



William Goswell: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

September 2026

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

Teacher: Mr William Goswell

Teacher ref number: 9650602

Teacher date of birth: 11 December 1966

TRA reference: 22800

Date of determination: 28 September 2026

Former employer: Furze Platt Senior School, Maidenhead

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 28 September 2026 way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr William Goswell.

The panel members were Ms Hannah Fellows (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Aidan Jenkins (teacher panellist) and Mrs Sue Siesage (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Jermel Anderson of Blake Morgan solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Kathryn Sheridan, Counsel, of Red Lion Chambers, as instructed by Kingsley Napley LLP solicitors.

Mr William Goswell was 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 allegation set out in the notice of hearing dated 30 June 2026.

It was alleged that he had been convicted, at any time, of a relevant offence in that:

1. On 1 May 2025, he was convicted at Reading Magistrates court of the following offences:

a) Possess indecent photograph / pseudo-photograph of a child contrary to section 160(1), (2A) and (3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Mr Goswell admitted the Allegation. Mr Goswell also admitted that the allegation amounted to a conviction for a relevant offence.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and key list of people – pages 4 to 5

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 7 to 13

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency exhibits – pages 15 to 90

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

No witnesses were called by the TRA or by Mr Goswell.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Goswell was employed by the School as an Art & Technology Teacher on 6 February 2023. He was arrested on 29 August 2023. The School opened an investigation on 26 September 2023 which concluded with a disciplinary meeting on 19 October 2023. The School referred Mr Goswell to the TRA on 22 November 2023.

On 1 May 2025, Mr Goswell pleaded guilty at Reading Magistrates' Court to possession of an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph (on 8 December 2022) of a child contrary to s160(1), (2A) and (3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Mr Goswell was sentenced to 9 months' imprisonment suspended for a period of 18 months on 27 June 2025 at Reading Magistrates' Court. The Court also imposed a Sexual Harm Prevent Order of 10 years, notification requirements, a 200 hours unpaid work requirement and a rehabilitation activity requirement.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

You have been convicted, at any time, of a relevant offence in that:

1. On 1 May 2025, you were convicted at Reading Magistrates court of the following offence:

a) Possess indecent photograph / pseudo-photograph of a child contrary to section 160(1), (2A) and (3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The panel noted that Mr Goswell admitted this allegation in full. In addition, it recognised that it had been provided with a Certificate of Conviction which detailed that Mr Goswell was convicted at Reading Magistrates' Court on 1 May 2025, of an offence of possession of an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child contrary to s160(1), (2A) and (3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. The panel considered the Certificate of Conviction as conclusive proof of the conviction as detailed. The panel also had regard to the Police National Computer record for Mr Goswell which corroborated the offence as set out.

The panel accordingly found Allegation 1a) proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the Allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proved allegation amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Goswell 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
 - 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, and maintain high standards.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that Mr Goswell's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting. Notably, Mr Goswell was convicted of possession of a Category A image which the panel considered was demonstrative of the significant of the concern and its relevance to Mr Goswell's role.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils and/or members of the public. The conviction concerned the possession of a Category A image which means that it involved the depiction of a child and penetrative sexual activity. The panel accordingly considered that this was demonstrative of the fact that it would be relevant to the question of safety and security, due to the inherently harmful nature of such a depiction.

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

The panel noted that Mr Goswell's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, (albeit that it was suspended), which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed. It had particular regard to the fact that in addition to the custodial sentence, Mr Goswell was also made subject of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and notification requirements, further highlighting the significance and nature of the offending behaviour.

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

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

The panel took into account the representations made by Mr Goswell. It noted that by his account, he was impacted at the time of the offending behaviour by significantly difficult personal circumstances. The panel was careful to acknowledge this though it did not consider that it could properly be said to undermine the gravity of the offending in the circumstances. It also acknowledged that as Mr Goswell advanced, the conviction pertained to a single image which could potentially affect the gravity of the offence. The panel however did not consider that the fact that the conviction related to a single image was indicative of there being low seriousness or gravity in relation to the offending behaviour.

The panel noted from the bundle that Mr Goswell had stated that he had committed the offence, in part, due to health matters at the time. The panel noted that it had not been provided with any independent medical evidence in relation to this. Further, the panel did not consider that this information, even if substantiated in further detail, could properly reduce the gravity of Mr Goswell's offending.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

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

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

- the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and protection of other members of the public
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Goswell which involved the possession of a Category A image, there was a strong public interest consideration in relation to all of the public interest considerations referred to as above.

The panel considered that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the fact that Mr Goswell was in possession of an image which was associated with the exploitation of a child.

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

The panel noted that through his submissions, Mr Goswell had advanced that he had been a teacher for a long period of time and that he had engaged in a wide range of educational and community based work which would be indicative of there being a public interest in retaining him within the teaching profession. The panel was careful with regard to what weight it afforded these submissions, having not heard from Mr Goswell in evidence and having not received any third-party references in this regard. The panel considered that there may well be some loss to the profession, should Mr Goswell be prohibited from teaching, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator. The panel however determined that the adverse public interest considerations above outweigh any interest in retaining Mr Goswell 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. It noted that the fact that Mr Goswell was convicted for an offence which directly concerned harm towards a child was inseparable from the influence that teachers may have upon pupils.

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 Goswell.

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

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing, or publishing any indecent photograph or image, or indecent pseudo photograph or image, of a child, or permitting such activity, including one-off incidents;

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

In the light of the panel's findings, the panel did not consider that it had sight of any evidence that Mr Goswell's actions in engaging in the offending behaviour were not deliberate, though it acknowledged that he had advanced through submissions that he had inadvertently downloaded the material. The panel also did not consider that it had any basis on which it could determine that Mr Goswell was acting under duress at the relevant time; it did however note that Mr Goswell had made submissions that he was experiencing significant health issues at the relevant time which led to him engaging in the offending behaviour. The panel took this into consideration, though again was cognisant of the fact that it had received no evidence to this effect and noted that even if substantiated this explanation would not properly amount to duress. The panel noted that Mr Goswell did have a previous good history and had not been subject to any previous regulatory or disciplinary findings.

The panel considered that Mr Goswell had shown some insight through his representation. He advised that he had engaged with the probation service and that he had been given a mark of "high" in terms of his compliance with probation services. It also noted that Mr Goswell had stated that he had engaged with assisting other offenders with their rehabilitation processes and had actively mentored them. It considered that this was indicative of Mr Goswell's character, though it noted that no evidence had been presented to in this regard, limiting the extent to which the panel could rely upon it.

The panel considered that Mr Goswell had demonstrated some remorse and noted that he had been apologetic to all parties concerned, extending this to children who are the victims of sexual exploitation.

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 Goswell 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 Goswell. The Category of the image, even in circumstances where it was a one-off event, was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

One of these was present:

- any activity involving viewing, taking, making, possessing, distributing or publishing any indecent photograph or image or indecent pseudo photograph or image of a child, including one off incidents;

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.

As above, the panel considered that Mr Goswell had shown good insight in relation to his conduct. It also noted that he did appear to be remorseful insofar as he was apologetic as to the nature of his conduct and the consequences. The panel considered the risk of repetition in the case; the panel did not consider that it could conclusively determine that there was a high risk of repetition in the circumstances, it noted that Mr Goswell had received a conviction pertaining to a single image, and it noted that there was no evidence of other conduct of this nature. It however considered that in circumstances

where Mr Goswell did not give evidence, it could not properly make a determination in relation to the extent of his insight, his remorse, or the risk of repetition, where these had not been explored through questioning.

The panel considered whether to recommend a review period. It however considered that in circumstances where Mr Goswell was convicted of an offence of this nature, and where there was limited evidence presented with regard to insight and remediation on the part of Mr Goswell, it could not recommend one.

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 the allegation proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they involve a conviction for the relevant offence of possessing an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child, which led to suspended sentence of imprisonment.

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

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

“The panel considered that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the fact that Mr Goswell was in possession of an image which was associated with the exploitation of a child.”

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

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

“As above, the panel considered that Mr Goswell had shown good insight in relation to his conduct. It also noted that he did appear to be remorseful insofar as he was apologetic as to the nature of his conduct and the consequences. The panel considered the risk of repetition in the case; the panel did not consider that it could conclusively determine that there was a high risk of repetition in the circumstances, it noted that Mr Goswell had received a conviction pertaining to a single image, and it noted that there was no evidence of other conduct of this nature. It however considered that in circumstances where Mr Goswell did not give evidence, it could not properly make a determination in relation to the extent of his insight, his remorse, or the risk of repetition, where these had not been explored through questioning.”

I agree with the panel's assessment and have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed:

“Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Goswell were not

treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for possessing an indecent image of a child in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

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

“The panel noted that through his submissions, Mr Goswell had advanced that he had been a teacher for a long period of time and that he had engaged in a wide range of educational and community based work which would be indicative of there being a public interest in retaining him within the teaching profession. The panel was careful with regard to what weight it afforded these submissions, having not heard from Mr Goswell in evidence and having not received any third-party references in this regard. The panel considered that there may well be some loss to the profession, should Mr Goswell be prohibited from teaching, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator.”

The panel has also commented:

“The panel noted that Mr Goswell did have a previous good history and had not been subject to any previous regulatory or disciplinary findings.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the seriousness of the offence of which Mr Goswell was convicted. 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 Goswell. The Category of the image, even in circumstances

where it was a one-off event, 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.”

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

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

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

The panel has noted that the Advice states that where cases involve possessing any indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child, the public interest will weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

I have also considered the panel’s comment:

“The panel considered whether to recommend a review period. It however considered that in circumstances where Mr Goswell was convicted of an offence of this nature, and where there was limited evidence presented with regard to insight and remediation on the part of Mr Goswell, it could not recommend one.”

I have considered whether not allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offence of which Mr Goswell was convicted and the lack of evidence of full insight and remorse.

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 William Goswell 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 allegation found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Goswell 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 William Goswell has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 29 September 2026