



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr James Thomas: Professional conduct panel 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 Thomas

Teacher ref number: 3757141

Teacher date of birth: 17 July 1992

TRA reference: 20018

Date of determination: 12 August 2026

Former employer: Shrewsbury House School, Surbiton, Surrey

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 10 to 12 August 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of James Thomas.

The panel members were Mr Paul Millett (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Lucy Conley (teacher panellist) and Ms Katie Dent (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Helen Kitchen of Blake Morgan, solicitors.

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

Mr James Thomas was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public, save that portions of the hearing were heard in private, and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 18 May 2026 as amended by way of a preliminary application at the outset of the hearing as agreed by the panel:

1. While employed as a teacher at Shrewsbury House School ("Shrewsbury House"):
 - a. Between August 2018 and August 2019, he used his personal mobile phone to exchange personal text messages with Pupil A;
 - b. In or around March 2019, he engaged in sexual activity with Pupil A, namely:
 - i. He kissed Pupil A on her cheek and / or neck;
 - ii. He touched the middle of Pupil A's chest and / or her waist;
 - c. On one or more unknown dates between June 2019 and September 2019, whilst at Pupil A's home, he:
 - i. Told Pupil A that she made him "hard" or words to that effect
 - ii. Told Pupil A that she looked "sexy" or words to that effect
 - iii. Placed the hand of Pupil A onto his erect penis;
 - iv. Touched Pupil A's breasts;
 - v. Touched Pupil A's bottom.
 - vi. Kissed Pupil A;
 - vii. Told Pupil A she could not wear a dress because he would "rip it off" or words to that effect.
 - viii. Told Pupil that her swimming costume was "sexy" or words to that effect.
 - ix. Told Pupil A that if she really liked him, she would come to his room naked
 - x. Told Pupil A to deny and / or conceal his relationship with her, or words to that effect
 - d. His actions at allegation 1(c)(x) above demonstrate a lack of integrity.

2. While employed as a Music Assistant at Bedales Schools, Petersfield ["Bedales"], between September 2010 and September 2012, he engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B, in that he:
 - a. Engaged in flirtatious behaviour with Pupil B;
 - b. In response to Pupil B telling him that she fancied him said "Let's wait and see" or words to that effect;
 - c. Made sexual innuendoes in the presence of Pupil B.
3. While working as a Visiting Music Teacher (piano and saxophone) at Bishop Luffa School, Chichester ["Bishop Luffa"], between December 2012 and March 2015, he engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B, in that:
 - a. He kissed Pupil B;
 - b. He touched Pupil B's breasts;
 - c. He forced and/or allowed Pupil B to perform oral sex upon him on one or more occasions;
 - d. He touched Pupil B between her legs;
 - e. He removed all of his clothing to enter a shower Pupil B was in;
 - f. He inserted one or more fingers into Pupil B's vagina;
 - g. He attempted to put his penis into Pupil B's vagina on one or more occasion.
4. His behaviour as set out as may be found proven at allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2, and 3 above was sexually motivated.

Mr Thomas had not responded to the allegations. In the absence of a response from Mr Thomas the allegations were considered as not admitted.

As Mr Thomas had made no admissions to the allegations it was considered that he had made no admissions to his actions amounting 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, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 6

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 19

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 20 to 144

Section 4: Other relevant documents – page 145 to 429

- an amended pupil identification list – page 1 only
- a CMH decision made in the matter on 9 July 2026 – pages 1 to 9
- service and supplementary Bundle – pages 2 to 84
- proposed updated allegation – page 1 to 2

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents provided to it in advance of the hearing.

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

Witnesses

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

Pupil A, [REDACTED]

Pupil B, [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In 2009/2010, Mr Thomas was in his final year of sixth form at Bedales School. [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

In September 2010, Mr Thomas commenced employment as a Music Assistant at Bedales School.

Between October 2010 and 2012, alleged inappropriate conduct between Mr Thomas and Pupil B is said to have taken place.

From December 2012 to March 2015, Mr Thomas was employed as a visiting Music Teacher at Bishop Luffa School. He allegedly maintained a relationship with Pupil B.

In the academic year 2017/2018, Mr Thomas was employed on a fixed term contract at Oundle School. Whilst working there he met Pupil A and Pupil A's family.

From August 2018, Mr Thomas was alleged to be involved in inappropriate conduct with Pupil A.

From September 2018, Mr Thomas commenced employment as a Director of Music at Shrewsbury House School.

In March 2019 and between June and September 2019, Mr Thomas was alleged to be involved in inappropriate activity with Pupil A.

On 18 August 2020, Pupil B reported concerns about Mr Thomas' previous conduct towards them to the police (West Sussex) and an investigation was commenced.

In September 2020, Pupil A reported concerns about Mr Thomas' conduct towards them to their counsellor. Mr Thomas was suspended and interviewed by the police about his conduct towards Pupil A.

On 11 October 2020, Pupil A was interviewed by the police (Northamptonshire).

On 8 December 2020, the police investigation into concerns relating to Mr Thomas' conduct towards Pupil B was closed with no further action.

On 9 December 2020, Mr Thomas' employment at Shrewsbury House School came to an end.

On 13 January 2021 Mr Thomas had an appeal meeting at Shrewsbury House School.

On 22 March 2021, Mr Thomas was interviewed again by the police about his conduct towards Pupil A.

On 31 March 2021, Mr Thomas informed Shrewsbury House School that all allegations against him had been formally dropped by the police.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact were as follows:

The panel considered and accepted the legal advice provided.

In its consideration of the case the panel;

- had regard to Mr Thomas' good character; he had had no previous TRA findings against him;
- in its consideration of the allegations based on factual matters, applied the civil standard of proof, the balance of probabilities;
- noted that there was no burden of proof on Mr Thomas;
- noted that Mr Thomas had denied the allegation of sexual conduct with Pupil A that had been put to him by the police and had provided the police with an explanation for at least some of the allegations relating to this pupil before the panel. No evidence had been put before the panel that Mr Thomas had been interviewed by the police about the allegations related to Pupil B; and
- noted that Mr Thomas had made no response to the allegations put to him by the TRA.

Whilst the panel went on to consider the evidence of the pupil witnesses in relation to the individual allegations before it, it initially gave careful consideration to the credibility of the pupil witnesses.

The panel found Pupil A and Pupil B's evidence to be clear, credible and compelling. It found that their evidence under affirmation was consistent with the evidence in their witness statements to the TRA and with their accounts to the police. The panel considered that the accounts provided by both pupils were cohesive and provided a credible narrative of the incidents under scrutiny by the panel. The pupils' accounts appeared measured and straightforward. Pupil B was clear when they were not able to recall details and when they were unable to explain the content of particular texts that were identified to them. Both pupils explained clearly the impact of Mr Thomas' behaviour upon them. Pupil A was clear that although, at Mr Thomas' insistence and in order to protect him, they had at one time denied their relationship with him, they had no reason not to be honest with the panel or to make up a false account.

The panel found both pupils to be truthful witnesses.

The panel was aware that the pupils had not raised their concerns until sometime after the relevant events took place. The panel found Pupil A's explanation for coming forward that they had spoken to a counsellor who had reported the matter on, to be credible. It also found Pupil B's account of their internalisation of what had taken place and their growing realisation of the serious nature of Mr Thomas' conduct towards them, which led to them reporting the matter to the police, to be credible.

The panel noted that there was no evidence of collusion or communication between Pupils A and B. They were in different geographical areas, and different age groups and

were not at the same school. There was no evidence that their accounts could, or had, been impacted by contact between them.

On that basis the panel considered that it could take the evidence of Pupil B into account when assessing the credibility and reliability of Pupil A's account where it was satisfied that there was sufficient connection and similarity between the facts of the allegations made by the two pupils.

The panel was aware that some of the matters within the allegations were alleged to have taken place whilst Mr Thomas was working as a Music Assistant at Bedales School. In that capacity it is arguable that Mr Thomas did not fall directly within the definition of a teacher for the purposes of the TRA's proceedings.

The panel noted that in his Music Assistant role Mr Thomas was subject to the same Code of Conduct for Staff and duties to safeguard children as other staff at Bedales School.

The panel noted the case of *Zebaida [2016] EWHC 1181 (Admin)* in which a challenge had been made to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State for Education to make a decision on a prohibition. This was based on the appellant not having been "employed or engaged to carry out teaching work" when the issue of concern in that case had arisen and when an investigation by the TRA was begun. In that case Judge Molyneux had stated:

"A common sense and plain reading of the legislation allows for referral to the Secretary of State of a person who is employed or engaged in teaching (whenever the conduct giving rise to concern takes place) or who was so employed or engaged at the time the conduct complained of take place or comes to light. This is what the words say and what the principles in re M [1994] 2AC 424 enables".

On this basis the panel considered that it had jurisdiction to consider the part of the case that related to the period when Mr Thomas was a Music Assistant. He was employed as a teacher at the time the complaint about his conduct that was referred to the TRA came to light.

In recording its consideration of the following allegations, the panel addressed them in the order set out in the Notice of Hearing (as amended) and not in the chronological order of the allegations as presented by the TRA.

The panel moved to consider the individual allegations.

1. While employed as a teacher at Shrewsbury House School ("Shrewsbury House"):

a. Between August 2018 and August 2019, you used your personal mobile phone to exchange personal text messages with Pupil A;

The Panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil A, which it accepted.

Taking account of Pupil A's TRA statement, the evidence they provided to the police and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that;

- Pupil A had met Mr Thomas in around September/October 2017 [REDACTED] and he was around 25, [REDACTED] when he was a music teacher at Oundle School. They had gone to observe a [REDACTED] at the school who was quite friendly with Mr Thomas. Pupil A thought that Mr Thomas was "cool". He was much younger than other teachers.
- The following academic year Pupil A had been provided with a telephone number by [REDACTED]. He told them that this belonged to someone they could call if they were "down". It turned out to be Mr Thomas' number. They had subsequently spoken to him a couple of times a week as someone they could "vent at and complain to".
- The communication developed slowly with Mr Thomas validating their feelings, "*you deserve so much better*" and became slightly sexual, him complimenting them on their appearance and telling them they were beautiful. It moved on to him communicating things to them like they had "*a perfect body*" and "*if only you were older*" and "*if only you were 16 we could have sex*". It didn't feel weird to Pupil A as the communication developed so gradually. Pupil A enjoyed the attention and said they had a crush on Mr Thomas. However, the topics of Mr Thomas' communications started to make them feel anxious. The romantic and sexual topics were initiated by Mr Thomas.
- Pupil A told the panel that some of the messages exchanged were by text, some by Facebook messenger and, in 2019, they and Mr Thomas communicated by Snapchat.
- That the police record of Pupil A's account to them referred to text messages having been exchanged between them and Mr Thomas.

The panel had not had sight of the messages exchanged but drew the inference from the above evidence that the messaging included exchanges of personal text messages via Facebook messenger and/or other messaging.

On this basis the panel found allegation 1(a) proven.

- b. In or around March 2019, you engaged in sexual activity with Pupil A, namely:**
- i. You kissed Pupil A on her cheek and/or neck;**
 - ii. You touched the middle of Pupil A's chest and/or her waist;**

The Panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil A, which it accepted.

Taking account of Pupil A's TRA statement, the evidence they provided to the police and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that;

- Mr Thomas had been invited to Pupil A's home to celebrate their relative's birthday. That was why Pupil A was clear about the date. Mr Thomas being invited was not unusual as he had a friendship with the relative and Pupil A's parents thought that he was a good influence. [REDACTED].
- Pupil A had come home from school tired and had "half fallen asleep" in an armchair in the sitting room.
- When they were alone in the sitting room, Mr Thomas had knelt down in front of Pupil A and kissed them quite softly on their neck and cheek and touched their middle chest, skin on skin, and their waist. They were wearing a V-neck dress at the time. Pupil A described the touching as a stroke. Mr Thomas had then taken Pupil A up to their bedroom and left.
- Pupil A could not quite believe what had happened and indicated that they were "sort of bit delirious" (sic). In their oral evidence Pupil A clarified that they meant that they had just woken up. They confirmed that they could not believe what had happened because they were shocked by it, not that they were unclear about what had taken place.

Mr Thomas' account in his police interview that Pupil A had been drinking on this occasion was put to Pupil A. They strongly denied this. They felt that this was a slur upon them as they were only young, [REDACTED], at the time and only drank limited alcohol, with their parents' permission, on special occasions. They accepted that they may have been given one glass of champagne but that was all. Pupil A also denied that they could have been wrong or mistaken about what had happened. The panel accepted Pupil A's response and, after considering this response, placed no reliance at all on the comments made by Mr Thomas as recorded in his police interview on this point.

Taking account of this evidence, the panel found allegation 1(b) proven.

- c. On one or more unknown dates between June 2019 and September 2019, whilst at Pupil A's home, you:**
- i. Told Pupil A that she made you "hard" or words to that effect;**
 - ii. Told Pupil A that she looked "sexy" or words to that effect;**
 - iii. Placed the hand of Pupil A onto your erect penis;**
 - iv. Touched Pupil A's breasts;**
 - v. Touched Pupil A's bottom;**
 - vi. Kissed Pupil A.**

The panel found these allegations proven based on the evidence of Pupil A, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil A's TRA witness statement, their account to the police and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that:

- Mr Thomas had stayed at Pupil A's parents' home for up to two weeks in the summer of 2019 possibly at the invitation of Pupil A's relative. [REDACTED].
- Mr Thomas went to the pub one night and came back smelling of cigarettes and beer.
- Pupil A was wearing a [REDACTED], and he told Pupil A about how "hard" they made him and how "sexy" they looked.
- As they were sitting on Pupil A's bed Mr Thomas took Pupil's A's hand by the wrist and placed their hand on his erect penis. Pupil A removed their hand.
- Mr Thomas then started touching their breasts through the neckline of their [REDACTED] and touching their "bum" either under, or through, the [REDACTED].
- Mr Thomas and Pupil A then stood up and were in the doorway between Pupil A's bedroom and the bathroom. He took Pupil A's hand by the wrist and put it down his shorts so Pupil A was touching his penis. This was just for a few seconds. He kissed them on their mouth using his tongue and touched their "boobs" and their "bum". Then he said goodnight and went to bed. The panel noted that this was not in Pupil A's statement to the TRA but considered that it was consistent with Mr Thomas reported conduct towards Pupil A and was contained in an account that was taken some time closer to the events in question than the TRA statement. The panel noted that the account was exhibited to Pupil A's statement which was

adopted by Pupil A under affirmation at the hearing. On this basis the panel accepted this evidence.

- This incident contrasted with how romantic things had been before and Pupil A found what had happened uncomfortable and unpleasant. However, Pupil A still had an “intense desire” to make him like them and so kissed him afterwards.

Taking this evidence into account, the panel found allegations 1(c)(i), 1(c)(ii), 1(c)(iii), 1(c)(iv), 1(c)(v) and 1(c)(vi) proven.

vii. Told Pupil A she could not wear a dress because you would “rip it off” or words to that effect;

viii. Told Pupil A that her swimming costume was “sexy” or words to that effect;

ix. Told Pupil A that if she really liked you, she would come to your room naked;

The panel found these allegations proven based on the evidence of Pupil A, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil A’s TRA witness statement, their account to the police and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that:

- as previously found, Mr Thomas had stayed at Pupil A’s parents’ home for up to two weeks in the summer of 2019. [REDACTED]. They would chat and have lunch together with their relative.
- On one occasion Pupil A had put on a dress as they were going out, and they asked their relative and Mr Thomas what they thought and if it looked nice. Mr Thomas had whispered in their ear something like that Pupil A could not wear it as he would “rip it off ... [them]”.
- On another occasion he commented to Pupil A that their swimming costume was “sexy”. The panel noted that, although this was in Pupil A’s witness statement given to the TRA under affirmation, it was not in Pupil A’s police statement. However, the panel considered that this was consistent with Mr Thomas’ conduct towards Pupil A generally at around that time. Taking that factor into account, the panel accepted that this remark had been made.
- On another occasion, on the last night that he had stayed with their family, Mr Thomas had said to Pupil A words to the effect that “if ... [they] really liked him, ... [they] would come to his room naked”. Pupil A went into his room, but not naked, and gave him a hug. The panel noted that, although reference to this matter was

within Pupil A's witness statement given to the TRA under affirmation, this was not referenced in Pupil A's police statement. The panel considered that this behaviour was consistent with Mr Thomas' conduct towards Pupil A generally at around that time. Taking that factor into account, the panel accepted that the behaviour had occurred.

Taking this evidence into account, the panel found allegations 1(c)(vii), 1(c)(viii) and 1(c)(ix) proven.

x. Told Pupil A to deny and/or conceal your relationship with her, or words to that effect.

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil A, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil A's TRA witness statement, their account recorded by the police, and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that:

- Mr Thomas had asked Pupil A to conceal the relationship and said Pupil A could not tell anyone.
- When Mr Thomas became aware that Pupil A's parents had become aware of some aspect of the relationship between himself and Pupil A, Mr Thomas told Pupil A to deny it and/or say that Pupil A had made up what they had said to their friends about having kissed him. Otherwise, it would ruin his life. He said Pupil A had to make up an excuse for him because they cared about him.

In their oral evidence Pupil A talked about how strongly they had been impacted by the fact that Pupil A's family had believed Pupil A when Pupil A said that they had previously been lying about Mr Thomas' conduct towards them. It was clear to the panel that this was the most profound, and the most serious, impact of Mr Thomas' conduct on Pupil A.

On the basis of this evidence the panel found allegation 1(c)(x) proven.

d. Your actions at allegation 1(c)(x) above demonstrate a lack of integrity.

When considering this allegation, the panel took into account that integrity denotes the higher standards of conduct which society expects from professionals and professions expect from their own members. It denotes adherence to the ethical standards of the profession.

It was clear to the panel that Mr Thomas' actions in allegation 1(c)(x) were not what would be expected from a teaching professional by other professionals or the public. It

did not meet the high standards expected of a member of the profession. A teacher should never ask a child to lie.

On this basis the panel found allegation 1(d) proven.

**2. While employed as a Music Assistant at Bedales Schools, Petersfield
[“Bedales”], between September 2010 and September 2012, you engaged in an
inappropriate relationship with Pupil B, in that you:**

The panel noted that Pupil B would have been a child, [REDACTED] in the period specified in the allegation.

a. Engaged in flirtatious behaviour with Pupil B;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil B’s TRA witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that whilst Pupil B was at Bedales and Mr Thomas was a Music Assistant at that School, from around October 2010 Mr Thomas would:

- discuss topics with Pupil B that related to relationships or romantic and sexual topics and called Pupil B a pet name, an example was “my dear”;
- flirt with Pupil B and say things that were “cryptic with sexual connotations”;
- “mouthed” things through a window at Pupil B when they were in class, but they couldn’t hear what he said;
- stare at Pupil B’s breasts and comment on their breast size and try to touch their clothes; and
- comment on Pupil B’s clothes, hair and physical appearance including saying “they look really good on you” on an occasion when they were wearing their own clothes.

Additionally,

- on one occasion, when Pupil B’s computer would not work and Pupil B said “fuck me that’s annoying”, Mr Thomas heard this as he was in the vicinity and replied saying “one day hopefully”; and
- when Pupil B had told him that they “fancied him” and that they “liked him” he said something like “wait for me”, or “let’s wait and see”.

The panel considered that this was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in flirtatious behaviour and engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B during the period specified in allegation 2.

On this basis the panel found allegation 2(a), and the stem of allegation 2 as it related to 2(a), proven.

b. In response to Pupil B telling you that she fancied you said “Let’s wait and see” or words to that effect;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed

Taking account of Pupil B’s TRA witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that whilst Pupil B was at Bedales and Mr Thomas was a music assistant at that School that:

- Pupil B had told Mr Thomas that they “fancied him” and that they “liked him”.
- Mr Thomas had replied saying “wait for me”, or “let’s wait and see”.

The panel noted that in their oral evidence Pupil B was adamant about Mr Thomas using this phrase and that the implication of it was that they were “both in this together”. Pupil B believed at the time that he meant that he had feelings for them but that he had to wait until they were 16, “of age”. This was borne out when they became 16 as Mr Thomas said that he could now have a sexual relationship with Pupil B.

The panel considered that allegation 2(b) was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 2.

On this basis the panel found allegation 2(b), and the stem of allegation 2 as it related to allegation 2(b), proven.

c. Made sexual innuendoes in the presence of Pupil B.

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil B’s TRA witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which it found to be consistent, the panel found that whilst Pupil B was at Bedales and Mr Thomas was a music assistant at the School that Mr Thomas would:

- say things that were cryptic with sexual connotations; and
- on one occasion when Pupil B’s computer would not work and Pupil B said “fuck me that’s annoying”, he replied “one day hopefully”.

The panel considered that allegation 2(c) was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 2.

On this basis the panel found allegation 2(c), and the stem of allegation 2 as it related to allegation 2(c), proven.

3. While working as a Visiting Music Teacher (piano and saxophone) at Bishop Luffa School, Chichester [“Bishop Luffa”], between December 2012 and March 2015, you engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B, in that:

The panel noted that Mr Thomas had moved positions and was employed as a music teacher at Bishop Luffa at the time of allegation 3. It further noted that Pupil B, although [REDACTED] a pupil, was not a pupil at Bishop Luffa school.

The panel noted that Mr Thomas [REDACTED] but that he had got back in contact with Pupil B when Pupil B was under 18 and he was at Bishop Luffa.

The TRA regulatory regime makes it clear that, for the TRA’s purposes, a child is any person under the age of 18.

a. You kissed Pupil B;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil B’s TRA witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that Mr Thomas had kissed Pupil B on a number of occasions including the following:

- an occasion in December 2012 when Mr Thomas had started to aggressively kiss Pupil B when he had driven them to a secluded place, in or near a forest, in his car;
- on occasions after February 2013 when they would meet up and kiss before engaging in other, sexual, activities;
- an occasion which Pupil B explained in their oral evidence had been referenced in a Facebook message before the panel dated in 2013. This referred to “when we were upstairs with ur bro down stares unsuspectingly that was pretty hot” (sic). Pupil B explained this was a reference to an occasion when Mr Thomas had kissed them when they were at his home. Mr Thomas kissed them on the mouth using his tongue; and
- an occasion detailed in the Facebook messages exchanged between Pupil B and Mr Thomas in 2013 when they had referenced him leaving a “a very sexi

hicky on me”(sic). In their oral evidence Pupil B explained that this was a mark left on the skin after a strong kiss.

The panel also noted that in Facebook messages from Pupil B to Mr Thomas in December 2013 there was reference to an occasion when Mr Thomas had picked Pupil B up and “kissed” Pupil B and a later Facebook message, dated 31 December 2013, which referred to them having “kissed properly last 2 weeks ago” (sic).

The panel considered that allegation 3(a) was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(a), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(a), proven.

b. You touched Pupil B’s breasts;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

Taking account of Pupil B’s witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found consistent, the panel found that Mr Thomas had:

- touched Pupil B’s breasts on an occasion in December 2013 when they had gone over to his home to watch a film. He had started taking off Pupil B’s clothes and touched Pupil B’s breasts and the back of their head and engaged sexually with Pupil B. This had happened very quickly and although Pupil B had not said no, they had not said yes, and they felt “forced” to engage with him.

The panel considered that this allegation, which it had found proven, was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(b), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(b), proven.

c. You forced and/or allowed Pupil B to perform oral sex upon you on one or more occasions;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

On the basis of Pupil B’s TRA witness statement and their oral evidence to the panel, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that:

- on one occasion Mr Thomas had invited Pupil B to go for a drink but had then driven Pupil B to a secluded forest. There he “forced” Pupil B to have oral sex. In their oral evidence Pupil B said that this incident had taken place in the middle of

nowhere and Pupil B felt very isolated. They felt forced to have oral sex as they felt unable to object because of the way Mr Thomas had acted towards them and the situation in which he had placed them.

- on an occasion in February 2013 Mr Thomas had asked Pupil B to go over to his house to watch a film. Mr Thomas had touched Pupil B's breasts and the back of their head and started taking off Pupil B's clothes. He then "forced" Pupil B to have oral sex.
- on an occasion after February 2013, Mr Thomas drove Pupil B around and to a field and made Pupil B perform oral sex on him on a public walkway.

In their oral evidence Pupil B explained that things happened very quickly and although they had not said "no", they had not said "yes" and they felt "forced" to engage with him. They said that on at least one occasion he held their head and pushed it down.

The panel noted that Pupil B's account to the police of their concerns about Mr Thomas included reference to an incident which was consistent with their account in their witness statement to the TRA.

In view of the above, the panel found that Mr Thomas had forced Pupil B to perform oral sex on him on one or more occasions.

The panel considered that this allegation, which it had found proven, was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(c), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(c), proven.

d. You touched Pupil B between her legs;

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

On the basis of Pupil B's TRA witness statement the panel found that Mr Thomas often used to drive Pupil B around [REDACTED] and its suburbs and touch Pupil B between Pupil B's legs whilst he was driving. This happened between December 2012 and December 2014.

The panel noted that, although reference to this matter was within Pupil B's witness statement given to the TRA under affirmation, this was not referenced in Pupil B's police statement. The panel considered that this behaviour was consistent with Mr Thomas' conduct towards Pupil B generally at around that time. Taking that factor into account, the panel accepted that the behaviour had occurred.

The panel considered that this allegation was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(d), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(d), proven.

- e. You removed all of your clothing to enter a shower Pupil B was in;**
- f. You inserted one or more fingers into Pupil B's vagina;**

The panel found these allegations, which related to one incident, proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

On the basis of Pupil B's TRA witness statement, their account to the police and their oral evidence, which the panel found to be consistent, the panel found that Mr Thomas had:

- invited Pupil B over to his home to watch a movie. He and Pupil B had engaged in sexual activity and Mr Thomas had ejaculated. Pupil B had a shower to get a break from him and to clean themselves up.
- entered the shower uninvited, naked.
- placed two fingers, and then three fingers, inside Pupil B's vagina.
- said that if he could do this, he could [REDACTED] inside Pupil B's vagina too.

The panel considered that this allegation, which it had found proven, was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(f), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(f), proven.

- g. You attempted to put your penis into Pupil B's vagina on one or more occasion.**

The panel found this allegation proven based on the evidence of Pupil B, which it accepted for the reasons previously detailed.

On the basis of Pupil B's TRA witness statement and account to the police the panel found that Mr Thomas:

- had tried to have penetrative sex with Pupil B on the occasion he next met with Pupil B following the incident in particular 3b, but it was too painful for Pupil B;
- on the occasion detailed in particular 3e and 3f, whilst Mr Thomas and Pupil B were in the shower, had placed his fingers inside Pupil B's vagina. When Pupil B

got out of the shower he had then attempted to place [REDACTED] into Pupil B's vagina. Pupil B had found this very painful; and

- on another occasion Mr Thomas tried to have penetrative sex with Pupil B on the beach but this was "too painful because of the sand from the dunes".

The panel considered that this allegation was evidence that Mr Thomas engaged in sexual activity with Pupil B at the time specified in allegation 3.

On this basis the panel found allegation 3(g), including the stem of allegation 3 as it related to allegation 3(g), proven.

4. Your behaviour as set out as may be found proven at allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2, and 3 above was sexually motivated.

The panel considered that it was self-evident from the accepted evidence, including the context of the allegations identified in allegation 4, that Mr Thomas was acting as he did in pursuit of sexual gratification and in pursuit of a future sexual relationship with Pupil A and Pupil B.

He had told Pupil B "to wait and see" and had then pursued a sexual relationship with Pupil B once they had turned 16.

He had told Pupil A that he was proposing to have a relationship with them when they were over 16, "*when you're 16 we'll be together*".

Having drawn this inference from the evidence of Pupil A and Pupil B which it had accepted and from the proven allegations, the panel determined that Mr Thomas' behaviour as set out in allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2 and 3 was sexually motivated.

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

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

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

In relation to the conduct of Mr Thomas which post-dated the coming into force of the Teachers' Standards (allegation 1, part of the time period in allegation 2, allegation 3, and, allegation 4 as it related to those allegations) the panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Thomas, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Thomas was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

In relation to Mr Thomas' conduct that post-dates 26 March 2015 (allegation 2 and allegation 3) the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Thomas, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

The panel considered that Mr Thomas was in breach of the following provisions:

- All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.
- All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding...

In relation to Mr Thomas' conduct which took place prior to the coming into force of Teachers Standards, (part of the time period in allegation 2 and allegation 4 as it relates to that part of the time period in allegation 1) the panel had regard to its knowledge and experience of teaching standards at the time of the conduct. Having done so, it considered that the maintenance of teacher/pupil boundaries, the importance of child welfare, acting in children's best interests and not putting children at unnecessary risk of harm were relevant, and that Mr Thomas had breached these standards in his conduct.

The panel also considered whether Mr Thomas' conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel found that the offence of sexual activity was relevant.

No teacher should seek, or have, a sexual relationship with, or engage in sexualised conduct towards, a pupil or a child or act in pursuit of a future sexual relationship with a pupil or child. Mr Thomas had acted in manner contrary to these requirements with two pupils/children which represented a pattern of conduct that cannot be tolerated.

The panel noted that, save for the conduct in allegation 2, the allegations took place outside the education setting. The panel noted however that Mr Thomas had first come into contact with Pupils A and B when he occupied a position of authority within education whilst in an educational setting. He had then sought to take advantage of his role and privileged access to students to further his own sexual gratification and to pursue a sexual relationship with children after they reached the age of 16. There was therefore a link between his work as a teacher/music assistant and young people. A teacher or other person working in a school having personal, sexualised and/or sexual relationships with two young people who are children, regardless of whether or not it is within a school setting, is completely inappropriate. For these reasons the panel considered that Mr Thomas' actions affected the way he fulfilled his teaching role and led to pupils being exposed to, or influenced by, the behaviour in a harmful way. The panel was also concerned at the pattern of Mr Thomas' behaviour towards young pupils/children which had spanned over a period of some years.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Thomas 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 Thomas was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Thomas' 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 Thomas' 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 Thomas was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that the offence of sexual activity was relevant.

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

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Thomas' actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely,

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils ...;
- the 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 Thomas which involved him conducting inappropriate personal, sexualised and/or sexual relationships with pupils who were children, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.

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

The panel decided that there was some, but limited, public interest consideration in retaining Mr Thomas in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator. However, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Thomas in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to develop personal, sexualised and/or sexual relationships with pupils who are children should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- ... a lack of integrity including the deliberate concealment of their actions ... especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious

consequences or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

In the light of the findings made by the panel, the panel found that:

- Mr Thomas' actions were deliberate;
- there was no suggestion that Mr Thomas was acting under any duress;
- Mr Thomas had a previously good record;
- there was no evidence before the panel of Mr Thomas demonstrating exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector;
- the incident was not out of character in light of two pupils, who were children, at different times being involved by him in his inappropriate activities.

As Mr Thomas had not engaged with the TRA's regulatory proceedings there was no evidence before the panel of any mitigating factors such as evidence of remorse, insight, expression of regret or apology, evidence of reflection, or evidence of relevant learning. There were also no personal or professional character references before the panel. In consequence the panel considered that there was a high risk of Mr Thomas repeating the inappropriate behaviour.

The panel noted that in his police interview Mr Thomas had sought to avoid the detection of his inappropriate behaviour by presenting Pupil A as being someone who drank alcohol to excess. This was not accepted by the panel, which considered Mr Thomas' conduct in making such a suggestion to be completely inappropriate.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Thomas of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Thomas. The seriousness, repetition and the significant and on-going impact of his conduct on young people were significant factors in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons; and
- any sexual misconduct involving a child.

Mr Thomas' conduct was wholly unacceptable in a teacher and represented serious sexual misconduct undertaken for his own sexual gratification and for the development of sexual/sexualised relationships with pupils who were children. His actions had serious, long-term negative impacts on the children involved, including on their psychological and emotional well-being and their relationships with others.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

There were no mitigating factors that the panel could determine from the information before it save that Mr Thomas had a clear record with the TRA and was understood to be of previous good character. This led the panel to conclude that there was a serious risk of repetition which meant that a review period was unlikely to be appropriate. In light of the seriousness of the conduct, Mr Thomas' motivations and that his misconduct included a pattern of developing inappropriate relationships, including sexualised and sexual relations with children, the panel had very serious concerns for pupils who may come into contact with Mr Thomas.

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

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Thomas, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexually motivated conduct towards two children. As the panel puts it, *“Mr Thomas’ conduct was wholly unacceptable in a teacher and represented serious sexual misconduct undertaken for his own sexual gratification and for the development of sexual/sexualised relationships with pupils who were children.”*

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

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, *“In the light of the panel’s findings against Mr Thomas which involved him conducting inappropriate personal, sexualised and/or sexual relationships with pupils who were children, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils.”*

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

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, *“As Mr Thomas had not engaged with the TRA’s regulatory proceedings there was no evidence before the panel of any mitigating factors such as evidence of remorse, insight, expression of regret or apology, evidence of reflection, or evidence of relevant learning.”*

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

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexually motivated conduct in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order Mr Thomas himself. The panel comment “...*there was no evidence before the panel of Mr Thomas demonstrating exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector*”

Further, the panel note that there were no personal or professional character references provided by Mr Thomas for the panel to consider. However, the panel determined that “...*there was some, but limited, public interest consideration in retaining Mr Thomas in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator.*”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse. The panel has said, “*The panel noted that in his police interview Mr Thomas had sought to avoid the detection of his inappropriate behaviour by presenting Pupil A as being someone who drank alcohol to excess. This was not accepted by the panel, which considered Mr Thomas’ conduct in making such a suggestion to be completely inappropriate.*”

This, in my view suggests that Mr Thomas has not gained full insight or shown full remorse into his conduct.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that it “...*considered that there was a high risk of Mr Thomas repeating the inappropriate behaviour.*”

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

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

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

In this case the panel has identified that the Advice indicates that where certain types are found proven, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. The panel has identified that the behaviour types of serious sexual misconduct and sexual misconduct involving a child are relevant in this case.

I have considered the panel's comments,

"There were no mitigating factors that the panel could determine from the information before it save that Mr Thomas had a clear record with the TRA and was understood to be of previous good character. This led the panel to conclude that there was a serious risk of repetition which meant that a review period was unlikely to be appropriate. In light of the seriousness of the conduct, Mr Thomas' motivations and that his misconduct included a pattern of developing inappropriate relationships, including sexualised and sexual relations with children, the panel had very serious concerns for pupils who may come into contact with Mr Thomas."

I have firstly considered whether allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the conduct, specifically the sexually motivated behaviour towards two children, which occurred over several years.

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

This means that Mr James Thomas is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Thomas shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of his eligibility to teach.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Mr Thomas has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

S. Blunfield

Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 14 August 2026

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