



Mr James Bees: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

August 2026

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

Teacher: Mr James Bees

TRA reference: 20042

Date of determination: 13 August 2026

Former employer: The Stanway School, Colchester

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 13 to 16 July and 13 August 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr James Bees.

The panel members were Mrs Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Helen Hynd (teacher panellist) and Mr Richard Young (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Rebecca Hughes of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Louisa Atkin of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Bees was present and was represented by Ms Aleksandra Manning-Rees of 5 St Andrew's Hill Chambers.

The hearing took place in public, save for the parts which were held in private, and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 10 February 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Bees was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, while employed as a teacher at The Stanway School, Colchester ("the School"):

1. Between approximately March 2020 and March 2021 he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A and/or Pupil B ("the Pupils") in that he:
 - a. Sent emails to Pupil A and/or Pupil B at inappropriate times, including during school holidays, at weekends and/or outside of school hours;
 - b. Discussed matters in his emails with Pupil A and/or Pupil B that was not related to their schoolwork;
 - c. Frequently telephoned Pupil A and/or Pupil B, and/or spoke to them for an inappropriate length of time;
 - d. Allowed himself to be photographed with Pupil A and/or Pupil B, and/or shared those photographs with the Pupils;
 - e. Placed his hand around Pupil A's waist;
 - f. Allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon, and/or hit Pupil B with a balloon on the bottom;
 - g. Gave Pupil A a hug on one or more occasions;
 - h. Gave Pupil A and/or Pupil B biscuits and/or chocolate on one or more occasions;
 - i. Stroked and/or touched Pupil A's hair on one occasion;
 - j. Sent one or more messages to Pupil A and/or Pupil B by typing comments onto documents they were working on;
 - k. Made one or more comments to the effect that:
 - i. He missed Pupil A and/or Pupil B;
 - ii. Pupil A and/or Pupil B meant too much / a lot to him;
 - iii. He would find a way to stay in contact.

- I. Took Pupil A out of lessons on one or more occasions to ask if everything was OK and/or if they were annoyed with him;
 - m. Suggested that Pupil A and/or Pupil B walk to the school to meet him for a chat on one occasion.
2. Between approximately March 2020 and March 2021 he purchased for and / or received gifts from one or more of the following pupils:
 - a. Pupil A
 - b. Pupil B
 - c. Pupil D
 - d. Pupil G
3. On or around 17 March 2021 he placed a mobile phone belonging to Pupil A into his trouser pocket and:
 - a. Invited Pupil A to retrieve the phone from his pocket;
 - b. Commented with words to the effect of “come and get it”
 - c. Commented with words to the effect of “it’s not like I have asked you to touch anything else”
4. Between approximately 5 March 2020 and 10 March 2021 he did not maintain professional boundaries with Pupil C and/ or Pupil D and/ or Pupil E and / or Pupil F and / or G in that he:
 - a. Exchanged messages with one or more of those pupils that were not related to schoolwork;
 - b. Sent messages to one or more of those pupils outside of School hours;
 - c. Allowed himself to be photographed with one or more pupils and shared those photographs with one or more pupils;
5. His conduct as may be proven at any of Allegation 1 and / or Allegation 3 demonstrated a lack of insight into his conduct following management advice given to him in 2019.
6. His conduct as may be proven with respect to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, as set out above at any or all of allegations 1a – 1m, 2a – b and/or 3a – c was sexually motivated.

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that he admitted the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 1(g), 1(h), 1(j), 1(k), 1(l), 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 2(d), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 4(a), 4(b), 4(c), and 5. He provided a partial admission to the facts of allegation 1(f), in that he accepted he allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon, but denied hitting Pupil B with a balloon on the bottom. Mr Bees denied allegations 1(i), 1(m), and 6.

Mr Bees accepted that those admitted facts amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

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

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 22

Section 3: Statement of agreed and disputed facts – pages 23 to 35

Section 4: TRA witness statements – pages 36 to 46

Section 5: TRA documents – pages 47 to 176

Section 6: Teacher documents – pages 177 to 194

The panel was also provided with separate bundles of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupils A, B, C, D, E, F, and G – pages 196 to 2,043.

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following – pages 2,044 to 2,127:

- CV
- Teacher Witness Statement
- Reflections
- Professional Boundaries in Practice - Course Cancellation Emails
- Professional Boundaries in Practice - Course Re Booking Email
- Testimonial Request Email
- Testimonial Request Letter

- TRA Allegations
- Testimonial – Individual A
- Testimonial – Individual B
- Testimonial – Individual C
- Testimonial – Individual D
- Testimonial – Individual E
- Testimonial – Individual F
- Christmas Card from Pupil A
- Christmas Card from Pupil B and Parents
- Christmas Card from Pupil B
- Thank You Letters - December 2019
- Card from Tutor Group at end of Placement
- Parent's Testimonial - September 2024
- Parent's Testimonial - June 2026
- DBS No Action Letter - April 2025
- Further Reflections - July 2026
- CPD Certificate - Professional Boundaries in Practice
- CPD Certificate - Safeguarding In Education

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 the 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:

- Pupil A
- Witness B

Mr Bees was also present at the hearing and gave oral 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.

On 1 July 2019, Mr Bees commenced employment as a maths teacher at the School, part of the Sigma Trust ('the Trust').

On 22 March 2021, concerns were raised by parents regarding Mr Bees' relationship with pupils. It was alleged that Mr Bees had taken a pupil's phone and put it in his trouser pocket, then invited her to take it out. It was further alleged that Mr Bees had communicated extensively with the pupil, including by phone and email, over the Covid lockdown period.

The School commenced an investigation into Mr Bees' email correspondence on 23 March 2021, and it was identified that Mr Bees had allegedly exchanged a significant volume of emails with several pupils, which were unrelated to schoolwork, and which were sent outside of school hours. The investigation into email correspondence also indicated that Mr Bees had allegedly taken photographs with pupils and had then shared them.

Mr Bees attended an investigation meeting on 16 April 2021 and was suspended. He was subsequently dismissed on 19 May 2021.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 27 May 2021.

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:

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that he admitted the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 1(g), 1(h), 1(j), 1(k), 1(l), 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 2(d), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 4(a), 4(b), 4(c), and 5. He provided a partial admission to the facts of allegation 1(f).

The panel also noted that Mr Bees also accepted that those admitted facts amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

1. Between approximately March 2020 and March 2021 you failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A and/or Pupil B (“the Pupils”) in that you:

a. Sent emails to Pupil A and/or Pupil B at inappropriate times, including during school holidays, at weekends and/or outside of school hours;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he sent emails to both Pupil A and B at inappropriate times and, in so doing, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel had sight of a substantial bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil A between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted that there were a significant number of emails exchanged over the period.

The panel particularly noted several emails that were sent late at night after 10pm, including on 16 November 2020, 24 December 2020, 2 January 2021, 27 January 2021, and 8 March 2021. The panel also noted that a number of emails had been sent over the school holidays, including on Christmas Day in 2020 and during the summer holiday period. The panel also considered several emails which were sent over the weekend, including on Saturday, 6 March 2021.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted the volume of email correspondence exchanged over the period extended over 500 pages. A number of the emails had been sent over school holiday periods, including on Christmas Day and Boxing Day in 2020, and in August 2020. There were several email chains where emails were exchanged after 9pm, including on 21 October 2020, 16 November 2020, 17 November 2020 and 12 December 2020. The panel also noted that some email exchanges took place over the weekend, including on Saturday, 26 September 2020, and Sunday, 10 January 2021.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. The panel found Pupil A to be a credible witness who sought to answer questions carefully and fairly. The panel noted that Pupil A described a pattern of regular and ongoing contact with Mr Bees outside usual school hours, including evenings, weekends and school holidays. Pupil A confirmed that email communication with Mr Bees became frequent.

The panel noted Pupil A's evidence that Mr Bees would regularly respond to emails sent outside school hours. Pupil A accepted that Mr Bees was supportive and "*was looking out for [her]*".

The panel further noted that Pupil A described Mr Bees as available to her throughout the relevant period.

The panel noted that, whilst some of the communications arose during periods of remote learning and were often framed as welfare support, the panel considered Pupil A's evidence supported the documentary evidence showing a sustained pattern of frequent contact outside normal school hours.

The panel considered that her evidence illustrated how professional boundaries had become progressively blurred through the timing of the communications.

The panel considered that Pupil A's evidence was consistent with the documentary evidence and demonstrated a pattern of regular, informal and increasingly personal communication between Mr Bees and Pupil A which extended beyond matters related to her education.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that his emails to Pupil A and B occurred during periods of remote learning when the pupils were often working in the evenings, and he was seeking to support their academic progress and wellbeing. Mr Bees accepted that the frequency and timing of the emails were inappropriate, particularly those sent on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, a period which he was finding emotionally difficult. He stated that "*supporting the students became a distraction from [REDACTED]*" but acknowledged that this was inappropriate.

The panel also considered Mr Bees' admissions that he had emailed Pupils A and B significantly more frequently than other pupils, accepting in evidence that he could have emailed them approximately six times more than other mentees and substantially more than members of his tutor group.

The panel considered that Mr Bees stated that the communications took place during periods of remote learning and that he was concerned about the pupils' academic progress and wellbeing.

The panel accepted that the Covid-19 pandemic and periods of remote learning provided important context and that there was increased reliance upon electronic communication during this period. However, it concluded that these circumstances did not justify the late-night, weekend and holiday communications that had developed between Mr Bees and Pupils A and B. The panel found that the timing of the communications demonstrated a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(a) proved.

b. Discussed matters in your emails with Pupil A and/or Pupil B that was not related to their schoolwork;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he sent emails to both Pupils A and B, which were not related to their schoolwork, and in so doing, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil A between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted that a number of the communications were of a personal and informal nature and were not directly related to schoolwork. The panel noted that the correspondence was extensive and frequently adopted a chatty, informal and personal tone.

In particular, the panel noted an email chain from 27 April 2020 in which Mr Bees discussed with Pupil A their respective activities over the weekend and stated that he was looking forward to her baking him a cake when they returned to school. The panel also noted a message sent on 17 July 2020 in which Mr Bees stated, *"Anyway, I could waffle on all evening (as I'm sure you could too!) but you must have more exciting plans for this evening than messaging me!"*. The panel noted that Pupil A had emailed Mr Bees on Christmas Day 2020, stating that she was *"Just laying in bed on my own as you do!"*, to which he replied, *"Oh, sounds very festive!"*

The panel also considered screenshots of emails between Mr Bees and Pupil A, and noted that on 6 March 2021, Mr Bees emailed photographs of a cheese and potato pie to Pupil A stating, *"nothing special at all, only cheese and potato pie, but I know you're always interested"*.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted that Mr Bees' emails to Pupil B were frequently of a chatty and informal style and that he would often ask questions about matters unrelated to schoolwork. In particular, the panel noted an email from 10 January 2021 in which Mr Bees wrote to Pupil B, *"Hope your walk wasn't too chilly and things are still all good with [REDACTED]!"*, and another email from 22 June 2020 in which Mr Bees commented, *"the weather's going to be perfect for dominos in the [REDACTED]!"* The panel also noted the personal nature of an email chain from 5 March 2021 in which Mr Bees asked questions regarding Pupil B's [REDACTED] and discussed Pupil B's hobbies and [REDACTED].

The panel considered the notes of a meeting between Pupil B and Individual G, the [REDACTED], on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that during this meeting, Pupil B had

disclosed that Mr Bees had regularly emailed her from his school email account to check on her well-being and had emailed her once during lockdown, stating that he missed her.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. The panel noted that Pupil A described Mr Bees as supportive during the Covid-19 pandemic but also confirmed that his communications were not limited to schoolwork.

Pupil A explained that, during the first lockdown, she and Mr Bees communicated more frequently by email and that Mr Bees would routinely check on her welfare. In her written statement, Pupil A stated, "*The first lockdown was when we would email more often for help, and it was hard because we were not set work, so it was more that Mr Bees used to check up on me daily.*"

The panel noted that Pupil A's evidence was that Mr Bees' involvement extended beyond responding to requests for academic assistance. Pupil A described receiving emails from Mr Bees about matters unrelated to schoolwork, including an email on 16 September 2020 concerning his role as her mentor.

The panel also noted Pupil A's evidence that, upon completing homework, she would receive enthusiastic messages from Mr Bees. By way of example, Pupil A referred to an email in which Mr Bees wrote "*Wooooohoooo!!*"

The panel further noted Pupil A's evidence that she would often complete work later in the evening and recalled an occasion when Mr Bees scheduled an email to be sent at 10.00pm stating "*hope you've stopped working*".

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that both pupils were struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic and that, in attempting to support them, his email communications became overly frequent and informal. Mr Bees accepted that some exchanges went beyond appropriate professional boundaries, including personal and informal conversation, and that he failed to appreciate the volume and nature of the correspondence at the time.

The panel accepted that the communications took place during an unprecedented period of remote learning and that welfare support formed part of Mr Bees' motivation. However, having considered the volume, frequency and content of the communications as a whole, the panel concluded that many of the discussions went beyond legitimate pastoral support and entered into personal matters unrelated to Mr Bees' professional role. The panel found that the cumulative effect of the correspondence demonstrated a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(b) proved.

c. Frequently telephoned Pupil A and/or Pupil B, and/or spoke to them for an inappropriate length of time;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that in respect of Pupil A and Pupil B, he had frequently telephoned them and spoken to them for an inappropriate length of time. The panel noted that Mr Bees admitted that although it was not inherently inappropriate to speak to pupils on the telephone at this time due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the frequency and duration of his calls to Pupil A and Pupil B were in excess of his calls to other pupils.

The panel considered the notes of a telephone call from Pupil A's [REDACTED] to Individual G on 22 March 2021. In this telephone call, Pupil A's [REDACTED] stated that Mr Bees had phoned home "*quite a lot*" during lockdown. He further stated that Pupil A had once told him Mr Bees was "*crying down the phone*". Pupil A's [REDACTED] raised his concerns with the School because he felt "*uneasy*" about the incidents.

The panel considered notes of a meeting between Pupil A and Individual G on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that Pupil A stated that Mr Bees had rung home and spoken to her and [REDACTED] a lot during lockdown. She further stated, in relation to the "*crying down the phone*" comment, that Mr Bees was not crying as such, but that he was saying how he was missing everyone and it was hard not being at school.

The panel considered notes of a telephone call between Pupil A's [REDACTED] and Individual G on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that Pupil A's mother stated that Mr Bees had called a "*ridiculous*" number of times in lockdown, and that often when she saw the number she would avoid answering. She further stated that Mr Bees would speak to her on the phone for a couple of minutes and then speak to Pupil A for over 40 minutes every few days.

The panel considered notes of a telephone call between Pupil B's [REDACTED] and Individual G on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that Pupil B's mother stated that Mr Bees would call most weeks on a Friday to see how Pupil B was getting on with work. She stated that the phone calls would be on the loudspeaker. She was also aware that Mr Bees had been emailing Pupil B "*a lot*" and she felt Mr Bees' behaviour could be seen as inappropriate.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A confirmed that telephone contact with Mr Bees became frequent during lockdown and formed a regular part of their communication. The panel considered that her evidence supported the parental evidence that the frequency and duration of the calls had become excessive.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he regularly contacted parents and students during the Covid-19 lockdown period as part of his mentoring and tutor responsibilities. He stated that he sought to support pupils' wellbeing and academic progress, particularly Pupils A and B, who were finding lockdown challenging. The panel heard that Mr Bees stated parental consent was obtained for calls and that parents were generally appreciative of the support provided. However, Mr Bees also accepted that the frequency and length of some of the calls became excessive, and he should have maintained more detailed records of the calls.

The panel noted that Pupil B's interview did not contain the same level of detail regarding telephone contact as the evidence relating to Pupil A. However, the panel noted that Mr Bees accepted that the frequency and duration of his calls with both Pupils A and B exceeded the level of contact he maintained with any other pupils.

The panel accepted that the Covid-19 pandemic provided an important context and that telephone contact with pupils was not, in itself, inappropriate. However, the panel concluded that the frequency and duration of the calls to Pupils A and B substantially exceeded what was professionally necessary or appropriate. The panel was particularly influenced by the evidence that calls with Pupil A regularly lasted in excess of 40 minutes and were regarded by [REDACTED] as "*ridiculous*" in their frequency.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(c) proved.

d. Allowed yourself to be photographed with Pupil A and/or Pupil B, and/or shared those photographs with the Pupils;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he allowed himself to be photographed with Pupil A and Pupil B, particularly on [REDACTED] in December 2020 and when setting up for an event in March 2021, and he then shared these images with the pupils.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil A. The panel noted that on 18 December 2020, Mr Bees emailed 15 photographs, including photographs of himself dressed in a bee costume posing for photographs with Pupil A and Pupil B to Pupil B, who were [REDACTED].

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B. On 18 December 2020, Mr Bees emailed Pupil B stating, *I have attached the photos from dress up day as I realised I hadn't sent them to you, have sent to Pupil A as well.* The panel noted that Pupil B had also sent a photograph of Mr Bees with a group of students on 17 December 2020.

On 10 March 2021, Mr Bees emailed Pupil B “*photos from earlier*” which included photographs of himself and pupils decorating a classroom for another teacher’s birthday.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had been photographed with Pupils A and B on a[REDACTED] [REDACTED]and he had then shared those photographs with students. He stated that the photographs were taken at the end of a challenging term during the Covid-19 pandemic and that he had intended them to form part of a leaving gift for his tutor group. The panel noted Mr Bees’ acknowledgement that he had been naïve and had failed to appreciate the risks of being photographed.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A, who confirmed that photographs had been taken involving herself, Pupil B and Mr Bees during events at school, [REDACTED]

The panel noted that Pupil A’s evidence confirmed that the photographs were taken and subsequently shared directly with the pupils. The panel considered that Pupil A’s evidence was consistent with the documentary record and supported the finding that Mr Bees had engaged in a pattern of conduct which extended beyond appropriate professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(d) proved.

e. Placed your hand around Pupil A’s waist;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that when posing for the photographs for [REDACTED], his arm was around Pupil A’s waist. He admitted that this was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had placed his hand around Pupil A’s waist whilst posing for a photograph. He stated that he had not intended anything inappropriate and had been seeking to avoid an awkward pose, but that his actions were misjudged and could have been perceived otherwise.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil A. The panel carefully examined the images and noted that, in a number of the photographs sent on 18 December 2020, Mr Bees had his arms around the waists of Pupil A.

The panel noted that it was possible to see his hand on the opposite side of Pupil A’s body, demonstrating that his arm was around her waist. The panel, therefore, concluded that the photographic evidence corroborated Mr Bees’ admission.

The panel further noted that placing his hand on a pupil's waist exceeds the professional boundaries ordinarily expected between a teacher and pupil.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(e) proved.

f. Allowed Pupil B to hit you with a balloon, and/or hit Pupil B with a balloon on the bottom;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon but denied that he hit Pupil B with a balloon on her bottom.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B. On 9 March 2021, Mr Bees sent an email to Pupil B and other pupils requesting that they send any pictures or videos from *"this afternoon"*, when he and the pupils were decorating a classroom for another teacher's birthday. Mr Bees stated that *"Even the video of Pupil B beating me up with a balloon would be great!"*

The panel considered that this email provided contemporaneous evidence that Pupil B had been hitting Mr Bees with a balloon and supported Mr Bees' admission that he had allowed inappropriate horseplay to take place.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he allowed Pupil B to hit him on the head with a balloon and that he had simply attempted to fend off the blows. He denied hitting Pupil B with a balloon on the bottom. The panel noted Mr Bees' statement that he should not have allowed the situation to develop, that it reflected a lapse in professional judgement, and that his desire to be an approachable teacher had led him to blur professional boundaries.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. The panel found Pupil A to be a credible witness who sought to answer questions honestly and fairly. However, the panel carefully considered the details of her evidence regarding the allegation that Mr Bees hit Pupil B with a balloon on the bottom.

The panel noted that, when discussing the allegation, Pupil A initially adopted the language of the allegation and referred to Pupil B being *"hit"* with a balloon. However, when questioned further, Pupil A described the contact as being more akin to a *"tap"* and stated that characterising the incident as a *"hit"* was an exaggeration. The panel considered this distinction significant.

The panel further noted that Pupil A's evidence on this issue lacked certainty. Whilst she remained a credible witness overall, the panel considered that her evidence regarding whether Mr Bees had hit Pupil B on the bottom had become less clear during

questioning. The panel concluded that Pupil A was doing her best to recall events but may have been mistaken in her description of this particular incident.

The panel also considered whether there was any contemporaneous evidence supporting the allegation that Mr Bees hit Pupil B on the bottom with a balloon. The panel noted that the incident did not appear in the list of concerns prepared by the pupils. The panel further noted that, despite the matter being investigated by the School shortly after the relevant period, Pupil B did not identify this allegation during the School's investigation. The panel considered it significant that such an allegation, if perceived as notable at the time, had not been raised contemporaneously.

The panel also considered the three videos showing pupils and Mr Bees hitting one another with balloons during the classroom decorating activities. The panel noted that the videos demonstrated playful interaction involving balloons between Mr Bees and a pupil.

Whilst the videos showed the wider classroom activities, the evidence before the panel was that the relevant incident was said to have occurred in the office area rather than in the classroom shown in the footage. Accordingly, the video evidence neither supported nor undermined the allegation that Mr Bees hit Pupil B on the bottom.

The panel further noted that Pupil B did not provide oral evidence before the panel. Whilst the panel had regard to the documentary evidence relating to Pupil B, including contemporaneous records and email correspondence, there was no direct evidence from Pupil B addressing whether Mr Bees had struck her on the bottom with a balloon.

The panel accepted Mr Bees' admission that he allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon. The panel considered that permitting a pupil to engage in that type of physical horseplay was inappropriate and amounted to a failure to maintain professional boundaries.

However, having considered all of the evidence relating to the second limb of the allegation, the panel was not satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Mr Bees hit Pupil B on the bottom with a balloon. The panel considered that the TRA via the presenting officer had not discharged the burden of proof in relation to this part of the allegation. In particular, the panel noted the absence of contemporaneous evidence, the fact that the allegation was not raised during the School's investigation, and Pupil A's own evidence that describing the contact as a "*hit*" was an exaggeration and that it was more accurately described as a "*tap*".

Accordingly, the panel found proved that Mr Bees allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon. The panel did not find proved the allegation that Mr Bees hit Pupil B on the bottom with a balloon. Therefore, the panel found allegation 1(f) proved.

g. Gave Pupil A a hug on one or more occasions;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he gave Pupil A a hug on one occasion.

Mr Bees accepted that he had placed his arm around her shoulder during what he described as a "*team huddle*".

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. The panel found Pupil A to be a credible witness. The panel considered that Pupil A in her written statement said, "*We then had another picture and put his arms round us, and he gave us a hug. He then messaged us to ask if he could have those pictures.*" The panel noted that Pupil A's evidence on this issue remained consistent and that she maintained that the contact amounted to a hug.

The panel considered the documentary evidence and noted that all references to this allegation appeared to relate to the same incident. The panel found no evidence of repeated hugging or multiple occasions of physical contact of this nature. Rather, the evidence consistently referred to a single incident occurring during what was described as an emotional period towards the end of the term.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had placed an arm around Pupil A's shoulder on one occasion on the last day before the Christmas break and a further lockdown. He stated that it occurred during an emotional period and was intended as a supportive gesture in a "*team huddle*" rather than a hug.

Mr Bees stated that he had placed an arm around Pupil A during the gathering and denied embracing her in the manner suggested by the allegation. He accepted, however, that physical contact had occurred.

Having considered the evidence as a whole, the panel concluded that placing an arm around a pupil in the manner described by both witnesses amounted to a hug. The panel considered that the ordinary meaning of a hug includes an embrace or the act of wrapping an arm around another person in a gesture of comfort, support or affection. The panel was satisfied that the contact described by Pupil A and admitted by Mr Bees fell within that description.

The panel accepted that the incident occurred during an emotional period shortly before the Christmas break and that it arose in the context of a group gathering rather than an isolated encounter between Mr Bees and Pupil A. Nevertheless, the panel considered that the contact represented a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries between teacher and pupil.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(g) proved.

I. stroked and/or touched Pupil A's hair on one occasion;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees denied stroking or touching Pupil A's hair.

The panel noted his explanation that he would sometimes place objects such as pens, rulers or calculators on pupils' heads as a joke when they rested their heads on desks. Mr Bees suggested that any perception that he had stroked Pupil A's hair may have arisen from this conduct.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. In her written statement, Pupil A stated: *"In terms of further contact we had in person, in a [REDACTED] revision class once, I had my head on the table because I couldn't be bothered, and Mr Bees stroked my hair. I don't have a good memory of when this was, but I would say if I had to guess around February or March 2021. Other people were present in the revision class including a few of my friends at the time. I just ignored it, didn't acknowledge it, and pretended it didn't happen. When he left me and my friends acknowledged it between ourselves and said, 'did you see that' sort of thing."*

The panel found Pupil A to be a credible witness and accepted that she was doing her best to recall events accurately. The panel noted that Pupil A maintained during her oral evidence that she believed it had been a hand rather than an object touching her head, even when questioned.

The panel also considered the contemporaneous list of concerns prepared by the pupils. Whilst the panel noted that the allegation of hair stroking did not appear in that precise form, the list contained a reference to Mr Bees *"playing"* with Pupil A's hair. The panel considered that this provided some contemporaneous support for Pupil A's account that there had been physical contact with her hair. The panel nevertheless identified a number of difficulties with the evidence insofar as it related to stroking.

The panel noted that the allegation was not raised during the School's initial investigation or in the contemporaneous accounts given shortly after concerns came to light. Whilst the panel accepted that pupils do not always report every concern and that questioning during investigations may focus on particular topics, the absence of any contemporaneous reference reduced the weight the panel was able to attach to the allegation.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that Pupil A would sometimes rest her head on a desk and that, on occasion, he would place items such as pens, rulers or calculators on her head as a joke. Mr Bees stated

that, while this may have involved incidental contact with her hair, he did not stroke her hair.

The panel carefully considered all of the evidence. Whilst it found Pupil A to be a credible witness generally, it was not satisfied that the evidence relating to this particular allegation was sufficiently strong to establish the allegation on the balance of probabilities.

The panel also took into account Mr Bees' evidence that he would place objects on pupils' heads, which could have involved incidental contact with a pupil's hair.

Having carefully considered all of the evidence, the panel was not satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Mr Bees stroked Pupil A's hair. The evidence was not sufficiently clear or compelling to enable the panel to distinguish between stroking and other forms of contact. However, the panel was satisfied that there was physical contact with Pupil A's hair on one occasion. This conclusion was supported by Pupil A's evidence that something touched her head, the contemporaneous reference to Mr Bees "*playing*" with her hair, and Mr Bees' own evidence that his practice of placing objects on pupils' heads could have involved contact with their hair.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(i) proved on the basis of touching hair not stroking hair.

j. Sent one or more messages to Pupil A and/or Pupil B by typing comments onto documents they were working on;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted he would send messages to Pupil A and Pupil B by typing comments onto shared documents they were working on.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had sent comments to Pupil A and Pupil B by typing directly onto documents they had shared with him during periods of remote learning. He explained that this was intended to provide feedback on their work but acknowledged that he had become too informal in his communications. The panel noted that Mr Bees stated: "*The students would sometimes share documents they were working on, usually past exam papers, and I would work on the same document to support them and provide feedback on their work. I recognise I was over enthusiastic to support the pupils.*"

The panel noted that Mr Bees accepted that he had used shared documents to communicate with pupils and accepted that some of his interactions with Pupil A and Pupil B became overly familiar.

The panel considered the documentary evidence relating to the shared documents. The panel noted that a significant proportion of the comments made by Mr Bees were

educational in nature and related directly to the pupils' work, progress and attainment. The panel noted examples of comments intended to encourage pupils and provide feedback on academic performance. The panel considered a comment stating, *"If I helped with all those you haven't done [REDACTED]!"*

The panel also considered the screenshots and emails of the comments contained within the shared documents.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A stated that *"During the Christmas lockdown, [she] would also work on Google docs to do [her] School work, and Mr Bees would come on and amend [her] work with [her]. He would then end up talking with [her] on the documents itself and would type things and then delete what he had typed."*

Pupil A further stated that Mr Bees would engage in conversations on the documents which extended beyond educational feedback. She recalled Mr Bees writing *"I'll make you both laugh"*, in reference to herself and Pupil B. Pupil A also stated that Mr Bees discussed golf within the comments and once pasted a meme into a document which read *"Keep rolling your eyes bitch and one day maybe you'll find a brain back there"* and accompanied it with a comment that he had thought of her when he saw it. Pupil A further recalled Mr Bees writing comments stating that she and Pupil B *"mean too much"* to him and messages including *"proud of you"* and *"miss you"*. Pupil A explained that she took screenshots of some of these comments.

The panel had regard to screenshots of online documents containing comments made by Mr Bees to Pupil A. The panel noted a comment from Mr Bees which stated, *"saw this earlier and thought of you, oops"* next to a meme which read *"Keep rolling your eyes, bitch. Maybe you'll find a brain back there."*

The panel also noted comments stating *"well done for all your work! Proud of you, miss you"* and *"A grade 5 is about 56 per paper SO WELL DONE :)))"* followed by a further comment in relation to Pupil A and Pupil B which stated, *"because you both mean too much."*

The panel considered examples where Mr Bees provided feedback on performance, assisted pupils in calculating marks, and made comments regarding their academic progress. The panel accepted that the use of shared documents to provide educational feedback was commonplace during periods of remote learning and that many of the comments were directly connected with supporting pupils academically.

The panel accepted that some comments adopted an informal and conversational tone. However, the panel considered the circumstances in which the comments were made. The evidence demonstrated that the comments were exchanged during periods of

remote learning when pupils and teachers were frequently working collaboratively through shared online documents and electronic platforms.

In particular, the panel considered that comments referring to missing pupils, pupils meaning "*too much*" to him, and sharing memes directed at individual pupils were not necessary for any educational purpose. The panel noted evidence showing that Mr Bees had used similar language when communicating with groups of pupils and classes more generally. The panel noted that messages expressing encouragement, pride in pupils' achievements and statements that he "*missed*" pupils were not confined to Pupil A and Pupil B. The panel had regard to communications sent to wider groups of pupils in which Mr Bees expressed similar sentiments regarding missing pupils. The panel considered that this wider evidence was relevant when assessing the significance of the comments made to Pupil A and Pupil B.

Whilst the panel noted that some limited comments directed to Pupil A and Pupil B were more personal and individualised than comments sent to the teaching or tutor groups, it did not consider that expressions of encouragement, pride in pupils' work, or statements that he missed pupils during lockdown were necessarily unique to Pupil A and Pupil B.

The panel further accepted that, whilst the tone of some of the comments was overly familiar and informal, this generally reflected Mr Bees' communication style.

The panel accepted that many teachers experienced difficulty maintaining contact with pupils during periods of remote learning and that communications expressing support, encouragement and concern for pupils' wellbeing were commonplace during the pandemic. The panel noted that the comments contained within the shared documents were made in the context of schoolwork and educational support. The panel accepted that the primary purpose of the documents was to enable pupils and Mr Bees to work collaboratively on examination questions, revision exercises and other schoolwork.

The panel nevertheless considered that certain comments went beyond educational feedback and entered into personal and overly familiar communications. In particular, the panel attached significant weight to the meme shared by Mr Bees with Pupil A accompanied by the comment: "*saw this earlier and thought of you, oops*" next to a meme which read "*Keep rolling your eyes, bitch. Maybe you'll find a brain back there.*"

The panel considered that the language used within the meme was inappropriate and unprofessional.

The panel considered that this involved a conscious decision to share the material with Pupil A. The panel further considered that the use of the word "*bitch*" in communications directed towards a pupil was wholly inappropriate. The panel also regarded the comment suggesting a pupil might "*find a brain back there*" as insulting and particularly ill-judged when directed towards a pupil whom Mr Bees was mentoring and supporting.

The panel therefore concluded that Mr Bees failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries when communicating with Pupil A and Pupil B through comments placed on shared documents.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(j) proved.

k. Made one or more comments to the effect that:

i. You missed Pupil A and/or Pupil B;

ii. Pupil A and/or Pupil B meant too much / a lot to you;

iii. You would find a way to stay in contact.

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he made comments to Pupil A and Pupil B stating he missed them, wanted to stay in contact, and they meant a lot to him.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he made these comments during the Covid-19 pandemic when he was concerned about his students' wellbeing and uncertain whether he would have an opportunity to see them again [REDACTED]. He stated that all his pupils meant a lot to him and he never intended to cause them confusion or upset.

The panel had regard to screenshots of documents containing comments from Mr Bees to Pupil A. The panel noted a comment from Mr Bees, which stated "*well done for all your work! Proud of you, miss you*", and in another "*miss you hopefully see you soon bye*".

The panel also noted a comment from Mr Bees regarding Pupil A and Pupil B, which stated "*because you both mean too much*".

The panel considered a screenshot of an email from Mr Bees to Pupil A from 16 June 2020 in which Mr Bees emailed to Pupil A, "*Thanks again for the visit, means a lot! (kind of miss you both even more now though!)*".

The panel further considered evidence contained within the Pupil A and Pupil B email bundles which contained further references to Mr Bees missing the pupils.

The panel also considered the wider context of the communications. In particular, the panel noted evidence that Mr Bees had made similar comments to the teaching or tutor groups. The panel had regard to communications sent to whole classes in which Mr Bees expressed that he missed pupils generally and looked forward to seeing them return to

school. The panel therefore accepted that comments expressing that he missed pupils were not confined to Pupil A and Pupil B.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he missed many of his pupils during the Covid-19 lockdown period and that such comments reflected the unusual circumstances in which teachers and pupils were unable to attend school in person. The panel accepted that many teachers experienced difficulties maintaining contact with pupils during lockdown and that expressions of support, encouragement and statements that pupils were missed were commonplace during that period. However, the panel was satisfied that Mr Bees did make comments specifically to Pupil A and Pupil B stating that he missed them.

The panel also had regard to the transcript evidence contained within the bundle. The panel noted a message sent by Mr Bees to Pupil B in which he stated *"It has been the highlight of my year ... can't put into words how much you both mean to me. We will smash these last months as a team, you won't get through it alone, I will be there every step of the way ... Memories I cherish forever. You honestly both mean the world to me and I am incredibly grateful for the friendship we have. I know I am incredibly lucky."*

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees. The panel noted that he accepted commenting to the effect that Pupil A and/or Pupil B meant a lot to him. Mr Bees stated that he cared deeply about all of his pupils and that his comments arose from his desire to support them through an exceptionally difficult period.

The panel accepted that Mr Bees frequently expressed encouragement and support to pupils generally. However, the panel considered that comments stating that Pupil A and Pupil B *"meant too much"*, *"meant the world"* to him and describing a *"friendship"* went beyond ordinary educational encouragement and pastoral support.

The panel noted the evidence of Pupil A, including her written statement and oral evidence, in which she described conversations about remaining in contact in the future.

The panel also had regard to the circumstances in which these comments were made. The panel noted that the conversation took place during a telephone call made to the family home rather than through a personal mobile telephone. The panel accepted that the use of a household telephone and the involvement of parents reduced some of the safeguarding concerns that might otherwise arise had the communication taken place through personal devices. However, the panel considered that the content of the conversation remained relevant.

The panel also had regard to the transcript evidence, including comments attributed to Mr Bees to the effect *"I can't hunt you down and track you down, it would be a bit weird, but you can't be strangers."*

The panel noted evidence in the transcript concerning discussions involving a GPS tracker and maintaining contact after the pupils left school. The panel considered that the underlying theme of the conversations was the continuation of a relationship beyond the normal teacher-pupil relationship.

The panel considered the transcript evidence and the evidence of Pupil A concerning the discussion about maintaining contact after she left school. The panel noted that, during the conversation, Pupil A appeared to be attempting to move the conversation on and change the subject. The panel considered that Pupil A was not actively pursuing a discussion about remaining in contact and that the issue was instead being raised and pursued by Mr Bees.

The panel considered the evidence of Mr Bees, who stated that he had no intention of establishing an inappropriate relationship with either pupil. However, the panel noted that he accepted making comments about staying in touch in the future.

The panel considered it significant that Mr Bees raised the prospect of future contact with individual pupils and sought reassurance that they would not simply become "*strangers*" after leaving school.

The panel accepted that pupils are free to decide whether to return to school [REDACTED] and whether to maintain contact with former teachers through appropriate school channels. However, the panel considered that it was inappropriate for a teacher to initiate discussions about maintaining future contact with individual pupils in the manner described. The panel concluded that the persistence of these comments demonstrated an attempt by Mr Bees to preserve a personal relationship beyond the ordinary teacher-pupil relationship and amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel considered it significant that these comments were directed at individual pupils rather than wider groups of students. The panel concluded that proposing or discussing ways to remain in contact after the pupils had left school was not consistent with maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. The panel further considered that the persistence of these discussions demonstrated an attempt to maintain a personal connection with the pupils beyond their time at school.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegations 1(k)(i), (ii) and (iii) proved.

2. Between approximately March 2020 and March 2021 you purchased for and / or received gifts from one or more of the following pupils:

a. Pupil A

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees accepted that he had bought Pupil A a “*lucky coin gift*” in December 2020 and he had also received gifts from her.

The panel had regard to a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil A. The panel noted that in an email from Pupil A dated 17 December 2020, she stated “*Thankyou so much for my present, and [REDACTED] said thankyou for her card-made her day!!*”. The panel also noted an email from Mr Bees dated 18 December 2020 in which he stated “*Just wanted to say a massive thank you for my presents and card, it is very much appreciated and means the world to me! Managed to hold it together in front of you both!*”.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A stated that, after being asked to return after the school day with Pupil B, Mr Bees gave them chocolate truffles, a personalised coin bearing their names and a message, and a card. Pupil A also stated that Mr Bees had provided biscuits from a bakery and a chocolate orange during mentoring sessions.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had given Pupil A a lucky coin with the message “*Do your best, you can’t do any more than that*”, as an exam related gift with a Christmas card and chocolates. He stated that he had intended the gift to be supportive and did not consider at the time how it could be perceived.

The panel accepted that some of the confectionery referred to in the evidence was inexpensive and similar to refreshments that were made available to other groups of pupils. However, the panel considered the personalised coin to be materially different. The panel noted the evidence that the coin had been purchased specifically for Pupil A, bore a personalised message and had an approximate value of £10.

The panel considered that, unlike ordinary confectionery provided to groups of pupils, the personalised coin was an individual gift purchased with Pupil A specifically in mind. The panel concluded that this represented a departure from normal professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 2(a) proved.

b. Pupil B

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees accepted that he had bought Pupil B a “*lucky coin gift*” in December 2020 and he had also received gifts from her.

The panel had regard to a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B. The panel noted that in an email to Mr Bees dated 17 December 2020, Pupil B stated,

"Thank you so much for my present sir that's so nice of you!" On 18 December 2020, Mr Bees emailed Pupil B stating, *"Just wanted to say a massive thank you for my presents and card, it is very much appreciated and means the world to me!"*.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A stated that, after being asked to return after the school day with Pupil B, Mr Bees gave them chocolate truffles, a personalised coin bearing their names and a message, and a card.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had given Pupil B a small motivational coin before an exam, and he did not consider at the time how this might be perceived as it was inexpensive and exam related. Mr Bees stated that he should have checked the School's policies before giving a personal gift and acknowledged that his actions risked creating an impression of favouritism.

The panel accepted that some of the confectionery referred to in the evidence was inexpensive and similar to refreshments that were made available to other groups of pupils. However, the panel considered the personalised coin to be materially different. The panel noted the evidence that the coin had been purchased specifically for Pupil B, bore a personalised message and had an approximate value of £10.

The panel considered that, unlike ordinary confectionery provided to groups of pupils, the personalised coin was an individual gift purchased with Pupil B specifically in mind. The panel concluded that this represented a departure from normal professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 2(b) proved.

c. Pupil D

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he had received a gift from Pupil D on or around 18 December 2020.

The panel had regard to a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil D. The panel noted that in an email to Pupil D on 18 December 2020, Mr Bees stated, *"Just wanted to say a massive thank you for the present you gave me, it was very thoughtful of you and means a lot to me! I really appreciate it and will enjoy tucking into them over the break!"*

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had received a box of chocolates from Pupil D and had provided chocolates to his tutor group, including Pupil D, to share. Mr Bees further stated that he should have checked the School's gifts policy and sought guidance before giving a class treat.

The panel accepted that the provision of inexpensive chocolates and confectionery to pupils during revision sessions, mentoring activities or end-of-term events was not uncommon within schools. The panel did not consider that the provision of chocolates, to a group of pupils such as a tutor group, in itself, represented a significant departure from ordinary professional practice. The panel further noted that the extract of the Trust's Code of Conduct from 2019 in the disciplinary investigation report ("Code Extract") does not prohibit the provision of low-value items of that nature and that the confectionery was neither expensive nor exclusive to Pupils A and B and instead said it was "*inadvisable*" to give personal gifts and to ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded and only to give gifts to a pupil as part of an agreed reward system.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 2(c) proved.

d. Pupil G

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he purchased a gift for Pupil G in the form of a box of chocolates to share with the whole class.

The panel had regard to a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil G. The panel noted that in a private comment on Google Classroom on 14 May 2020, Mr Bees had written to Pupil G on 18 December 2020, Mr Bees stated, "*Firstly, [REDACTED] looks great, well done! And the fudge looks lovely... even wrapped it up in a little gift wrap for me!*"

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that Pupil G mentioned during lockdown that they had made and wrapped fudge, to which Mr Bees joked that it must be for him. He denied any gift being offered or received from Pupil G. Mr Bees further stated that the only gift he gave Pupil G was a tub of chocolates, which was shared with his tutor group as a whole.

The panel accepted Mr Bees' evidence in this regard. Whilst the Google Classroom comment referred to fudge being wrapped as a gift, the panel was not satisfied that it had been provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that any gift of fudge had in fact been offered to or received by Mr Bees.

The panel accepted that the provision of inexpensive chocolates and confectionery to pupils during revision sessions, mentoring activities or end-of-term events was not uncommon within schools. The panel did not consider that the provision of chocolates, in itself, represented a significant departure from ordinary professional practice. The panel further noted that the extract of the Code Extract does not prohibit the provision of low-value items of that nature and that the confectionery was neither expensive nor exclusive

to Pupils A and B and instead said it was “*inadvisable*” to give personal gifts and to ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded and only to give gifts to a pupil as part of an agreed reward system.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 2(d) proved.

3. On or around 17 March 2021 you placed a mobile phone belonging to Pupil A into his trouser pocket and:

- a. Invited Pupil A to retrieve the phone from your pocket**
- b. Commented with words to the effect of “come and get it”**
- c. Commented with words to the effect of “it’s not like I have asked you to touch anything else”**

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that he admitted that, on or around 17 March 2021, during an after-school revision session, he took Pupil A's phone and placed it in his trouser pocket. The panel further noted that Mr Bees admitted that, when Pupil A asked for her phone back, he responded with words to the effect of “*come and get it*”. The panel also noted Mr Bees’ admission that, when a pupil commented that this was “*weird*”, he returned the phone and commented to the effect that “*it’s not like I have asked you to touch anything else*”.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who accepted that he had placed Pupil A's phone in his trouser pocket, made comments inviting her to get the phone back, and commented to the effect of “*it’s not like I have asked you to touch anything else*”. Mr Bees stated that the incident arose during after-school revision session “*banter*” and that he had not intended any inappropriate meaning. He further stated that he felt regretful and embarrassed about the incident, and that he had failed to appreciate how his actions and comments could be perceived.

The panel noted that Mr Bees accepted the factual basis of the incident. Whilst he maintained that he had not genuinely expected Pupil A to retrieve the phone from his pocket, he accepted that he had nevertheless used the words “*come and get it*”.

The panel considered the notes of a telephone call from Pupil A’s [REDACTED] to Individual G on 22 March 2021. In the note of the telephone call, Pupil A’s [REDACTED] reported that there had been an incident where Mr Bees had taken Pupil A’s phone, put it in his pocket and asked her to take it out. It was recorded that Pupil A’s [REDACTED] felt this needed reporting.

The panel considered notes of a telephone call between Pupil A's [REDACTED] and Individual G on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that Pupil A's [REDACTED] stated that she was concerned about the phone incident as Pupil A had told her that when Mr Bees had asked her to get the phone out of his pocket, he had said, "*it's not like I have asked you to grab anything else*". Pupil A's [REDACTED] was recorded as stating that Pupil A had described it as "*weird*".

The panel considered notes of a meeting between Pupil A and Individual G on 23 March 2021. The panel noted that Pupil A stated that during after school revision, Mr Bees had taken her phone and put it in his trouser pocket. Pupil A had then asked for it back and Mr Bees had said to get it. Pupil A told Individual G that she did not try to get it back, and Mr Bees handed her the phone back.

The panel considered this account to be broadly consistent with the admissions made by Mr Bees.

The panel considered notes of a meeting between Pupil B and Individual G on 23 March 2021. Pupil B told Individual G that she had been in the back of the classroom during after school revision the previous Wednesday and Mr Bees had "*jokingly*" taken Pupil A's phone and put it in his trouser pocket. Pupil A had asked "*can I have it back*" and Mr Bees had replied "*come and get it*". Pupil A had then said, "*that's weird*" and Mr Bees had given her the phone back.

The panel noted that Pupil A in her oral evidence stated that she did not believe the incident had been done with bad intentions. However, the panel considered that the absence of improper intent did not alter the conduct itself.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees. Mr Bees accepted that he had placed the phone in his trouser pocket and accepted making comments inviting Pupil A to come and get it. He stated that he did not recall exactly what was said but believed he may have made a joke about her having to come and get it, as he had had to retrieve his drinks bottle. The '*banter*' ended here as he returned the phone to the pupil.

Mr Bees stated that the incident arose out of what he described as "*banter*", that it was a "*rush of blood*" moment, and that he had not intended any inappropriate meaning. The panel accepted that Mr Bees did not genuinely expect Pupil A to reach into his pocket and accepted that he returned the phone when the comment was challenged.

However, the panel considered that the crucial issue was not whether Mr Bees expected Pupil A to retrieve the phone, but that he chose to place a pupil's phone in his trouser pocket and then invited her to come and get it.

The panel was satisfied that on the balance of probabilities Mr Bees had invited Pupil A to retrieve the phone from his pocket. The panel was satisfied that Mr Bees made comments to the effect of "*come and get it*", and "*it's not like I've asked you to touch anything else*" or "*it's not like I've asked you to grab anything else*" following the incident being described as "*weird*".

The panel considered that both saying, "*come and get it*" and the subsequent comment represented an inappropriate lapse in professional judgment. The panel accepted that the incident arose in the context of ill-judged banter.

Accordingly, having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegations 3(a), (b) and 3(c) proved.

4. Between approximately 5 March 2020 and 10 March 2021 you did not maintain professional boundaries with Pupil C and/ or Pupil D and/ or Pupil E and / or Pupil F and / or G in that he:

b. Sent messages to one or more of those pupils outside of School hours;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he sent emails to Pupil C, D, E, F and G outside of school hours and that this was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. He particularly noted the correspondence after 7pm when he emailed pupils to arrange a gift of flowers for another teacher.

The panel had sight of the relevant email bundles and noted a number of communications sent significantly outside normal school hours.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil D between March 2020 and March 2021, and particularly noted emails exchanged on 27 January 2020 after 11 pm and on 28 January 2020 after 9 pm. The panel also noted emails sent on Saturday, 13 February 2020, at the beginning of the School's half-term.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil E, and Mr Bees and Pupil C, between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted correspondence from Mr Bees to Pupil E and Pupil C on Friday, 5 March 2021, after 7pm, and Saturday, 6 March 2021, after 9 pm, discussing flowers to give to another teacher on her birthday.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil F between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted an email from Mr Bees to Pupil F on 5 November 2020 after 8pm, in which he stated, "*Sorry it's a little late (it's been a busy evening!)*" The panel also noted emails on 15 March 2021 after 6pm, initiated by Mr Bees, discussing favourite chocolates.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil G between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted in particular emails exchanged on 11 November 2020 between 9pm and 10pm, and emails exchanged on Christmas Day 2020.

In relation to Pupil G, the panel noted exchanges extending until approximately 9.43pm and evidence of messages being exchanged after midnight, including communications sent at 12.23am.

In relation to Pupil F, the panel noted emails sent after 8.00pm and communications continuing until approximately 10.34pm.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that the communications outside of School hours arose from arrangements being made for a birthday surprise for a member of staff. The panel noted his acceptance that these discussions should have taken place in school, that the communications were unnecessary and outside professional expectations, and that he should not have exchanged such messages with pupils outside school hours.

The panel accepted that there was no clear rule identifying precisely when communications become inappropriate. However, the panel considered that a number of the communications identified occurred at times which could not reasonably be regarded as appropriate for teacher-pupil correspondence. The panel considered that emails exchanged late at night, during school holidays and after midnight crossed the boundary of acceptable professional communication, particularly where they were not urgent and could readily have been sent during the next school day.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who accepted that many of these communications were unnecessary and should not have been sent at those times.

Whilst the panel recognised the unusual circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and periods of remote learning, it concluded that the timing of the communications demonstrated a failure to maintain professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 4(b) proved.

5. Your conduct as may be proven at any of Allegation 1 and / or Allegation 3 demonstrated a lack of insight into his conduct following management advice given to him in 2019.

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that he accepted that his admitted conduct was

contrary to advice he had been given by Witness B on 12 June 2019 and that he demonstrated a lack of insight into his conduct following that advice.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who acknowledged that he should have paid closer attention to the advice given in 2019, particularly in relation to professional boundaries, social media contact with students and seeking guidance when unsure. The panel noted Mr Bees' statement that he did not take the advice seriously enough at the time and that he had failed to fully appreciate the potential consequences of his actions.

The panel had regard to a letter of advice sent to Mr Bees by Witness B on 13 June 2019. The panel noted that the purpose of the letter was to set out the advice given in a meeting the previous day at which Mr Bees' inappropriate contact with pupils at his placement school was discussed. Mr Bees had been involved in a group chat on social media with a number of year 9 students. The panel noted that Witness B advised Mr Bees that in future he should avoid any social media or digital contact with students. *"Discretion around being photographed with students, even on their devices"* was also discussed as inadvisable, and Witness B stated that photographs of students should never be taken on a teacher's device. The panel noted in particular Witness B's advice to Mr Bees that, *"going forward, you should be especially mindful of the need to establish appropriate professional boundaries around any contact you have with students/young people, whether at school or outside school. You will be seen as a Teacher, whether at work or outside work, and you should ensure that any interaction with young people is appropriate to that position."*

The panel noted that Witness B expressly advised Mr Bees that he should avoid social media and unnecessary digital contact with pupils. The panel further noted that the advice specifically addressed the importance of maintaining clear and appropriate professional boundaries with students and exercising caution in relation to photographs involving pupils.

The panel considered that this advice was clear, unambiguous and directly relevant to a number of the allegations found proved in the present case. The panel noted that, notwithstanding this advice, Mr Bees subsequently engaged in extensive out-of-hours communications with pupils, exchanged personal and informal messages, discussed remaining in contact after pupils left school, provided personalised gifts to individual pupils and engaged in other conduct which the panel had found crossed professional boundaries.

The panel also considered the evidence of Witness B and the contemporaneous documentation. The panel concluded that the advice provided in June 2019 was intended to ensure that Mr Bees understood the importance of maintaining clear professional boundaries in all interactions with pupils. The panel found that the conduct proved in

Allegations 1 and 3 demonstrated that Mr Bees had failed fully to appreciate, apply and act upon that advice.

Whilst the panel accepted that Mr Bees ultimately acknowledged his mistakes and admitted much of the underlying conduct, the panel was satisfied that the recurrence of boundary issues after receiving explicit management advice in 2019 demonstrated a lack of insight at the time the conduct occurred.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 5 proved.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you not proved, for these reasons:

1. Between approximately March 2020 and March 2021 you failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A and/or Pupil B (“the Pupils”) in that you:

h. Gave Pupil A and/or Pupil B biscuits and/or chocolate on one or more occasions;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed by Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he would take biscuits and chocolate orange into school for revision and mentoring sessions for all pupils, including Pupil A and Pupil B.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A confirmed that Mr Bees would sometimes provide biscuits, chocolate and other snacks during revision and mentoring sessions. The panel noted that her evidence was consistent with Mr Bees' admissions and with the wider evidence before it.

Pupil A further stated that Mr Bees had provided other items during mentoring sessions, including biscuits from a bakery and, on one occasion, a chocolate orange.

The panel considered that Pupil A's evidence demonstrated that Mr Bees had, on a number of occasions, provided confectionery and snacks to Pupil A and Pupil B.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he brought snacks to mentoring and revision sessions attended by Pupil A and Pupil B, as well as other students. He stated that the snacks were intended as a small treat to support students during a difficult period. Mr Bees stated that the provision of snacks was not confined to Pupil A and Pupil B and formed part of his wider practice when conducting revision and mentoring sessions.

The panel accepted that the conduct alleged had occurred and therefore found as a matter of fact that Mr Bees had provided biscuits and chocolate to Pupil A and Pupil B on one or more occasions.

However, the panel carefully considered whether this conduct, viewed in its proper context, amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The panel noted that the items in question were inexpensive, commonplace refreshments. The panel further noted that the snacks were not provided exclusively to Pupil A and Pupil B but were made available more broadly to pupils attending revision and mentoring sessions.

The panel considered that it is not uncommon for teachers to provide biscuits, chocolate or similar refreshments to pupils during revision sessions, tutoring sessions or pastoral activities. The panel found no evidence that the snacks were provided with any improper motivation, that Mr Bees expected anything in return, or that the provision of the items was intended to create a special or exclusive relationship with either Pupil A or Pupil B.

In those circumstances, the panel concluded that whilst the factual allegation was established, the provision of biscuits and chocolate did not constitute a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The panel therefore found that the factual conduct occurred but did not regard it as inappropriate or as supporting the wider allegation of boundary failures.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(h) not proved.

I. Took Pupil A out of lessons on one or more occasions to ask if everything was OK and/or if they were annoyed with you;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he had taken Pupil A out of a lesson briefly to chat and check that they were okay, and as part of this conversation, he may have joked about Pupil A being annoyed with him.

The panel noted that Mr Bees accepted that, in doing so, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A.

The panel considered a screenshot of notes made by Pupil A and Pupil B regarding their concerns about Mr Bees' behaviour towards them. The panel noted that two items on the list of conduct involved Mr Bees taking Pupil A out of lessons: "*took me out of [REDACTED] in lockdown*" and "*pulling me out of [REDACTED]*".

The panel further considered the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. A number of the events took place during the Covid-19 lockdown period when normal school routines had been disrupted, and opportunities for teachers to speak to pupils

were more limited. The panel also took into account Mr Bees' mentoring and pastoral role in relation to the pupils.

Even if the panel were to conclude that Pupil A had been taken out of lessons on two occasions, it did not in itself amount to conduct crossing professional boundaries. In the context of the mentoring relationship and the exceptional circumstances prevailing during the lockdown period, the panel considered that occasional discussions even if they interrupted lessons, were capable of having an educational or pastoral purpose.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. The panel noted that, during cross-examination, Pupil A described being taken out of lessons by Mr Bees.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he had taken Pupil A out of a lesson to check on her wellbeing because he was concerned about her. He stated that, although he may have jokingly referred to checking whether she was annoyed with him, his intention was to undertake a welfare check, though he acknowledged that if he had concerns about her wellbeing, he should have raised those concerns through the appropriate safeguarding channels.

The panel accepted that there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a teacher to remove a pupil briefly from a lesson for welfare or safeguarding reasons. However, the panel also considered that interrupting a pupil's learning for a welfare discussion should ordinarily occur only where there is a clear need to do so and that, in many circumstances, it would be preferable to arrange such conversations during a break, lunchtime or another appropriate time.

The panel noted that the evidence did not suggest that the conversation itself was improper or that Mr Bees had any inappropriate motive. The panel accepted that he was seeking to check upon Pupil A's welfare and that the context was his mentoring role. The panel did not consider that asking a pupil whether they were alright, or whether they appeared upset with him, was inherently inappropriate.

The panel further considered that the evidence did not establish that Pupil A was removed from lessons for the purpose of developing a personal relationship or otherwise crossing professional boundaries. Rather, the evidence suggested that Mr Bees was acting in an overenthusiastic pastoral capacity and exercising poor judgment regarding the timing of the conversation.

Whilst the panel considered that Mr Bees could and should have chosen a more appropriate time to speak with Pupil A, it was not satisfied that taking her briefly out of class to conduct a welfare check crossed professional boundaries in the manner alleged. The panel considered this to be a pastoral intervention which, although arguably

unnecessary at that particular time, fell within the scope of a teacher's welfare responsibilities.

The panel also considered the extent to which Pupil A had been taken out of lessons. The panel noted that some of the documentary evidence suggested that this may have occurred on more than one occasion. However, the panel considered the evidence as a whole and found that it was not sufficiently clear to establish that this was a regular or recurring practice.

The panel noted that, had Mr Bees routinely been removing Pupil A from lessons over a sustained period, it would be reasonable to expect that this would have been observed by other members of staff, particularly the teachers from whose lessons Pupil A was being removed. The panel considered that repeated interruptions to a pupil's learning would likely have attracted attention and prompted concerns from teaching staff. The panel noted that there was no evidence before it that any other teacher had raised concerns regarding Mr Bees removing Pupil A from lessons, nor was there evidence of complaints from teaching staff regarding disruption to Pupil A's attendance in class.

The panel therefore concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, the evidence established a particular welfare-related conversation rather than a pattern of repeatedly removing Pupil A from lessons.

Accordingly, having considered all of the evidence, the panel was not satisfied that the TRA via the presenting officer had established that Mr Bees failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries by taking Pupil A out of lessons to check on her welfare. The panel therefore found allegation 1(l) not proved.

m) Suggested that Pupil A and/or Pupil B walk to the school to meet you for a chat on one occasion.

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees denied that he suggested Pupil A or Pupil B walking to the School to meet him for a chat.

The panel had regard to a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil B. On 16 June 2020, Pupil B sent an email to Mr Bees stating, "*Sir we're about to walk past*". Later that day, Mr Bees sent an email to Pupil B which stated, "*Thanks again for the visit, means a lot!*", to which she replied, "*Yeah it was good to see you*". Mr Bees emailed again that evening saying, "*Cake was delicious*".

The panel noted that the documentary evidence established that a visit to the School took place and that Mr Bees subsequently exchanged emails with the pupils regarding that visit. However, it did not evidence that he suggested Pupil A or Pupil B walk to the school to meet him for chat.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that he recalled the pupils proposing to visit the school during a remote learning period to drop off some cake. Mr Bees stated that he discussed the visit with a colleague and that he briefly spoke to the pupils outside the school with another colleague present.

The panel also considered the oral evidence of Pupil A. The panel noted that Pupil A gave evidence regarding the visit to the School and the surrounding circumstances. However, the panel did not consider that her evidence established that Mr Bees had suggested or invited the pupils to walk to the School to meet him. The panel considered that Pupil A's evidence was consistent with the pupils attending the School and speaking to Mr Bees but did not provide clear evidence that the idea for the visit originated from Mr Bees.

The panel further noted the submissions of the presenting officer. The presenting officer expressly acknowledged that there was no evidence in support of allegation 1(m) and invited the panel to find the allegation not proved. The presenting officer submitted that, in light of Pupil A's oral evidence, there was no longer sufficient evidence to establish that Mr Bees had suggested that Pupil A and/or Pupil B should walk to the School to meet him for a chat.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 1(m) not proved.

4. Between approximately 5 March 2020 and 10 March 2021 you did not maintain professional boundaries with Pupil C and/ or Pupil D and/ or Pupil E and / or Pupil F and / or G in that you:

a. Exchanged messages with one or more of those pupils that were not related to schoolwork;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he sent emails to Pupils C, D, E, F and G which were not related to their schoolwork and that this was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupils C, D, E, F and G.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil D between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted an email from Mr Bees to Pupil D on 8 June 2020 in which Mr Bees asked, "[REDACTED]?" The panel further noted an email from Mr Bees on 12 February 2021 in which he stated, "*Hope the [REDACTED] went well this morning (can a trip to the [REDACTED] ever go well? I used to hate it!)*"

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil E, and Mr Bees and Pupil C, between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted that Mr Bees exchanged emails with Pupil E and Pupil C in March 2021 in which they discussed plans and gifts for another teacher's 50th birthday party.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil F between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted an email from Mr Bees on 21 May 2020 in which he stated, *"It is lovely though, I'm sat outside having socially distanced lunch with a friend, and we are frying too! Make sure you've got your sun cream on"*, and another email on 24 June 2020 in which he mentioned his golf practice and cricket training. The panel also noted emails on 15 March 2021 in which Mr Bees and Pupil F discussed their favourite chocolates and Easter eggs.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil G between March 2020 and March 2021. On 1 April 2020, Mr Bees added a private comment to Google Classroom in which he stated, *"Glad to hear you're all well. Yep all good thanks - just very bored, might have to take a [REDACTED] and start going for a run!"* The panel noted emails exchanged between Mr Bees and Pupil G on Christmas Day 2020 in which Pupil G emailed Mr Bees *"happy birthday sir and merry christmas hope you have a good day"*, and Mr Bees replied, *"Thank you very kind of you to think of me and to email! Means a lot :) Merry Christmas to you too, hope you have a lovely day with your family."*

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that the communications with the pupils related to organising a birthday surprise for another member of staff, and he acknowledged that discussing matters such as flowers and gifts with students by email was inappropriate. Mr Bees stated that he had become caught up in the situation and had failed to maintain the standards expected of a teacher.

The panel also noted references to hair dye and other informal conversations not directly connected to schoolwork.

The panel accepted that a number of these communications were not directly related to schoolwork. However, the panel considered the broader context in which they occurred. The communications took place during the Covid-19 pandemic when schools were operating remotely, and teachers were encouraged to maintain pupil engagement and wellbeing. The panel accepted that a number of the discussions were intended to build rapport with pupils, encourage participation and maintain morale during a difficult period.

The panel considered that the examples relied upon were innocuous in nature and concerned ordinary topics such as swimming, sporting activities, weather, family life, hobbies and school events. Whilst they were not directly related to academic work, the panel was not satisfied that they demonstrated a failure to maintain professional boundaries.

The panel accepted that, had similar communications occurred outside the exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, and an increased use of emails and other forms of communications with pupils, a different conclusion may have been reached. However, viewed in their proper context, the panel did not consider the communications relied upon in this allegation to amount to a failure to maintain professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 4(a) not proved.

c. Allowed yourself to be photographed with one or more pupils and shared those photographs with one or more pupils;

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that Mr Bees admitted that he allowed himself to be photographed with Pupils C, D, E, and F, and shared those photographs with the pupils. He further admitted that doing so was a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil D between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted an announcement on Google Classroom on 17 December 2020 in which Mr Bees stated, *"You all looked awesome today! I've had a great day and hope you all have too! As per popular request, I have attached 2 photos from this morning."*

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil C, Mr Bees and Pupil E, and Mr Bees and Pupil F, between March 2020 and March 2021. On 10 March 2021, Mr Bees sent an email attaching photos of himself and pupils decorating a classroom to Pupil C, Pupil E and Pupil F, stating *"I've attached the photos below, thank you for all your help - I think ma'am has had a lovely day and seemed very emotional!"*.

The panel had sight of a bundle of email correspondence between Mr Bees and Pupil G between March 2020 and March 2021. The panel noted in particular an announcement on Google Classroom on 17 December 2020 in which Mr Bees stated, *"I've attached the group photo on here. If you had photos with me this afternoon, could you please email them to me so I can save them into a folder on the school drive (not my own personal device) to use as part of a [REDACTED] at the end of the year (which will unfortunately happen at some point)."*

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that the taking and sharing of photographs occurred in the context of arrangements for a birthday surprise for a member of staff. The panel noted Mr Bees' acceptance that, although his intentions were well-meaning and other staff were involved, he should not have been included in the photographs and should not have shared them.

He explained that the photographs were intended to form part of a [REDACTED] and that he had sought to ensure that any photographs were stored on the School drive rather than on his personal devices.

The panel noted that there are important considerations surrounding the taking and sharing of photographs of pupils. The panel further noted that some pupils may not have permission for their images to be shared and accepted that teachers should exercise considerable caution in this area. The panel also considered that, as a matter of good professional practice, teachers should generally avoid taking, collecting and circulating photographs involving pupils unless there is a clear educational purpose and appropriate authorisation. However, the panel distinguished between conduct which was unwise or contrary to best practice and conduct which amounted to a failure to maintain professional boundaries. The panel considered that the photographs in question were taken at school events, involved groups of pupils and staff, and were not covert, secretive or personal in nature. The panel further noted that the photographs were shared through school systems rather than personal social media accounts or personal devices.

Whilst the panel considered that Mr Bees should not have involved himself in gathering and distributing photographs in the manner described, it was not satisfied that the evidence demonstrated a blurring of teacher-pupil boundaries.

The panel therefore accepted that Mr Bees allowed himself to be photographed with pupils and shared those photographs. However, having considered the evidence as a whole, it was not satisfied that the TRA, via the presenting officer, had established that on the balance of probabilities this conduct amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegation 4(c) not proved.

6. Your conduct as may be proven with respect to Pupil A and/or Pupil B, as set out above at any or all of allegations 1a – 1m, 2a – b and/or 3a – c was sexually motivated.

The panel considered the statement of agreed and disputed facts signed on behalf of Mr Bees on 11 March 2026 and noted that he denied that his conduct towards either Pupil A or Pupil B was sexually motivated and that his intentions were *“to be an inspirational teacher admired for going above and beyond to make a difference in students’ lives.”*

The panel considered whether the conduct as 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 whether there was a "*plausible innocent explanation*" for Mr Bees' behaviour.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Mr Bees, who stated that although he accepted that he had exercised poor judgement, behaved in an overfamiliar manner, and failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, his intention had always been to support students academically and emotionally. He further stated that his enthusiasm to be an approachable and supportive teacher had clouded his judgment.

The panel accepted that Mr Bees' conduct was inappropriate, over-familiar and demonstrated poor professional judgement. However, the panel also accepted the Teacher's evidence that he wished to be regarded as a supportive and approachable teacher and that his motivation was to support pupils academically and emotionally.

The panel noted that there was no overtly sexual communication, no evidence of sexual gratification, no sexualised content within the emails and no evidence that Mr Bees sought a sexual relationship with any pupil.

The panel further noted that Pupil A did not regard Mr Bees' conduct towards her as flirtatious or romantic.

Having considered all of the evidence as a whole, the panel concluded that there was a plausible innocent explanation for Mr Bees' behaviour. Whilst his conduct represented a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, the panel was not satisfied that it was sexually motivated.

The panel gave careful consideration to the incident involving Pupil A's mobile phone and, in particular, Mr Bees' comment to the effect that "*it's not like I have asked you to touch anything else*". The panel accepted that the comment was inappropriate and demonstrated a significant lapse in professional judgement. The panel considered that placing a pupil's phone in his trouser pocket, inviting her to retrieve it and then making that comment crossed professional boundaries and was conduct which a reasonable teacher should have recognised as inappropriate.

However, the panel did not consider that the comment was made for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification or pursuing a sexual relationship. The panel accepted the evidence of Mr Bees that the comment was an ill-judged attempt at humour made in the course of what he described as "*banter*". The panel further noted that neither Pupil A nor

Pupil B suggested that they interpreted the incident as sexual in nature, and the panel accepted that the incident was not viewed in that way by those involved at the time.

The panel considered that the incident was better characterised as a serious example of professional boundaries being allowed to slip rather than conduct motivated by a sexual purpose. Whilst the panel regarded the comment as inappropriate and immature, it was not satisfied that it demonstrated a sexual motive.

Accordingly, whilst the panel relied upon the incident as evidence of poor judgement and a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, it did not regard it as supporting a finding that Mr Bees' conduct was sexually motivated.

The panel concluded that on the balance of probabilities, and viewing the allegations found proved as a whole, Mr Bees' conduct was not sexually motivated.

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

Having found a number 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 Bees, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Bees 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
- 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 it had not been provided with the Trust's full Code of Conduct, behaviour policies or other staff guidance documents, save for limited extracts contained within the disciplinary investigation report. The panel was also provided with some safeguarding and child protection guidance issued during the Covid-19 school closure period. The panel therefore exercised caution before concluding that conduct was

unacceptable solely because it may have been contrary to a particular internal policy or procedure.

The panel also had regard to the advice given to Mr Bees in June 2019, which expressly emphasised the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with pupils and exercising care in all interactions with young people. The panel was satisfied that the relevant standards expected of a teacher were sufficiently clear from the Teachers' Standards, the advice provided to Mr Bees in 2019 and the circumstances of the case as a whole.

In respect of allegation 5, the panel considered that the fact that Mr Bees engaged in boundary-crossing behaviour despite clear advice in 2019 regarding professional boundaries increased the seriousness of the conduct found proved under allegations 1 and 3.

The panel also considered whether Mr Bees' conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel considered the definition of unacceptable professional conduct as "*misconduct of a serious nature, falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher*".

In respect of allegation 1(a), the panel found that Mr Bees sent a significant volume of emails to Pupil A and Pupil B outside normal school hours, including late in the evening, at weekends and during school holiday periods. The panel found that this conduct amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. However, the panel also took account of the context in which the communications occurred. The communications took place during the Covid-19 pandemic when remote learning arrangements were in place and teachers were communicating with pupils more frequently through electronic means. The panel accepted that Mr Bees was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to provide educational and pastoral support to pupils during an exceptionally difficult period. The panel concluded that, whilst the timing and frequency of the emails were inappropriate and demonstrated poor professional judgement, the conduct did not amount to misconduct of a sufficiently serious nature to constitute unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(b), the panel found that Mr Bees engaged in a significant amount of correspondence with Pupil A and Pupil B which was unrelated to schoolwork and concerned personal matters and day-to-day activities. The panel considered that these communications contributed to a blurring of professional boundaries and were inappropriate. However, the panel accepted that much of the communication occurred

during lockdown, arose from Mr Bees' mentoring and pastoral role, and was not motivated by any improper purpose. Accordingly, whilst the conduct crossed professional boundaries, the panel did not consider that allegation 1(b), was serious enough to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(c), the panel found that Mr Bees had frequent telephone contact with Pupil A and Pupil B and that some conversations lasted for an inappropriate length of time. The panel noted that the calls occurred during the Covid-19 lockdown period and accepted that welfare contact with pupils formed part of Mr Bees' role. Whilst the panel considered that the frequency and duration of the calls exceeded what was professionally appropriate, it did not find that this allegation alone was sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(d), the panel found that Mr Bees allowed himself to be photographed with Pupil A and Pupil B and subsequently shared those photographs with them. The panel considered that the conduct demonstrated poor professional judgement and contributed to the overall blurring of boundaries. However, the photographs were taken in a school setting during school activities and were not inappropriate in content. The panel therefore concluded that allegation 1(d), did not amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(e), the panel found that Mr Bees placed his arm around Pupil A's waist whilst posing for a photograph. The panel considered that the conduct represented a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. However, the panel accepted that this was an isolated incident occurring during a group photograph and found no evidence that it was sexual in nature. The panel therefore concluded that allegation 1(e), was not sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(f), the panel found proved only that Mr Bees allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon. The panel considered this to be inappropriate horseplay and a lapse of professional judgement. However, it did not regard the conduct as sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(g), the panel found that Mr Bees hugged Pupil A on one occasion. The panel accepted that the incident occurred during an emotional period during Covid-19 and was not sexual in nature. Whilst the panel considered the conduct inappropriate and a failure to maintain professional boundaries, it did not regard the incident as sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 1(i), the panel found that Mr Bees touched Pupil A's hair on one occasion. The panel considered that such contact was ill-judged and represented a lapse in professional judgement. However, the panel noted that the allegation only referred to a singular incident. The panel noted it did not find that there was sufficient evidence to

demonstrate that Mr Bees stroked her hair. Whilst the panel considered that Mr Bees should not have touched a pupil's hair, it did not regard that the placing of items on her head or touching her hair on one occasion to amount to misconduct of a serious nature. The panel therefore concluded that allegation 1(i) did not amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegations 2(a) and 2(b), the panel found that Mr Bees purchased personalised coins for Pupils A and B. Whilst the panel considered the gifts inappropriate and a breach of professional boundaries, it did not consider the conduct sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegations 2(c) and 2(d), the panel found that gifts had been exchanged as alleged. The panel accepted that the items in question consisted primarily of low-value confectionery which were provided to, or shared amongst, groups of pupils rather than directed exclusively at an individual pupil. The panel considered that the provision of chocolates or similar treats to a class, tutor group or wider group of pupils was not uncommon within a school setting and did not of itself represent a serious departure from the standards expected of a teacher. The panel found no evidence that these items were provided with any improper motive or that Mr Bees expected anything in return. Accordingly, whilst allegations 2(c) and 2(d) were found proved as a matter of fact, the panel did not consider that the provision or receipt of such low-value items in the circumstances of this case amounted to unacceptable professional conduct.

In respect of allegation 4(b), the panel found that Mr Bees sent messages to pupils outside school hours. Whilst inappropriate, the panel accepted the wider Covid-19 context and did not consider the conduct, viewed in isolation, sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

In particular, the panel did not consider allegations 1(a)–(g), 2(a)–(d), or 4(b), viewed individually and in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, to be sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel further considered whether the allegations which it had found proved, but which it had not considered individually serious enough to amount to unacceptable professional conduct, could nevertheless amount to unacceptable professional conduct when considered cumulatively.

The panel took account of allegations 1(a)–(g), 1(i), 2(a)–(d) and 4(b), all of which involved some degree of poor judgement or failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The panel recognised that, when viewed collectively, the allegations demonstrated a pattern of informality and occasional lapses in judgement. However, the panel also had regard to the context in which much of the conduct occurred. A substantial proportion of the conduct took place during the Covid-19 pandemic when schools were operating under unprecedented conditions, teachers were required to

communicate with pupils remotely, and normal opportunities for pastoral interaction were significantly disrupted. The panel accepted that Mr Bees was attempting, albeit sometimes inappropriately, to support and encourage pupils during that period. The panel concluded that, even when considered together, the allegations which it had not individually characterised as serious misconduct did not reach the threshold of misconduct of a serious nature required for a finding of unacceptable professional conduct. Whilst the conduct demonstrated lapses in judgement and failures to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, the panel was not satisfied that those matters, whether viewed individually or cumulatively, fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel did, however, reach a different conclusion in relation to allegations 1(j), 1(k)(i), (ii) and (iii), and 3(a), (b) and (c).

In relation to allegation 1(j), the panel attached significant weight to Mr Bees deliberately sharing with Pupil A a meme stating *"Keep rolling your eyes, bitch. Maybe you'll find a brain back there."* The panel considered the use of the word *"bitch"* towards a pupil to be wholly inappropriate and inconsistent with the standards expected of a teacher. The panel further considered that the comment was deliberately targeted at an individual pupil and not necessary for any educational purpose.

In respect of allegation 1(k)(i), the panel found that Mr Bees made comments to Pupil A and Pupil B stating that he missed them. The panel accepted that Mr Bees made similar comments to wider groups of pupils during the Covid-19 lockdown period and that expressions of support, encouragement and missing pupils were not uncommon during that period. However, the panel considered that the repeated comments that he missed Pupil A and Pupil B contributed to the blurring of professional boundaries which had developed between Mr Bees and those pupils. The panel considered that Mr Bees had become over-involved in his relationship with Pupil A and Pupil B and had lost sight of the professional nature of that relationship.

In relation to allegation 1(k)(ii), the panel considered that comments to the effect that Pupil A and Pupil B *"meant too much"*, *"meant the world"* to him and references to friendship went beyond ordinary pastoral support and demonstrated that Mr Bees had lost sight of the professional nature of the teacher-pupil relationship.

In relation to allegation 1(k)(iii), the panel considered that discussions about ensuring that the pupils would not become *"strangers"* and maintaining contact after they [REDACTED] demonstrated a desire to preserve a personal connection beyond the ordinary teacher-pupil relationship and crossed professional boundaries.

In relation to allegation 3, the panel considered that placing a pupil's telephone in his trouser pocket and commenting *"come and get it"* and that *"it's not like I've asked you to touch anything else"* represented a serious lapse in professional judgement. Whilst the

panel did not find the comment sexually motivated, it considered the wording inappropriate, capable of carrying sexual overtones and wholly unsuitable in a teacher-pupil context.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that some of the conduct of Mr Bees 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 Bees was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct in relation to allegations 1(j), 1(k) (i), (ii) and (iii), and 3.

In relation to whether Mr Bees' 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 Bees' 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 Bees was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

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

In respect of allegation 1(a), the panel found that Mr Bees sent emails to Pupil A and Pupil B at inappropriate times, including during school holidays, weekends and outside normal school hours. Whilst the panel considered that this crossed professional boundaries, it accepted that the conduct occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic when remote learning arrangements were in place and communication between teachers and pupils was necessarily more frequent. The panel did not consider that an objective member of the public, aware of the context, would regard this conduct as sufficiently serious to bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(b), the panel found that Mr Bees engaged in personal and informal discussions with Pupil A and Pupil B which were unrelated to schoolwork. Whilst inappropriate and contributing to a blurring of professional boundaries, the panel did not consider that these discussions were conduct likely to diminish public confidence in the profession.

In respect of allegation 1(c), the panel found that Mr Bees spoke to Pupil A and Pupil B with an inappropriate frequency and for inappropriate lengths of time. However, the panel accepted that the calls occurred during periods of remote learning, were made through school channels, and were motivated by welfare concerns. The panel therefore did not find that this allegation amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(d), the panel found that Mr Bees allowed himself to be photographed with Pupil A and Pupil B and subsequently shared those photographs. Whilst the panel considered that this demonstrated poor judgement, the photographs were taken during school activities, were shared through school systems and were not inappropriate in content. The panel therefore did not find that this allegation amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(e), the panel found that Mr Bees placed his arm around Pupil A's waist during a photograph. The panel considered that this crossed professional boundaries but was an isolated incident occurring in the context of a group photograph. The panel did not consider that this single incident would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(f), the panel found that Mr Bees allowed Pupil B to hit him with a balloon. The panel regarded this as inappropriate horseplay but not sufficiently serious to damage public confidence in the profession.

In respect of allegation 1(g), the panel found that Mr Bees hugged Pupil A on one occasion. The panel accepted that the incident occurred in an emotional context during Covid-19 and was not sexual in nature. The panel did not consider that an isolated hug in those circumstances amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(i), the panel found that Mr Bees touched Pupil A's hair on one occasion. Whilst the panel considered the conduct ill-judged and inappropriate, it found that the incident was isolated, brief and not sexual in nature. The panel did not consider that this allegation was sufficiently serious to bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(j), the panel reached a different conclusion. The panel attached particular significance to Mr Bees deliberately sharing a meme with Pupil A that contained the words *"Keep rolling your eyes, bitch. Maybe you'll find a brain back there."* The panel considered that the use of the word *"bitch"* when communicating with a pupil was wholly inappropriate. The panel further considered that the comment was directed personally at a vulnerable pupil whom Mr Bees was mentoring. The panel concluded that an objective member of the public would be concerned by a teacher communicating with a pupil in this way and therefore found that allegation 1(j) amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(k)(i), the panel found that Mr Bees repeatedly told Pupil A and Pupil B that he missed them. Whilst the panel accepted that similar comments were made to wider groups of pupils during lockdown, it considered that, when viewed together with the wider pattern of communications, the comments contributed to an increasingly personal relationship. The panel therefore found that allegation 1(k)(i) amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(k)(ii), the panel attached significant weight to comments stating that Pupil A and Pupil B "*meant the world*" to him, "*meant too much*" to him, and references to friendship. The panel considered that members of the public would expect teachers to maintain professional boundaries with pupils. The panel concluded that these comments went beyond acceptable pastoral encouragement and amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 1(k)(iii), the panel considered that discussing future contact with pupils after they left school and seeking reassurance that they would not become "*strangers*" was inconsistent with maintaining a professional teacher-pupil relationship. The panel concluded that members of the public would be concerned by a teacher discussing the continuation of a personal relationship after pupils had left school. Accordingly, the panel found that allegation 1(k)(iii) amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegations 2(a) and 2(b), the panel found that Mr Bees purchased personalised "*lucky coin*" gifts for Pupil A and Pupil B. Whilst the panel considered that those gifts crossed professional boundaries, it did not consider them sufficiently serious, viewed in isolation, to bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegations 2(c) and 2(d), the panel noted that these allegations largely concerned low-value confectionery and chocolates shared amongst groups of pupils. The panel did not consider that such conduct would be viewed by the public as bringing the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 3, the panel attached considerable weight to the circumstances in which Mr Bees placed Pupil A's telephone in his trouser pocket and then commented "*it's not like I've asked you to touch anything else.*" The panel accepted that the conduct was not sexually motivated. However, it considered the comment inappropriate, capable of carrying sexual overtones and wholly unsuitable in a teacher-pupil context. The panel concluded that members of the public would be concerned by such conduct and therefore found that allegations 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 4(b), the panel found that Mr Bees communicated with a number of pupils outside normal school hours. Whilst the panel considered that this was inappropriate, it accepted the wider context of the Covid-19 pandemic and did not regard

the conduct as sufficiently serious to amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In respect of allegation 5, the panel did not regard this as a freestanding act of misconduct. Rather, it considered the allegation to be an aggravating feature which increased the seriousness of the conduct found proved elsewhere. The panel therefore did not make a separate finding of disrepute in relation to allegation 5 itself.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Bees' actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in respect of allegations 1(j), 1(k) (i), (ii) and (iii), and 3.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

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

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Bees, which involved sending inappropriate messages including to pupils through shared online documents, including a targeted and inappropriate comment directed at Pupil A, repeatedly telling Pupil A and Pupil B that he missed them, making comments to the effect that they meant a great deal to him and "*the world*" to him, expressing a desire to remain in contact with them [REDACTED] and the incident in which he placed Pupil A's mobile telephone in his trouser pocket, invited her to retrieve it and made comments to the effect of "*come and get it*" and "*it's not like I have asked you to touch anything else*", there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and 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 Bees 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 Bees 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 Bees in the profession.

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 Bees.

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.

In relation to safeguarding and wellbeing, the panel accepted that a number of the findings concerned failures to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and that such conduct has the potential to create safeguarding concerns. However, the panel was not satisfied that the misconduct found proved had seriously affected the education or wellbeing of the pupils concerned. The panel noted that the conduct was not found to be sexually motivated and there was no evidence that Mr Bees sought to pursue a sexual or romantic relationship with either pupil. The panel also considered the evidence of Pupil A, who stated: *"I don't think Mr Bees' behaviour imposes any risks for staff or pupils at the School..."* and *"I never felt worried about him..."*

Whilst the panel did not regard the views of the pupils as determinative, it noted the absence of evidence that either pupil considered themselves to have been placed at risk of harm. The panel further noted that a substantial part of Mr Bees' conduct, albeit misguided and inappropriate, arose from a desire to provide support and reassurance to pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel therefore concluded that, whilst the misconduct involved boundary failures and poor judgement, it did not amount to misconduct seriously affecting the education, safeguarding or wellbeing of pupils and did not demonstrate a continuing risk of that nature.

The panel likewise considered whether the misconduct amounted to an abuse of trust. The panel concluded that it did not. Whilst the panel found that Mr Bees plainly failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and lost sight of the proper nature of the teacher-pupil relationship, the panel did not find that he deliberately exploited his position for personal gain, gratification or advantage. Rather, the panel considered that the misconduct arose from over-familiarity, poor judgement, emotional over-investment in certain pupils and an inappropriate blurring of professional boundaries. The panel regarded the conduct as misplaced and unprofessional but did not consider it amounted to an abuse of his position of trust.

The panel considered the submissions made by the presenting officer that the conduct represented a serious departure from the standards expected of a teacher and in particular that the findings under allegations 1(j), 1(k) and 3 demonstrated the importance of maintaining clear professional boundaries. The panel accepted that the misconduct was aggravated by the fact that Mr Bees had previously received management advice in 2019 emphasising the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with pupils and nevertheless engaged in further boundary-crossing behaviour.

The panel had regard to the Advice, which states that panels should attach appropriate weight and seriousness to online behaviours, including online misconduct, facilitating online abuse, and facilitating inappropriate relationships, whether those relationships remain online or progress into direct contact. The panel noted that whilst Mr Bees failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and lost sight of the proper nature of the teacher-pupil relationship, the panel did not find that he sought to exploit his position of trust for personal gain, gratification or advantage. Nor did the panel find that he engaged in covert behaviour. The communications took place through school systems, school email accounts and school telephone with conversations going through the parents, rather than through hidden or private channels. The panel considered that the misconduct arose from over-familiarity, immaturity and poor professional judgement which led Mr Bees to lose sight of appropriate professional boundaries and to describe aspects of his relationship with pupils in terms more akin to friendship.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order may 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 Bees' actions were not deliberate. The panel found the conduct found proved was deliberate. The panel also had regard to the fact that Mr Bees had previously received a letter of management advice in June 2019 concerning the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with pupils. The panel considered that Mr Bees was therefore on notice of the need to exercise particular care in this area. The conduct found proved demonstrated a failure to act consistently with that

advice and the panel took this into account when assessing the seriousness of the misconduct and the public interest considerations arising in the case.

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

However, the panel accepted that the misconduct occurred between 2020 and 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when Mr Bees was a newly qualified teacher in the earliest stage of his professional career. The panel accepted that the pandemic created unprecedented challenges for teachers and pupils and significantly altered the nature of teaching, pupil contact and pastoral support. Whilst those circumstances did not excuse the misconduct, the panel considered them part of the overall context in which it occurred.

[REDACTED]. Mr Bees described experiencing loneliness, social isolation and [REDACTED] during periods of lockdown and remote working. He stated that he became heavily invested in supporting pupils and that the distinction between his personal and professional life became blurred.

The panel was not presented with evidence that Mr Bees had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

However, the panel had regard to the evidence before it regarding Mr Bees' abilities as a teacher, his commitment to pupils and his positive contribution to education and young people. The panel also had regard to the evidence demonstrating his continued responsible involvement with young people in community sport since leaving teaching.

The panel considered a number of character references submitted on behalf of Mr Bees, which pertained to his professional conduct, his contribution to the profession, and his history and ability as a teacher. The panel particularly noted the following:

- *“Throughout our years working together, I was consistently impressed by James’ dedication, integrity, and passion for teaching. He went the extra mile to ensure each child felt valued and supported, adapting his teaching to meet diverse needs and learning styles. This commitment fostered a positive and inclusive classroom atmosphere that encouraged students to actively engage in their learning journey... His natural empathy and strong sense of responsibility made him exceptionally well-suited to working with young people, helping them build both confidence in mathematics and a positive outlook on learning.”*
- *“James’ reliability and professionalism have made him an invaluable member of our school community. He was always willing to offer support, whether it was assisting colleagues with lesson planning or helping students who needed*

additional guidance. He developed strong, respectful, professional relationships with both his students and colleagues, creating an environment where students felt safe, understood, and encouraged to excel.”

Individual A, teacher and [REDACTED]

- *“In my role as [REDACTED], and as a teacher, I am trained to recognise appropriate conduct, professional boundaries, and the behaviours expected of adults working with young people. Although I have not observed James in a school environment, my professional experience allows me to assess how adults interact with children and young people in any setting. Based on this, I have always found James to demonstrate a strong understanding of safeguarding expectations. He follows [REDACTED] procedures consistently and also helps to reinforce them with others. He is a positive role model for our younger players and consistently demonstrates excellent character on and off the pitch.”*
- *“When the allegations arose, James came to speak to me and [REDACTED] entirely of his own accord. He did not have to do this, but he chose to be open and honest. He was emotional, reflective, and showed genuine maturity in the way he approached the situation. Over the years, I have had many conversations with him—initially as safeguarding officer, assessing his wellbeing and mental health, and later as a friend. It is clear that the experience affected him deeply and has changed him. He recognises that he was a young teacher at the time and, in many ways, naïve.”*

Individual B, teacher [REDACTED]

- *“Although I cannot comment with specificity about James’s experience of teaching during this period, my experience of James lead me to believe that he will have felt a responsibility to do all he could to support the students that he was asked to support and will have adapted and risen to this challenge. The extreme and unprecedented nature of the scenario by which James undertook his first year of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was unusual to say the least.”*

Individual D, teacher and [REDACTED]

The panel noted the evidence describing him as a dedicated teacher who was committed to supporting pupils, maintained positive relationships with colleagues and young people, and had demonstrated maturity, openness and reflection since the incidents in question. The panel also noted evidence of his ongoing positive contribution through his involvement in community cricket, including roles involving safeguarding responsibilities and mentoring young people.

The panel further took account of the letters and cards from pupils and parents contained within the bundle, which reflected appreciation for the support, encouragement and commitment that Mr Bees had shown to pupils during his time as a teacher.

The panel further noted that Mr Bees had consistently acknowledged his misconduct throughout the proceedings. The panel attached significant weight to his admissions, his written reflections and his oral evidence. The panel was satisfied that he had demonstrated a detailed understanding of the failings in his conduct, the safeguarding implications of boundary violations, and the power imbalance inherent in teacher-pupil relationships. In particular, the panel noted his reflections regarding self-disclosure, professional boundaries and the unequal power dynamic between a teacher and a pupil.

The panel considered it significant that, when questioned during the school's disciplinary process, Mr Bees stated that he had been "*over enthusiastic*", felt "*silly, ashamed and embarrassed*" and maintained that his intention had only ever been to support pupils. The panel noted that this acknowledgement was made at an early stage and before many of the detailed reflections subsequently produced.

The panel considered Mr Bees' statement of reflection in which he accepted full responsibility for failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and acknowledged that his conduct was unprofessional, naïve and immature. He stated that he recognised that his desire to be a supportive and popular teacher, combined with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, led him to become over-invested in relationships with pupils and to lose sight of professional boundaries. The panel noted that Mr Bees outlined steps he had taken to remediate his practice and stated that in his new role in finance management and his voluntary role at a cricket club, he has maintained appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel was particularly assisted by his later reflections, in which he acknowledged that he had become overly invested in supporting particular pupils, had disclosed too much of himself to students and had allowed boundaries to become blurred.

The panel also attached weight to the steps undertaken by Mr Bees to remediate his conduct, including completion of a professional boundaries course and safeguarding training.

The panel accepted that Mr Bees' conduct represented serious lapses in judgment and significant failures to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. However, the panel considered that the misconduct arose from over-familiarity, immaturity and poor professional judgment rather than predatory intent or exploitation.

The panel noted that approximately five years had elapsed since the misconduct occurred. During that period there had been no evidence of any repetition of similar behaviour. The panel was satisfied that Mr Bees had maintained appropriate professional

boundaries in both his subsequent employment and his voluntary work with young people. In all the circumstances, the panel considered the risk of repetition to be low.

The panel also considered his reflections in which he acknowledged that failing properly to address his own wellbeing also contributed to his misconduct and that he now better understands the importance of seeking support and maintaining appropriate boundaries.

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 noted Mr Bees stated that there were a number of factors which contributed to his misconduct, including his status as a newly qualified teacher, the challenges of teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic, uncertainty around remote learning arrangements, and difficulties with his own wellbeing during lockdown. The panel noted Mr Bees' expressions of remorse and his extensive reflection on his conduct, which he acknowledged could have been perceived as inappropriate regardless of his intentions. He accepted that that he failed to appreciate the safeguarding risks and the power imbalance between a teacher and pupils at the time. The panel was satisfied that Mr Bees had developed significant insight into his misconduct, understood why his behaviour was inappropriate and had taken meaningful steps to reduce the risk of any recurrence. The panel was satisfied that Mr Bees had moved beyond simply accepting the allegations and had demonstrated a deeper understanding of why his conduct was inappropriate and the effect it could have on pupils, colleagues, parents and public confidence in the profession.

The panel further noted that Mr Bees had openly disclosed the allegations and proceedings to individuals and organisations involved in his life after leaving teaching, including those at his cricket club and his current employer. The panel considered this openness and transparency to be a positive indicator of insight and maturity. The panel contrasted this with Mr Bees' earlier failure to appreciate the significance of the management advice he received in 2019 and considered that he now appeared to understand the seriousness of the issues that had arisen.

The panel noted that he had accepted responsibility for the conduct found proved, expressed genuine remorse and had reflected extensively upon the impact of his actions.

Taken together, the panel considered that the evidence demonstrated genuine remorse, substantial reflection and meaningful remediation. It was satisfied that Mr Bees had developed a significantly greater appreciation of professional boundaries, safeguarding responsibilities and the importance of maintaining an appropriate teacher-pupil relationship than he had at the time of the misconduct.

Having balanced all of the relevant factors, the panel concluded that, whilst the misconduct was serious, it did not reach the threshold at which a prohibition order was necessary.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel recommends that no prohibition order be imposed.

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 sanction.

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

In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations proven and found that some of those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In this case, the panel has also found some of the allegations not proven, and/or found that some allegations do not amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr James Bees 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
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher failing to maintain proper professional boundaries with his pupils.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher.

I have also asked myself whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Bees, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

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

“Whilst the panel did not regard the views of the pupils as determinative, it noted the absence of evidence that either pupil considered themselves to have been placed at risk of harm. The panel further noted that a substantial part of Mr Bees’ conduct, albeit misguided and inappropriate, arose from a desire to provide support and reassurance to pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel therefore concluded that, whilst the misconduct involved boundary failures and poor judgement, it did not amount to misconduct seriously affecting the education, safeguarding or wellbeing of pupils and did not demonstrate a continuing risk of that nature.”

I have given some weight to this evidence in my considerations.

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

“The panel considered Mr Bees’ statement of reflection in which he accepted full responsibility for failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and acknowledged that his conduct was unprofessional, naïve and immature. He stated that he recognised that his desire to be a supportive and popular teacher, combined with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, led him to become over-invested in relationships with pupils and to lose sight of professional boundaries. The panel noted that Mr Bees outlined steps he had taken to remediate his practice and stated that in his new role in finance management and his voluntary role at a cricket club, he has maintained appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel was particularly assisted by his later reflections, in which he acknowledged that he had become overly invested in supporting particular pupils, had disclosed too much of himself to students and had allowed boundaries to become blurred.”

The panel also comments:

“The panel noted that approximately five years had elapsed since the misconduct occurred. During that period there had been no evidence of any repetition of similar behaviour. The panel was satisfied that Mr Bees had maintained appropriate professional boundaries in both his subsequent employment and his voluntary work

with young people. In all the circumstances, the panel considered the risk of repetition to be low.”

Given the evidence of insight identified by the panel, I agree with it that the risk of the repetition of this behaviour appears to be low. I have therefore given this element some 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 makes this observation:

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding in this case of a teacher failing to maintain proper boundaries with pupils, particularly having had the benefit of guidance and advice on such matters, and the impact that such a finding may have on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Bees himself. The panel offers these comments:

“The panel noted the evidence describing him as a dedicated teacher who was committed to supporting pupils, maintained positive relationships with colleagues and young people, and had demonstrated maturity, openness and reflection since the incidents in question. The panel also noted evidence of his ongoing positive contribution through his involvement in community cricket, including roles involving safeguarding responsibilities and mentoring young people.

The panel further took account of the letters and cards from pupils and parents contained within the bundle, which reflected appreciation for the support, encouragement and commitment that Mr Bees had shown to pupils during his time as a teacher.”

In making my decision I have considered and given weight to the panel's concluding comments:

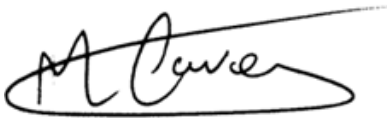
"Having balanced all of the relevant factors, the panel concluded that, whilst the misconduct was serious, it did not reach the threshold at which a prohibition order was necessary.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession."

In particular, I have noted and given weight to the panel's assessment of the relative seriousness of the misconduct found as being "*....at the less serious end of the possible spectrum*".

I have also noted and given weight to the extensive evidence of insight and remorse found by the panel, its assessment of the risk of repetition as "low", and the mitigating factors it has identified.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 17 August 2026

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