



# **Mr Russell Gregory: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**July 2026**

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

**Teacher:** Russell Gregory

**Teacher ref number:** 0346387

**Teacher date of birth:** 31 March 1980

**TRA reference:** 22657

**Date of determination:** 9 July 2026

**Former employer:** Clevedon School, Clevedon

## **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened between 6 July 2026 and 9 July 2026 at Cheylesmore House, 5 Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT to consider the case of Russell Gregory.

The panel members were Mr Robert Della-Sala (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Jasmin Choudhury (teacher panellist) and Mr Matthew Ball (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Jamila Bernard-Stevenson of Blake Morgan solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Callum Heywood of Blake Morgan solicitors.

Mr Russell was present and was represented by Mr Andrew Faux of Counsel

The hearing took place in private.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 9 April 2026.

It is alleged that you are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that, whilst employed at the Clevedon School ('the School'), you:

1. You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with:
  - a. Staff Members 3 and 4 by posting within a WhatsApp group including yourself, Staff Member 3 and Staff Member 4, sexual messages as set out within appendix 20 of the bundle:
    - i. Messages of a directly sexual or innuendo laden nature other than those pleaded below'
    - ii. I do love you when you're angry but bet you fuck even more amazingly when you are angry" or used words to that effect;'
    - iii. 'Just want you all to myself' or used words to that effect;
    - iv. 'First a coffee cup then some scissors...ing!!! Lets be honest, I would love to watch you two [redacted] together' or used words to that effect;
    - v. 'Now that would be hot and fucking sexy' or used words to that effect;
  - b. Staff Member 5, in that you;
    - i. Sent one or more messages of a sexual nature.
2. Your behaviour as may be found as proven at;
  - a. Allegation 1 was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated;
  - b. Allegation 1a and/or 1b, was despite staff members asking you to stop on one or more occasions.

## Summary of evidence

### Documents

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

Section 1: Anonymised pupil list – pages 5

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 14.

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 16 to 119.

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 121 to 140.

Section 5: Teacher response– pages 143 to 188.

Video submitted by Teacher containing oral character testimonies from pupils.

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

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

## **Witnesses**

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

Witness A – [REDACTED].

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

At the material time, Mr Gregory was employed as Assistant Headteacher of Ethos and Outcomes at Clevedon School (‘the School’). The School is a co-educational secondary school which is constituted of 4 houses (communities of students). In or about July 2023, concerns were raised by a male member of staff regarding messages of a sexual nature which were allegedly sent by Mr Gregory to female members of staff.

These members of staff included Staff Member 3 [REDACTED], Staff Member 4 [REDACTED] and Staff Member 5 [REDACTED].

The panel carefully considered all of the evidence presented. It accepted the legal advice provided.

Mr Gregory attended the hearing and was represented by counsel. Mr Gregory gave oral evidence to the panel. He admitted allegations 1(a)(ii), 1(b)(i) and admitted that the messages specified in 1 (a)(ii) and 1(b)(i) were sexual in nature. Mr Gregory admitted sending the message specified in allegation 1(a) (iii) but denied that it was sexual in nature. Mr Gregory denied all of the remaining allegations.

Mr Gregory denied that his actions amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel confirmed it had not relied upon any findings made during the School's and/or Police's investigation. However, the panel considered the evidence collated during the School's investigation and the evidence from the disciplinary process.

With reference to the various opinions set out within the evidence, the panel was mindful of the need to exercise its own judgment. It was for the panel, not anyone else, to draw inferences and conclusions from proven facts in this case.

The panel proceeded to form its own, independent view of the allegations based on the evidence presented to it.

## Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

- 1. You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with:**
  - a. Staff Members 3 and 4 by posting within a WhatsApp group including yourself, Staff Member 3 and Staff Member 4, sexual messages as set out within appendix 20 of the bundle:**

The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser and gave the term 'appropriate professional boundaries' its ordinary meaning.

The panel accepted the advice of the legal adviser and accepted that the term 'sexual' meant *'whatever its circumstances or any person's purpose in relation to it, it is because of its nature sexual,'* or *'because of its nature it may be sexual and because of its circumstances or the purpose of any person in relation to it (or both) it is sexual.'*

The panel heard evidence from Witness A (external investigating officer) that at the time that the concerns arose, Staff Member 3 was employed in an [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. Witness A gave further evidence that at the material time, Staff

Member 4 was employed in the role of [REDACTED]. It was the TRA's case that Staff Member 4 [REDACTED].

In Mr Gregory's evidence, he clarified that he and Staff Member 3 became [REDACTED] friends [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. In oral evidence, Mr Gregory described Staff Member 4 as being someone whose style was to [REDACTED].

Mr Gregory explained that both Staff Members 3 and 4 were experiencing [REDACTED] and that these issues were openly discussed between the three staff members within the WhatsApp group.

The panel heard evidence from Mr Gregory that the WhatsApp group had been set up by Staff Member 4 (prior to [REDACTED]). She had added Mr Gregory and Staff Member 3 to the group. Although, he was unable to say the reason why there were only three of them in this group, he explained that they all got on well [REDACTED] at the School. Mr Gregory explained that although the WhatsApp group would be used to discuss personal matters, it would also be used to speak about work such as logistics (i.e. staff timetables).

**i. Messages of a directly sexual or innuendo laden nature other than those pleaded below**

The panel gave the term innuendo its ordinary meaning.

The TRA presented appendix 20 which contained several messages purporting to be from the WhatsApp group shared by Mr Gregory, Staff Member 3 and Staff Member 4. These messages appeared to have been extracted from longer conversations.

The panel heard evidence from Witness A that during the internal investigation into Mr Gregory's conduct, the messages in appendix 20 had been presented to her by Staff Members 3 and 4.

Witness A explained that during her investigation interview with Mr Gregory, she was given an opportunity to review the messages in the WhatsApp group (from his phone) for a period of 5 to 10 minutes. Witness A further explained that during this time, she was able to confirm that several of the messages which had been provided to her by Staff Members 3 and 4 within appendix 20 were contained within the [REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

The panel was unable to see the full context of the messages between the Staff members and Mr Gregory. The panel noted that at times Staff Members 3 and/or 4 had responded to these messages with emojis and/or messages containing emojis and/or kisses. The panel inferred from this that there had been some reciprocal interaction between the parties.

During his oral evidence, Mr Gregory denied sending the WhatsApp messages in the latter part of appendix 20. He stated that he did not send these messages and that he did not know where they came from.

The panel acknowledged [REDACTED], there was limited evidence from which it could determine the provenance of the WhatsApp messages.

Therefore, the panel undertook a careful and considered assessment to determine on the balance of probabilities whether all of the disputed messages in appendix 20 could be attributed to Mr Gregory. The panel noted that Mr Gregory's witness statement of 28 May 2026 (which was prepared specifically for these proceedings) did not state that some of the messages in appendix 20 were disputed.

Moreover, during the disciplinary hearing on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 when specific messages in appendix 20 were put to Mr Gregory, he also did not state that these messages had not been sent by him. Therefore, it appeared that Mr Gregory made this claim for the first time during his oral evidence on 7 July 2026.

Furthermore, the panel noted that the disputed messages in appendix 20 were consistent in style and content with the messages that had been admitted.

The panel further noted that the messages in appendix 20 were almost invariably accompanied by the name 'Russ' or 'Russ Gregory'. Although Mr Gregory initially maintained (in his oral evidence) that the profile picture was not his, he eventually conceded upon further questioning that the profile picture was him.

Therefore, the panel determined that on the balance of probabilities, Mr Gregory had been responsible for sending all the messages included in appendix 20.

Once the panel had concluded that Mr Gregory was responsible for sending the messages, it went on to consider whether by sending these messages, Mr Gregory failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel determined that as a member of the teaching profession and a senior leader employed by the School, Mr Gregory was a high-profile leader as specified in his job description and had a duty to behave in a proper and professional manner. The panel notes his job description states that he held a responsibility to *'demonstrate excellent performance against parts one and two of the Teachers Standards'* and *'provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all students and staff.'*

The panel further determined that by sending the messages contained in appendix 20 to Staff Members 3 and 4, Mr Gregory failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. The panel determined that the following messages which had been disputed (but which the panel determined could be attributed to Mr Gregory) were particularly egregious:-

[REDACTED]

The panel noted that for at least some of the time that he sent these messages to Staff Members 3 and 4, Mr Gregory was a senior member of staff [REDACTED]. However, notwithstanding the disparity between the seniority levels of the Staff, the messages contained within appendix 20 were inappropriate and unprofessional.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 (a)(i) proved.

**ii. I do love you when you're angry but bet you fuck even more amazingly when you are angry" or used words to that effect;'**

Mr Gregory admitted sending this message and that by sending it, he failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. In his witness statement dated 28 May 2026, Mr Gregory explained that this message was sent in response to Staff Member 3, after she had expressed that she was angry with him for [REDACTED].

Mr Gregory further explained that this message was intended to be sent in a private WhatsApp conversation with Staff Member 3, but was sent to the WhatsApp group (which included Staff Member 4) by mistake.

As the panel had not been provided with any specific context or the messages which preceded and followed Mr Gregory's message, it was difficult for the panel to discern the wider context of the messages.

Notwithstanding this (and irrespective of the close relationship that Mr Gregory claimed to have cultivated with Staff Members 3 and 4), the panel determined that the language used in this message was suggestive and it was acknowledged by Mr Gregory in his oral evidence to the panel that his conduct is likely to have caused Staff Members 3 and/or 4 to feel uncomfortable.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 (a)(ii) proved.

**iii. 'Just want you all to myself' or used words to that effect;'**

Mr Gregory admitted sending this message.

The panel noted that owing to the manner in which appendix 20 had been composed, it was difficult to discern the wider context of the message.

In Mr Gregory's witness statement, he stated that *'I want you all to myself was not intended in any way to be sexual or inappropriate in its context. I simply had let her down, again, with regards to meeting her from a friendship point of view.'*

The panel reminded itself of Mr Gregory's oral evidence in which he stated that Staff Member 4 had been experiencing [REDACTED]. In Mr Gregory's oral evidence, he also explained that Staff Member 4 had been confiding in him about these issues and seeking his advice.

The panel determined that in light of this dynamic, sending the message knowing that Staff Member 4 had [REDACTED] it would be reasonable to expect that such a message as *'just want you all to myself'* to Staff Member 4, could have caused confusion over Mr Gregory's intended meaning.

The panel noted that in his statement, Mr Gregory acknowledged that 'the wording' in his reply *'could have been construed differently.'*

The panel further determined that sending this type of message in these circumstances amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 (a)(iii) proved.

**iv. 'First a coffee cup then some scissors...ing!!! Lets be honest, I would love to watch you two [redacted] together' or used words to that effect;'**

**v. 'Now that would be hot and fucking sexy' or used words to that effect;**

The panel considered allegation 1(a)(iv) and allegation 1 (a)(v) together as in appendix 20, these comments appear in the same message.

Mr Gregory denied sending this message. However, as this message was contained within appendix 20, and the panel has determined that on the balance of probabilities, Mr Gregory did send the messages in appendix 20, the panel went on to consider whether the message breached appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel determined that sending this message amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It noted that by including the term *'scissors..ing'* in his message, Mr Gregory was making a sexually explicit reference about two staff members.

The panel did not accept Mr Gregory's evidence that he did not know what this term meant until he asked [REDACTED] and she explained it to him. The panel did not find Mr Gregory's explanation (in this regard) to be plausible. The panel noted the nature of Mr Gregory's role and experience. The panel considered that his professional learning pathways, safeguarding training and broader life experience would have exposed him to such terminology.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 (a)(iv) and 1(a)(v) proved.

**b. Staff Member 5, in that you;**

**i. Sent one or more messages of a sexual nature.**

The panel was presented with photographs of several messages which had been sent by Mr Gregory to Staff Member 5. These messages were displayed on Staff Member 5's [REDACTED].

Mr Gregory admitted sending these messages.

The panel determined that the messages which Mr Gregory sent to Staff Member 5 were of a sexual nature, this is because in these messages Mr Gregory refers to dreaming about Staff Member 5 and also comments on her physical appearance, stating that:-

[REDACTED]

The panel determined that these messages were suggestive and therefore could be considered to be sexual owing to the circumstances.

The panel noted that Staff Member 5 was [REDACTED] to Mr Gregory and that therefore [REDACTED] in the relationship between Mr Gregory and Staff Members 3 and 4.

Notwithstanding this, the panel determined that sending the messages to Staff Member 5 amounted to a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Sending the messages had a profound impact on Staff Member 5 and led to [REDACTED] directly messaging Mr Gregory in order to deter him from sending Staff Member 5 further messages. During his oral evidence, Mr Gregory claimed that Staff Member 5 reported the messages to [REDACTED] who subsequently had an informal conversation with Mr Gregory about the conduct. The panel noted that this was not mentioned in his witness statement.

In his witness statement, Mr Gregory accepts some messages to Staff Member 5 were inappropriate.

The panel noted that in his witness statement, Mr Gregory stated that:- *'...I deeply regret sending those messages as they tarnished what was an outstanding working relationship with this member of staff, and although we continued to have a strong working relationship after this incident, because it was dealt with, it was not the same and that is on me..'*

Therefore, the panel found allegation 1 (b)(i) proved.

**2. Your behaviour as may be found as proven at;**

**a. Allegation 1 was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated;**

Having found allegation 1 proved in its entirety, the panel went on to consider whether this conduct was sexual in nature and/or was sexually motivated.

**i. Messages of a directly sexual or innuendo laden nature other than those pleaded below**

Mr Gregory accepted that one or more of the messages included in appendix 20 were of a sexual nature. Mr Gregory's admission was consistent with the evidence before the panel, which indicated that many of the messages were of an inherently sexual nature, as they included sexual suggestions and sexually explicit remarks. Other messages were less direct but alluded to sexual conduct and/or sexualised behaviour.

The panel also determined that the following messages were sent for sexual gratification and/or in order to pursue a future sexual relationship with either or both Staff Members 3 and 4. This is because the panel determined that sending the messages listed below sexually gratified Mr Gregory. It was reasonable to infer that many of these messages suggested that Mr Gregory wanted to explore the possibility of a future sexual relationship with Staff Member 3 and Staff Member 4. The panel concluded that there is no plausible alternative explanation for the content of these messages.

[REDACTED]

- *'Now that would be hot and fucking sexy [REDACTED]'*

[REDACTED]

Having carefully weighed all the evidence, the panel therefore concluded, on the balance of probabilities, that the above messages in appendix 20 were sexually motivated.

**ii. I do love you when you're angry but bet you fuck even more amazingly when you are angry" or used words to that effect;'**

Mr Gregory accepted that this message was of a sexual nature. His admission was consistent with the evidence before the panel, which indicated that this message was of an inherently sexual nature, owing to the wording used.

The panel reminded itself of its earlier findings in relation to this allegation. In relation to this allegation, the panel previously determined that the language used in this message was suggestive. The panel determined that this message was sent for Mr Gregory's sexual gratification as he derived this from imagining that Staff Member 3's anger would enhance her [REDACTED].

Having carefully weighed all the evidence, the panel therefore, concluded on balance, that the above message was sexual and/or sexually motivated.

**iii. 'Just want you all to myself' or used words to that effect;**

Mr Gregory denied that this message was of a sexual nature. The panel determined that this statement was inappropriate and unprofessional. The panel considered that this message could be interpreted as being of a sexual nature, however, due to the lack of context, the panel did not make this finding. Moreover, the panel was of the view that there was insufficient evidence from which the panel could properly infer a sexual motive.

Therefore, the panel concluded that the above message was neither sexual or sexually motivated.

**iv. 'First a coffee cup then some scissors...ing!!! Lets be honest, I would love to watch you two [redacted] together' or used words to that effect;'**

**v. 'Now that would be hot and fucking sexy' or used words to that effect;**

The panel considered allegation 1(a)(iv) and allegation 1 (a)(v) together as in appendix 20, these statements appear in the same message.

The message referred to '*scissors..ing*' which the panel understood to be a reference to a sexual act. Mr Gregory denied knowledge of the term '*scissors..ing*.' However, the panel rejected this assertion for the reasons set out above. The panel concluded that the reference to a sexual act- means that the message was of a sexual nature.

The panel determined that the inclusion of the statement:- '*I would love to watch you two [redacted] together*' in this message, directly after making reference to a sexual act, indicated that Mr Gregory wanted to partake in a sexual act with Staff Members 3 and 4. This inference is reinforced by Mr Gregory's further comments '*..that would be hot and fucking sexy*'.

The panel considered that Mr Gregory derived sexual gratification from his own suggestion.

Having carefully weighed all the evidence, the panel therefore concluded on balance that the above message was sexual and/or sexually motivated.

**b. Allegation 1a and/or 1b, was despite staff members asking you to stop on one or more occasions.**

The panel considered the messages in appendix 20. It determined that there were no messages in this appendix from Staff Members 3 and 4, where they had explicitly told Mr Gregory not to send them further messages of a sexual nature.

The panel acknowledged that there is a message in appendix 20 from either Staff Member 3 or Staff Member 4 which states:- '*I've said no 67 times*'. However, the

panel concluded that without any context, it was unclear what this message pertained to.

The panel reviewed the messages sent by Staff Member 5 in response to the messages she had received from Mr Gregory. It was unable to identify any messages in which she had specifically instructed Mr Gregory to stop sending these types of messages. The panel was able to identify messages from Staff Member 5's [REDACTED] making this request but owing to the manner in which allegation 2b had been drafted, the panel determined that this conduct was outside of the scope of allegation 2b.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 2(b) not proved.

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

Having found one or more 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.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Gregory 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
  - (..) at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

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

The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

As a senior leader at the School, Mr Gregory was in a position of authority. He was also [REDACTED]. Mr Gregory engaged in behaviour through messaging, which was both inappropriate and unprofessional. This led to an internal investigation which was instigated by another member of staff. As a result of this, the complainants were interviewed and provided evidence regarding the allegations.

The nature of the messages to Staff Member 5 was such that it resulted in [REDACTED] having to intervene to stop Mr Gregory from messaging her inappropriately.

Furthermore, Mr Gregory's conduct demonstrated a flagrant disregard for his role and responsibilities as a senior leader and member of the teaching profession.

Mr Gregory had a duty not to participate or encourage such inappropriate messaging.

His role involved maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and operating within the expectations of his job description, School Code of Conduct and the Teachers' Standards.

The panel noted that some of the messages were not sent during the working day. However, it could not be said that the WhatsApp group had no connection to Mr Gregory's employment as a teacher, as the panel were told by Witness A, that some of the messages exchanged pertained to work related matters such as timetabling.

[REDACTED].

For the reasons outlined above, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Gregory 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 Gregory was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether the teacher's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Gregory's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel determined that Mr Gregory's conduct would have a negative impact on his status as a teacher and the perception of the teaching profession as a whole. Mr Gregory was a senior leader at the School, and the Assistant Head for Ethos and Outcomes, and was therefore expected to be a positive role model, and display a high standard of behaviour towards pupils but also to staff.

Owing to the disparity between the respective levels of seniority of the staff participating in the WhatsApp group, there was an evident power dynamic. The volume of the inappropriate and unprofessional messages exchanged (including those of a sexual nature), demonstrated a pattern of behaviour. This indicated that Mr Gregory's conduct was habitual.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Gregory's conduct brought 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 a 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 protection of other members of the public and/or the maintenance of public confidence in the profession/declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Gregory, which included finding that Mr Gregory sent sexually motivated messages to staff members (including junior staff

members), there was a strong public interest consideration in protecting members of staff at the School and maintaining public confidence in the profession.

The panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Gregory, a senior leader, 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 Gregory 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 Gregory in the profession.

Whilst there is evidence that Mr Gregory had experience as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above, outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Gregory in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and undermined his position of authority.

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 Gregory. The panel reminded itself of the case of *Wallace [2017] EWHC 109*, and the seriousness of the proven allegations. The panel noted that there was no substantial evidence of Mr Gregory having made an exceptional contribution to teaching and learning as outlined in the Wallace case.

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;

- 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;

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

The panel considered the following mitigating factors in this case:

- Mr Gregory had no previous adverse regulatory findings.
- Mr Gregory was somewhat apologetic (however, he failed to recognise the impact of his actions on the complainants until challenged).
- There was evidence before the panel that Mr Gregory was regarded as a valued member of the School.
- There appeared to be some reciprocal interactions within the WhatsApp group.

Weighed against these matters, the panel considered there were some aggravating factors present, including:

- Mr Gregory sent the messages to multiple members of staff.
- Mr Gregory sent the messages to multiple members of staff that [REDACTED].
- Mr Gregory's conduct displayed a pattern of behaviour that was wholly inappropriate and unprofessional.

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 Gregory 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 Gregory. Mr Gregory's lack of insight and evidence of remediation was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a

recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

One of these includes:

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

The panel determined that the facts of Mr Gregory's case fell within this category.

The panel noted that whilst all sexual misconduct is serious, it determined that in the spectrum of seriousness, Mr Gregory's conduct was at the lower end of the spectrum.

In his evidence, Mr Gregory has yet to demonstrate sufficient remorse and insight into his actions.

The panel determined that a 3-year review period would enable Mr Gregory to reflect on his conduct and the subsequent impact of his conduct. The time allowed for the review period will also allow Mr Gregory to seek the appropriate assistance and undertake relevant personal and professional training such as therapeutic support.

The review panel would be assisted by Mr Gregory providing: a range of supporting evidence highlighting his positive contribution to the teaching profession; up to date professional references including reference to positive personal and professional conduct whilst in employment.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the

circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provision for a review period of 3 years.

## **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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Russell Gregory should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of three years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Gregory 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
  - (..) at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 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 Gregory fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of sexually motivated behaviour, and that *“Mr Gregory’s conduct demonstrated a flagrant disregard for his role and responsibilities as a senior leader and member of the teaching profession.”*

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 Gregory, 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 others. The panel has observed, *“In light of the panel’s findings against Mr Gregory, which included finding that Mr Gregory sent sexually motivated messages to staff members (including junior staff members), there was a strong public interest consideration in protecting members of staff at the School.”* 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. The panel note that *“Mr Gregory was somewhat apologetic (however, he failed to recognise the impact of his actions on the complainants until challenged).”*

Additionally, the panel formed the view that, *“In his evidence, Mr Gregory has yet to demonstrate sufficient remorse and insight into his actions.”*

In my judgement, the lack of full insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour, and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of others. 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, *“The panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Gregory, a senior leader, were not treated with the utmost seriousness, when regulating the conduct of the profession.”*

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual motivation, and in particular the panel’s findings that this behaviour was directed towards more junior members of staff in this case, and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Gregory himself. The panel comment *“The panel noted that there was no substantial evidence of Mr Gregory having made an exceptional contribution to teaching and learning...”*.

I also note that the panel has indicated some mitigating factors, including that Mr Gregory was regarded as a valued member of the School.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Gregory 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 on insight and remorse. The panel has said, *“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 Gregory. Mr Gregory’s lack of insight and evidence of remediation was a significant factor in forming that opinion.”*

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that *“Owing to the disparity between the respective levels of seniority of the staff participating in the WhatsApp group, there was an evident power dynamic.”*

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

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

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

I have considered the panel's comments,

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

*One of these includes:*

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

*The panel determined that the facts of Mr Gregory's case fell within this category.*

*The panel noted that whilst all sexual misconduct is serious, it determined that in the spectrum of seriousness, Mr Gregory's conduct was at the lower end of the spectrum.*

*In his evidence, Mr Gregory has yet to demonstrate sufficient remorse and insight into his actions."*

The panel has also said that a three-year review period would "...enable Mr Gregory to reflect on his conduct and the subsequent impact of his conduct. The time allowed for the review period will also allow Mr Gregory to seek the appropriate assistance and undertake relevant personal and professional training such as therapeutic support."

I have considered whether a three-year 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 my view, factors in this case mean that a three-year review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the conduct, including that it was sexually motivated, and that this included some conduct which was directed towards junior members of staff where there was an inherent power dynamic

I consider therefore that a three-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

**This means that Mr Russell Gregory is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth**

**accommodation or children's home in England.** He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 21 July 2029, three years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Gregory remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Blomfield'.

**Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield**

**Date: 16 July 2026**

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