr Islam made the comment in a way that came across as his saying that she was cute *“in the way all children are cute”*.

Witness B voiced her opinion that it was not an abnormal comment for Mr Islam to have made in the circumstances, as they were discussing the students when they were younger and pictures of them for their [REDACTED] assembly. Witness B was also clear in oral evidence that she saw no issue or concern with this statement at the time it was made and no concerns about Mr Islam’s relationship with Pupil A at the time.

The panel considered the notes of an undated interview with Witness B as part of the School’s investigations in which Witness B had been recorded as stating that Mr Islam did refer to Pupil A as “cute” at a [REDACTED] assembly going on to state he was making fun comments about the whole of [REDACTED] and that this was dismissed as a harmless joke. Witness B acknowledged that Mr Islam had said something like Pupil A was cute *“with or without make up”*.

The panel considered an undated record of a meeting between the School and Pupil A taken as part of the School’s investigations. The panel noted that in response to the question *“What have your interactions with Mr Islam been up to now?”* Pupil A indicated that she didn’t suspect anything until Mr Islam had stated she was “cute” in assembly.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Islam, who submitted that his calling Pupil A “cute” was an innocent comment during the [REDACTED] assembly to describe Pupil A’s personality. He stated that she used to get mad in a “cuteish” way. Mr Islam described his comment as a “harmless joke” and stated that he actually used the word “cutest” rather than cute. Mr Islam denied ever directly

telling Pupil A face to face that she was cute and said that he used the word cute as a behavioural not a physical reference.

Mr Islam acknowledged in cross examination that in the [REDACTED] assembly he said something like “[Pupil A] *is easily annoyed even when happy, sad or mad but wearing make up or not is the cutest*”.

The panel carefully considered the evidence before it. The panel noted Witness B’s direct evidence that a statement of the nature alleged had been made and the supportive, albeit hearsay, comment of Pupil A. The panel also noted that Mr Islam admitted making this comment in a [REDACTED] assembly albeit that he stated that he had said “*cutest*”. The panel considered that it was likely that “*cutest*” was the word which had been used and considered that the word “*cutest*” would fall within the category of a ‘word to the effect’ of “*cute*”.

The panel considered it proven that on at least one occasion Mr Islam had called Pupil A cute or words to that effect.

The panel found allegation 2 proven, on the balance of probabilities.

3. On one or more occasions you said you loved Pupil A or words to that effect;

The panel noted that Mr Islam denied allegation 3.

The panel again considered the screenshots of the message which it had found Mr Islam sent to Pupil A on Instagram. The panel reminded itself that within this message, Mr Islam expressed to Pupil A “*by the end of the School year I have fallen in love with you*”, “*the more I learnt about you the deeper my love became*” and “*before falling in love with you*” and “*It wasn’t the normal type of love, but the Edward Cullen type of love*” and “*I love you [Pupil A]*”.

The panel again considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A, who stated that Mr Islam had written a response to the allegations formulated during the School’s investigatory process in connection with the Instagram message. Witness A submitted that in his response, Mr Islam set out that he loved Pupil A and wanted to spend his life with her.

The panel again considered an undated letter sent by Mr Islam to Witness A during the investigation in which he wrote “*I’m sorry for falling deeply in love with [Pupil A] in your school and I thought she felt the same way as she was [REDACTED] and used to [REDACTED] at me etc. It was a natural love and I couldn’t hide my feelings as things were natural my eyes always focused on her and lit up uncontrollably smiled when we made eye contact in [REDACTED] or when she complimented me and was doing [REDACTED]*”.

The panel noted an undated record of an investigatory meeting with Mr Islam taken as part of the School's investigation in which he was recorded as stating he strongly felt that he had fallen in love with her and that as he felt he was in love with her he could not go against his feelings.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Islam, who stated that he did not verbally tell Pupil A that he loved her. Mr Islam repeatedly referred in evidence to a "*natural love*" between him and Pupil A. Mr Islam was clear that in relation to his interactions with Pupil A the only time he had asserted his love directly had been within the message and that any other reference to his love for her was simply an explanation for his conduct in the context of the subsequent investigations.

The panel carefully considered the evidence available to it and concluded that it had been demonstrated, including by the wording of the Instagram message which it had found Mr Islam had sent and by Mr Islam's evidence and by the contemporaneous documentation, that on at least one occasion Mr Islam had said he loved Pupil A or words to that effect.

The panel found allegation 3 proven.

4. You failed to follow the School's safeguarding process when you believed or had cause to believe that Pupil A liked you and/ or had feelings for you.

The panel again considered the oral and written evidence of Witness A, who stated that the School has and had a safeguarding policy in place which covers all aspects of safeguarding and personal relationships with pupils, in line with Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE") and that the policy talks about the importance of professional boundaries between pupils and teachers.

Witness A was clear in his oral evidence that if a teacher at School thought a pupil had developed feelings about them which were more than a normal relationship between teacher and pupil then any such concerns should be put to the safeguarding team.

Witness A stated that the School's code of conduct was also clear on how teachers should conduct themselves professionally.

The panel considered the Staff Code of Conduct dated 26 April 2021 (and in place at the time of the allegations) and noted that it stated:

At clause 3.1 that "all staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct", and

At Clause 4.2 that "the duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection", and

At Clause 5.1 that “*Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students*”, and

At Clause 8.3 that “*staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student*”.

The panel heard evidence that the “MyConcern” safeguarding reporting software was in place at the school and that Mr Islam was aware of this and was aware how to use it.

The panel considered the oral and written evidence of Mr Islam.

Mr Islam admitted that he did not record anything in the School’s safeguarding systems regarding his feelings for Pupil A or her alleged feelings or actions towards him.

Mr Islam described himself as “*infatuated*” with Pupil A from July 2021 when he developed a crush on her stating that in [REDACTED] she was “[REDACTED]” but not as much as in [REDACTED]. Mr Islam stated that in [REDACTED] he would think about her every hour. Mr Islam stated that he thinks she had feelings for him from January 2022. He stated in cross examination that he accepted that as soon as he felt that she had those feelings he should have reported it.

Mr Islam stated that he was aware of certain things he should have reported but he was not sure where to draw the boundaries and that he had a difficult [REDACTED]. He reported that he was concerned that “*if he did report them*” it could have led to the [REDACTED] “*being more difficult*” and that this was an important year for them and it could have impacted their [REDACTED]. Mr Islam also made reference to his mentor having highlighted to Mr Islam that his [REDACTED] was one of his professional targets. Mr Islam also indicated that if he did report some of the incidents of Pupil A’s behaviour he would need to justify them and teachers would then speak to her or “*keep an eye on her more*”.

Mr Islam’s oral evidence was that he accepted he failed to follow the School’s safeguarding process, that he was aware of, and had used, the safeguarding system and was aware that the policy in place at the School was that “*if you are unsure you still report it*”. He acknowledged that he did not report Pupil A and indicated that he “*should have, looking back*”.

Mr Islam also gave evidence that he felt that he should have reported safeguarding concerns with regard to other teachers’ actions towards Pupil A including a [REDACTED] teacher who gave her sunglasses and a [REDACTED] teacher who looked at her in a certain way but stated that he did not make any such reports.

The panel carefully considered the evidence before it.

The panel was satisfied that the safeguarding process at the School was to report concerns about pupils via MyConcern including any information which gave rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. The panel was satisfied that this would include a situation where a teacher believed, or had cause to believe, that a child liked them to an unusual level and/or had feelings for them.

The panel noted that it had identified that Mr Islam's position was that he believed that Pupil A liked him or had feelings about him by, at the latest, January 2022 and that she had engaged in "[REDACTED]" behaviour towards him since the end of [REDACTED]. Mr Islam cited examples of that [REDACTED] behaviour which included Pupil A saying "nice watch" and "nice shoes" and "[REDACTED]" and saying her [REDACTED] "[REDACTED]".

The panel considered that Mr Islam had directly admitted therefore that there were at least 5 months where Mr Islam had been aware of this alleged behaviour by Pupil A and did not report the alleged concerns.

Mr Islam was aware that there was a safeguarding team and was aware of the safeguarding software and how to use it and the evidence was that he had received appropriate training. The panel considered that Mr Islam's reasons for not reporting any matter concerning Pupil A did not appear to constitute a defence to the allegation or any proper basis for his not reporting these matters.

The panel considered that it had been evidenced to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Islam failed to follow the School's safeguarding process when he believed or had cause to believe that Pupil A liked him and/or had feelings for him.

The panel found allegation 4 proven.

5. Your conduct at any or all of allegations 1 to 3, as may be found proved, was sexually motivated.

The panel noted that Mr Islam denied allegation 5.

The panel noted that it had found all of allegations 1 to 3 proven.

The panel's attention was drawn to section 78 *Sexual Offences Act 2003* and to the cases of *Sait v The General Medical Council [2018]*, *Basson v General Medical Council [2018]* and *The General Medical Council v Haris [2020] EWHC 2518*.

The panel considered whether the conduct it had found proven was sexually motivated. It noted that in *Basson* it was stated 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 was also mindful of the Court of Appeal's conclusion in *General Medical Council v Haris [2021] EWCA Civ 763*. The Court found in that case that, *"In the absence of a plausible innocent explanation for what he did, the facts spoke for themselves"*.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Islam, who stated that he sent the message to Pupil A to find out if she felt the same way about him, and that the message was not sexual and that he was seeking *"companionship"* and wanted to know how she felt and that whether she reciprocated was *"not important to him"*.

Mr Islam stated that he had never been in a relationship before, never pursued sex outside marriage, which he indicated would be against his religious beliefs, and that his previous use of dating apps proved he was only interested in finding a partner to marry.

Mr Islam stated that his feelings towards Pupil A were never sexual. He stated that he developed intense feelings to be with her which he described as *"companionship"* due to her ongoing behaviour towards him on a day-to-day basis. The panel noted that Mr Islam acknowledged that his Instagram message communicated that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her if she wanted to.

Mr Islam stated his view that it is possible to love someone intensely without sexual feelings towards them and frequently in oral evidence described his feelings towards Pupil A as *"infatuation"* but not sexual. Mr Islam stated that he did want to be with Pupil A but was not thinking about *"that sort of thing"* and that *"infatuation is not just S E X"*. Mr Islam said he had been infatuated 10 to 20 times in his life and that infatuation *"just came"* and that he was infatuated by everything Pupil A did. Mr Islam also provided that *"infatuation"* was what he was indicating in his message to Pupil A when he stated that he had *"developed a crush on"* her.

The panel noted Mr Islam's assertion that the LADO and the Police had found that the message was not sexual and the panel considered Mr Islam's additional documentary evidence in that regard but the panel noted that, regardless of whether this was the case or not, the panel was not bound by such findings and was considering the allegations before it afresh.

The panel was invited by the presenting officer to consider the inherent unlikelihood of a teacher of Mr Islam's age wanting only companionship with a [REDACTED] and noted that the panel had before it no material evidence of spiritual or intellectual companionship between them and that Mr Islam's comments regarding her seemed to be mainly confined to her appearance and behaviour as opposed to any level of intellectual interaction.

The panel again considered the content of the message which it had found Mr Islam had sent to Pupil A. The panel found some of the comments sexually suggestive. The panel noted, in particular, Mr Islam's use of the following phrases:

"I spent most of my Sunday in bed just thinking about the few days we have left"

"At the beginning of July last year I developed a crush on you"

"By the end of the school year I have fallen in love with you"

"I spent every day of my summer thinking about you"

"The world became meaningless to me without you, and I couldn't stop thinking about you"

"you were [REDACTED] with me my love for you became intense"

"I desired to be with you more than anything"

"It wasn't the normal type of love, but the Edward Cullen type of love"

"School holidays were particularly painful as sometimes I would spend most of my day in bed just thinking about you"

"Despite how much I love my career, I would sacrifice it all if you want to be together"

"I love you [Pupil A] and I really hope we can be together, as this would make me the happiest man alive".

The panel noted that a significant amount of the content appeared to envisage a long term romantic relationship between Mr Islam and Pupil A occurring and repeatedly envisaged their having a future together. The message stated *"Despite how much I love my career, I would sacrifice it all if you want to be together, But thought if we are smart we can be together and a good income means we can do more things together, I wanted to speak to you so many times about resigning by 31/5 to start in another school in term 1 September if you felt the same way, I even thought about starting a life elsewhere".*

The panel carefully considered Mr Islam's detailed explanations for his behaviour.

The panel also again noted the legal advice which it had received 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 noted Mr Islam's references to marriage and references to sex as being something which occurred within marriage and again noted Mr Islam's acknowledgement that this was a message indicating that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Pupil A. The panel noted that Mr Islam's evidence repeatedly was that he thought Pupil A was [REDACTED] with him and that it was in part his belief as to her feelings for him that led to his sending the message.

Having carefully considered all the evidence the panel found it evidenced to the standard of the balance of probabilities that Mr Islam's intention by his actions was to pursue a relationship with Pupil A, a child in his class. The panel considered that the wording within the messages was unambiguous that the relationship which was being pursued was intended, by Mr Islam, to be a serious and long term one. Mr Islam himself was clear in his evidence that he wanted to be with Pupil A for long term companionship.

The panel considered that a marriage fell within its definition of a sexual relationship.

Though the panel noted that a number of the aspects of the message appeared to be of a sexual nature it noted Mr Islam denied that he had any sexual intent. The panel considered that as what was being pursued was a marriage, and considering the Basson definition, the panel was satisfied that Mr Islam's conduct, as found proven at allegations 1 and 3 was conduct in pursuit of a sexual relationship. The panel considered then that even taking Mr Islam's position and evidence at its highest his conduct was sexually motivated under the terms of that definition.

The panel considered whether there was a 'plausible innocent explanation' for Mr Islam's conduct. The panel carefully noted each aspect of Mr Islam's defence including, without limitation, his submissions that his actions were a genuine declaration of his love for Pupil A, that he was acting in response to her alleged repeated behaviours and that he needed to find out if she felt the same way. The panel though did not find these to be innocent explanations and further did not find any plausible innocent explanation for Mr Islam's actions as to why he had acted in the way it had found proved he had with Pupil A.

Further, the panel did not consider that Mr Islam had provided, nor sought to provide, a credible, professional justification for his actions towards Pupil A who was, at the material time, a child for whom he was directly responsible.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found that Mr Islam's conduct was sexually motivated.

Taking into account the evidence before it, and drawing on its professional judgement, the panel found allegation 5 proven.

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

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

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

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Islam 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 Islam, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE") including Part 1, point 2, which provides that *"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. [...] In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child"*, and point 12 which provides teachers *"should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties"*.

The panel also considered that Mr Islam was in breach of point 71 which provides that *"All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing"*.

The panel noted that Mr Islam's clear evidence was that he considered that Pupil A had had strong feelings for him (from January 2022 at the latest). He recorded in his response to the allegations that Pupil A *"used to actually call me cute, [REDACTED], show me heart signs, saying "woohoo", come to talk to me [REDACTED] on a daily basis and [REDACTED]"*. Whether or not any aspect of this was correct this was clearly a concern which he was under an obligation to report, in any child centric approach. Mr Islam acknowledged in this evidence that he had not raised any such concerns.

The panel considered that Mr Islam's actions, as found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children including bullet point 10 which provides that a child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of

every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

The panel also identified breaches of the School's own policies including the Staff Code of Conduct which states at clause 3.1 that "*all staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times*" and at 3.2 "*All staff must [...] demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage [...] pupils [...] to do the same*", and at clause 3.3 that "*all staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct*".

The panel also found Mr Islam in breach of Clause 4.2 which states "*the duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection*", Clause 5.1 which states "*Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students*", Clause 7.5 "*Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute*" and Clause 8.3 "*staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student*".

In addition the panel found that Mr Islam was in breach of the School's acceptable use policy for staff which provides that staff "*must ensure that they do not engage with students, under the age of 18, through social networking sites and unauthorised blogs, both inside and out of school*" and that "*Use of any personal accounts to communicate with learners and parents/carers is not permitted.*"

The panel also considered whether Mr Islam'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 type of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

The panel noted that although allegation 1 took place outside the education setting, Mr Islam's conduct was relevant to his position as a teacher including in that the panel had found he had messaged a child who was within his class, inappropriately, on social media for the purposes of pursuing a relationship with her.

The panel again carefully considered the matters which it had found proven. The panel noted that it had found proven that Mr Islam had sent a message to Pupil A for the purposes of pursuing a future sexual relationship; a marriage. The panel noted that the message had been compiled over a period of time and had initially been printed and Mr

Islam had planned to hand it to Pupil A and this was not therefore an impulsive action or statement.

The panel noted that at all material times Pupil A had been a pupil within [REDACTED] to whom Mr Islam clearly owed all the duties of child centred behaviour which were incumbent upon him as a teacher. The panel noted that in complete disregard of this he had chosen to pursue his own infatuation and interests in sending the message which he had. The panel noted that Mr Islam's evidence was that he had given no material consideration to the impact on Pupil A of his actions which had taken place during her [REDACTED].

The panel also noted that the content of the message appeared to suggest that Mr Islam had had feelings of this nature for Pupil A since the previous summer and yet had not reported this clear safeguarding risk to the School nor reported to the School his alleged observations that Pupil A had developed feelings for him in spite of the fact that again this represented a clear and unarguable concern and a safeguarding risk. The panel also again noted the various breaches of statutory guidance and the School's procedures which it had found. The panel considered that both within his evidence and by his actions Mr Islam had displayed little or no respect for the policies of the school or any established societal norms and had entirely ignored the professional boundaries in place between teachers and pupils.

The panel did not consider Mr Islam's explanation that he was in love or infatuated mitigated his actions. The panel did not consider Mr Islam's repeated assertions that Pupil A behaved [REDACTED] or was [REDACTED] towards him (whether or not true and the panel made no finding in this respect) as in any way mitigating his actions. In fact, the panel felt this illustrated very clearly his entire failure to recognise that he was dealing with a child and a child for whom he was responsible.

The panel noted Mr Islam's evidence that he had was experiencing [REDACTED] at some of the relevant times but noted that it had no [REDACTED] before it that this has any material impact on his behaviour.

The panel noted that Mr Islam had demonstrated in his written documents and oral evidence a highly concerning lack of insight generally into the seriousness and wholly unacceptable nature of his actions.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Islam 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 Islam was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct including in connection with his actions as found proven on the allegations 1, 3 and 4 (noting that it had found his actions at 1 and 3 were sexually

motivated). The panel did not find it had been proven to the balance of probabilities that the facts as found proven under allegation 2 were unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Islam'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 Islam'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 Islam was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offence type of sexual communication with a child was relevant.

Again the panel carefully considered the facts which it had found proven, that a teacher had sought to progress a sexual relationship with a pupil under his care in breach of statutory guidance and the School's own procedures.

The panel considered that a fully informed member of the public would unquestionably find it to be entirely unacceptable for a teacher to seek to pursue a relationship with a child for whom he was responsible including in declaring love to her and seeking to pursue a future relationship, as it had found that Mr Islam had. The panel noted the clear upset which had been caused to Pupil A at a pivotal time for her in the middle of her [REDACTED].

The panel considered a member of the public would consider this gross breach of professional boundaries to be wholly contrary to appropriate and role modelling behaviours which teachers are required to demonstrate.

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.

The panel considered that Mr Islam's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of him and of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Islam'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, including 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 the light of the panel's findings against Mr Islam, which involved his failing to disclose, for a prolonged period, in breach of the School's safeguarding processes, his belief that Pupil A liked him and had feelings for him and, in conduct the panel had found to be sexually motivated, his declaring his love within detailed correspondence setting out the basis for that love to Pupil A, who was a child at the School at which he taught, and for whom he was a [REDACTED], there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other 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 Islam 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 Islam 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 Islam in the profession. Whilst Mr Islam provided some evidence to attest to his ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Islam 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 Islam.

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 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 noted paragraph 41 of the Advice which states that panels should attach appropriate weight and seriousness to online behaviours including, but not limited to: online misconduct; facilitating online abuse; or facilitating inappropriate relationships (including both online only relationships and where online relationships move into contact relationships). The panel considered that this was applicable in this case.

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.

The panel found that Mr Islam's actions were clearly deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Islam was acting under extreme duress [REDACTED].

The panel did not find that Mr Islam demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel did not consider that the incidents were out of character.

The panel carefully considered all the evidence which Mr Islam had put forward in mitigation. This included, without limitation, his record of previously good service and the positive exam results for his class which he put forward in evidence.

The panel also noted the number of positive comments, apparently from students, within the bundle noting such comments as *"you were a great teacher"*, *"thank you for your help"*, *"thank you for being a great teacher"* *"Thank you for teaching me math this term and to catch up in my new class. I appreciate what you have done to help you improve and understand maths"*, *"I know many of my peers have already expressed their deep gratitude and I would like to extend my appreciation to you as well"*, *"you have been one of the most friendly, respectful, and great teachers in my education and you have made maths very enjoyable"* and *"it has been an absolute pleasure to have you as a teacher"*.

Mr Islam set out that teaching was something which he loved and that he wanted to be a lead practitioner and that he worked really hard to ensure that pupils got *"great results"*.

The panel also noted a letter of 17 June 2020 from Individual A, [REDACTED] in which she stated *"Mr Islam is always punctual, well presented and exceedingly keen to support the Academy ethos and culture. Mr Islam cares deeply about becoming an outstanding teacher meticulously plans and prepares his lessons... he cares passionately both about mathematics and instilling his love of mathematics within the pupils in his care"*. The panel noted that this reference preceded the matters with which the allegations were concerned.

The panel considered the evidence of Mr Islam. Mr Islam stated that he was heavily infatuated by Pupil A and that she had given the impression she felt the same towards him. He stated that despite his feelings, he understands that it was wrong to tell a pupil he loved her. Mr Islam expressed the financial impact the TRA process has had on him. Mr Islam stated that the experience of loving someone who, he stated, used him, caused him a lot of pain and he provided that he felt stuck in limbo for almost 4 years experiencing financial and emotional struggles.

Mr Islam stated that at the time of sending Pupil A the message, he was a relatively new teacher and [REDACTED]. He stated that at the time, he did not think properly and made a poor decision, for which he apologised. Mr Islam indicated that he fully accepted that the message he sent was completely unacceptable and that he had had four years to

reflect on his conduct and could only apologise. Mr Islam stated it was a rushed and impulsive decision taken when he was [REDACTED].

Mr Islam set out that since April 2024 had been [REDACTED] which required him to handle sensitive data and documents and adhere to policy strictly. He provided that safeguarding had always been a priority for him except for Pupil A. He stated there was no risk of him repeating his behaviour and he was committed to ensuring that this did not happen again and he had changed over the previous 4 years. He accepted that he had breached professional boundaries and that what occurred was his fault and his conduct fell far below professional standards. He indicated that he had worked hard to develop decision making strategies and sought support from others to ensure he learned better practice.

The panel considered the evidence it had as to the impact upon Pupil A, noting Mr Islam's position that there was no evidence that her [REDACTED] or future had been harmed. It was uncontested that Pupil A was in the midst of her [REDACTED] at the time she received the messages. The panel noted that Pupil A's mother was recorded as saying that upon seeing the messages Pupil A became quite upset and that at the meeting of 14 June 2022 Pupil A seemed very distressed and shocked by the messages. It was also recorded that during discussions Pupil A became upset and confused by the whole incident and that her parents were clearly shocked and angered by the messages. It was recorded that Pupil A stated she felt let down and betrayed.

The panel noted Witness B's evidence that Mr Islam's conduct really impacted Pupil A at a crucial point of her schooling, and it was an anxiety that she did not need during her [REDACTED].

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 again carefully considered what it had found proven. The panel had found that over a prolonged period Mr Islam had, on his own account, been aware the Pupil A may have feelings for him and had failed to report these concerns through the School's safeguarding processes. Mr Islam had openly acknowledged that he was "*infatuated*" with Pupil A for a long period of time prior to declaring his love for her and again failed to report that behaviour or the love which he said then developed.

The panel had also found that Mr Islam sent the child a lengthy message on social media stating "*I spent most of my Sunday in bed just thinking about the few days we have left*", "*At the beginning of July last year I developed a crush on you*", "*By the end of the school year I have fallen in love with you*", "*I spent every day of my summer thinking about you*" "*you were [REDACTED] with me my love for you became intense*", "*I desired to be with*

you more than anything” and “It wasn’t the normal type of love, but the Edward Cullen type of love” and that this conduct had been sexually motivated.

Though the panel noted Mr Islam’s expressions of regret and remorse the panel did not find them to be consistent with the balance of his evidence or find them plausible in that context. The panel noted, in particular, Mr Islam’s observation that other pupils may have been shocked by his message but Pupil A would not have been, as illustrating Mr Islam’s failure to develop any meaningful understanding of his actions or insight into the potential impact of his behaviours on Pupil A. The panel also considered Mr Islam’s repeated submissions that this was a one-off incident to be entirely misconceived. The panel had heard evidence of Mr Islam’s failure to safeguarding processes when he believed or had cause to believe that Pupil A liked him and/or had feelings for him over a prolonged period. Mr Islam failed to address convincingly, in evidence or in his submissions, those repeated failures save for wholly inappropriate suggestions that it was in some way to maintain class harmony or prevent embarrassment for Pupil A, also specifically saying if he had reported it that *“more people would have had eyes on Pupil A”*. Though Mr Islam accepted in closing submissions that he should have reported matters the panel considered that there was a failure on his part to recognise that safeguarding procedures exist to protect children including from exactly the behaviour which it had found Mr Islam demonstrated.

The panel considered that Mr Islam’s written and oral reflections indicated the beginning of recognition of the seriousness of his behaviour but failed to materially recognise that his behaviour was potentially harmful to children and in particular to Pupil A. He maintained that his actions would have been expected by Pupil A and would not have damaged her focus on her [REDACTED].

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 Islam 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 Islam. The extreme seriousness of Mr Islam having, in conduct the panel had found to be sexually motivated and in breach of his position of trust, declared his love for a child who was under his care in private social media correspondence with her and his failing to disclose his perception of her feelings for him over a prolonged period in a gross breach of professional boundaries and safeguarding requirements, as well as the multiple breaches of the Teacher’s Standards and School policies which the panel had found, as well as the breaches of the professional boundaries and the behaviours it had identified from the Advice as illustrating prohibition may be appropriate, 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 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 again considered what it found proven.

It was clear from the facts and evidence that this was not, regardless of Mr Islam's assertions, an impulsive act. It was openly admitted by Mr Islam that he had had feelings towards Pupil A for some time, believed she had too, and sent the message with the intention of pursuing a serious long term romantic relationship with a child in his class. His failure to report his perception of Pupil A's feelings, or to materially raise any aspect of this situation via the School's safeguarding processes (or seemingly even to materially consider doing so) was, in the panel's view, an extremely serious matter.

The panel again noted the clear conflict between Mr Islam's acceptance that his conduct constituted unacceptable professional conduct, seemingly therefore, at least in part, realising the seriousness of what he had done, when, at the same time, showing a repeated pattern of blaming Pupil A for her behaviour towards him and seemingly

implying her responsibility for his actions. The panel noted Mr Islam's comment in the referral form of 29 August 2024, some 2 years after the relevant events, that *"she was seeking fame.. and used my letter to [REDACTED]"* and *"she was at the time a young adult and should have known better"* and his separate reference to her being *"very [REDACTED]"* towards him. Mr Islam's repeated attitude appeared then to be, even after a long period for reflection, to consider a child in his class, who only in that academic year had turned [REDACTED], as on equal terms with him. He appears to consider that it was her responsibility not to behave towards him as he had perceived she did, in order that he did not behave in the serious manner which the panel had found proven he had. This inversion of responsibility the panel considered wholly incompatible with being a teacher.

Mr Islam also repeatedly appeared to suggest that the fact that he was in love with Pupil A was some manner of defence to his actions. Mr Islam appeared to fail to appreciate that this was a child within his care and that his feelings, whatever they may be, were utterly irrelevant to the question of his professional obligations. Again Mr Islam had clearly not materially considered, at the time or since, the harm his actions could have had on Pupil A. In fact the panel found no evidence that Mr Islam had materially understood the potential impact of his actions on the child, the School or the wider profession and the panel's view was that, in all these respects, the potential for harm was substantial. The panel had no material evidence that Mr Islam had appreciated the importance of the School's, and the profession's, safeguarding requirements and how manifestly he had acted in breach of them.

The panel found these dangerous attitudes, and Mr Islam's actions as found proven generally, to be wholly contrary to the basic requirements, duties of care and professional standards of a teacher and to illustrate an almost complete failure to demonstrate any meaningful level of insight and remorse.

The panel considered that, notwithstanding Mr Islam's submissions, there was a very serious risk that if faced with a similar situation in the future Mr Islam would again prioritise his own interests over the interests of a child under his care were he to become, as he repeatedly described it, *"infatuated"* and that he could then act in a similar manner.

Given the extremely serious nature of the allegations which it had found proven and taking into account the guidance in the Advice as to the factors which it had identified which weigh in favour of not offering a review period 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 unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, save for allegation 2, which the panel has found does not amount to unacceptable professional conduct. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Islam 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 Islam, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) and involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Islam fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexual motivation towards a child.

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 Islam, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “...*his declaring his love within detailed correspondence setting out the basis for that love to Pupil A, who was a child at the School at which he taught, and for whom he was [REDACTED], there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other 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 sets out as follows, “*The panel noted that Mr Islam had demonstrated in his written documents and oral evidence a highly concerning lack of insight generally into the seriousness and wholly unacceptable nature of his actions.*”

In my judgement, the lack of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour, and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “...*that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Islam were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession*”.

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct towards a child 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 Islam himself. The panel comment *"The panel did not find that Mr Islam demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel did not consider that the incidents were out of character."*

However, I note the number of positive comments the panel record from students, submitted by Mr Islam. I have also had due regard to the positive reference provided by Individual A, [REDACTED].

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Islam 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 lack of insight or remorse. The panel has said, *"Though the panel noted Mr Islam's expressions of regret and remorse the panel did not find them to be consistent with the balance of his evidence or find them plausible in that context. The panel noted, in particular, Mr Islam's observation that other pupils may have been shocked by his message but Pupil A would not have been, as illustrating Mr Islam's failure to develop any meaningful understanding of his actions or insight into the potential impact of his behaviours on Pupil A."*

Further, the panel has noted that Mr Islam showed *"...a repeated pattern of blaming Pupil A for her behaviour towards him and seemingly implying her responsibility for his actions."*

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that Mr Islam declared his love for a child who was under his care, and that he failed to disclose his perception of her feelings towards him over a prolonged period of time.

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

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

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended that no provision should be made for a review period.

I have considered the panel's comments *"...the panel found no evidence that Mr Islam had materially understood the potential impact of his actions on the child, the School or*

the wider profession and the panel's view was that, in all these respects, the potential for harm was substantial."

Additionally, the panel came to a view that "...there was a very serious risk that if faced with a similar situation in the future Mr Islam would again prioritise his own interests over the interests of a child under his care were he to become, as he repeatedly described it, "infatuated" and that he could then act in a similar manner."

The panel has also said that "Given the extremely serious nature of the allegations which it had found proven and taking into account the guidance in the Advice as to the factors which it had identified which weigh in favour of not offering a review period 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."

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 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 conduct, particularly the sexually motivated conduct towards a child, and the lack of full insight and remorse into his actions.

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

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



Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 1 July 2026

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