



Mr Shaun Valentine: Professional conduct panel 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 Shaun Valentine

TRA reference: 23712

Date of determination: 30 September 2026

Former employer: St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bury St Edmunds

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 21 to 25 and 30 September 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Shaun Valentine.

The panel members were Mr Alan Wells (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Elizabeth Kitcatt (teacher panellist) and Mr Philip Jolowicz (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Ben Schofield of Blake Morgan LLP.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Aleksandra Manning-Rees, instructed by Kingsley Napley LLP.

Mr Valentine 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 30 June 2026 (and as amended at this hearing).

It was alleged that Mr Valentine was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead at St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School ('the School'):

1. Between 2022 and 2023, in respect of the pupils in Schedule A below, he did not:

a) record and/or ensure recording on the School system "Safeguard my school", at all or in a timely manner:

i. chronologies;

ii. actions;

iii. rationales; and/or

iv. the child's voice.

b) submit and/or oversee the submission of referrals to relevant external agencies at all or in a timely manner.

2. Between March 2020 to May 2023, with respect of the School's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DDSL') and/or Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead ('ADSL'), he:

a) Did not ensure a job description was in place for the DDSL/ADSL;

b) Did not ensure that the DDSL/ADSL was appropriately supported and/or supervised by him;

c) Did not discuss effective strategy with the DDSL/ADSL and/or to follow up with her on specific cases, at all or in a timely manner;

d) Did not ensure that the DDSL/ADSL completed training, at least every two years.

3. With respect to the conduct alleged at paragraphs 1a) – 1b), he did not safeguard the pupil(s) as set out in Schedule A.

[REDACTED]

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 5 to 8

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 9 to 18

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 19 to 61

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 62 to 658

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 659 to 680

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

Witnesses

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

- Witness 1 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 2 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 3 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 4 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 5 – [REDACTED]

No witnesses were called on behalf of Mr Valentine.

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 Valentine qualified as a teacher in 1993 and was in the profession until 2023. In 2003, Mr Valentine was appointed as the Headteacher of a primary school, a position he has held at two further following schools.

In 2018, Mr Valentine took up the role of Headteacher at St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk ("the School"). At the time of these allegations, it had around 250 pupils on roll.

As part of his duties at the School, Mr Valentine also held the post of the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' ("DSL"). This is a role which every school is required to have in place. This requirement, along with other safeguarding requirements for schools is set out in the Department for Education statutory guidance document known as 'Keeping children safe in education' (2022 version) ("KCSIE"). This document is well known to those in the teaching profession. KCSIE sets out what the DSL's role is in detail. It states:

*"The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection..."*

It also provides advice on deputising the role:

"Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated."

At the School, Witness 5 was appointed to the role of Deputy DSL in December 2019. With Mr Valentine as the DSL, they both effectively undertook the safeguarding provision at the School. There was an Alternative DSL at the School – the Deputy Headteacher, Witness 3. In her evidence to the panel, she explained that she had little involvement with the DSL role, save for occasionally covering Mr Valentine or Witness 5. Witness 3 went on [REDACTED]. Witness 4 took up an acting post to cover her position as both Deputy Headteacher and Alternative DSL. However, he was not actively called upon to take up any safeguarding duties, which remained with Mr Valentine and Witness 5 throughout the period in question.

In May 2023, the School underwent an Ofsted inspection. It was graded as 'inadequate'. Part of the issues identified by Ofsted were concerns that appropriate actions were not being taken to address safeguarding concerns. Ofsted inspectors identified around nine instances in which they considered safeguarding concerns, which would have required onward referrals to the 'multi-agency safeguarding hub'. This did not appear to have happened. These included pupils who had disclosed being subjected to physical violence at home and pupils showing signs of neglect.

As part of the interventions resulting from Ofsted's grading, Mr Valentine and other members of staff were the subject of disciplinary investigations by the School. Mr Valentine was suspended from duty on 17 May 2023. He then resigned on 21 August 2023 but remained engaged with the School's disciplinary process. During that process,

the School made a referral to the TRA on 30 March 2024, which has resulted in this hearing.

Although Mr Valentine was not present at this hearing, he had otherwise fully engaged in the regulatory process and had provided a substantive witness statement for these proceedings. The statement contained some broad admissions to the concerns raised in this case. However, there was not any formal admission or denial for each sub-allegation before the panel. The panel therefore applied the usual burden and standard of proof used in these proceedings in deciding on the allegations.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

1. Between 2022 and 2023, in respect of the pupils in Schedule A below, you did not:

a) record and/or ensure recording on the School system “Safeguard my school”, at all or in a timely manner:

Following the Ofsted inspection, the School commenced an investigation (alongside other interventions taking place, for example from the local authority). Witness 1 was instructed to undertake this investigation. As part of his investigation, he interviewed a number of persons connected to safeguarding roles for the School. He also obtained a number of records from the School’s electronic record keeping system. Those interview accounts and records were before the panel.

The panel reviewed each of the obtained safeguarding records, with timestamped entries, in relation to the sixteen named pupils in Schedule A of the allegation. It also considered the surrounding evidence of the accounts of others who were able to identify what took place in regard to the safeguarding concerns present for each of these pupils. Much of this evidence came from Witness 2, an experienced DSL, who was brought into the School from another school to review a number of cases and take remedial action.

Whilst the panel shared the concerns raised by others in regard to the appropriateness of some actions taken or omitted in some of these cases, the panel kept firmly in mind that allegation 1.a. relates purely to record keeping concerns and the timeframe in which they were recorded, if at all. Importantly, this allegation did not call for the panel’s assessment as to the adequacy of any particular record or the underlying substantive safeguarding actions taken or omitted.

In his statement to the TRA, Mr Valentine accepted there were difficulties with the record keeping and that some were poorly recorded, wrongly handled and did not appropriately capture the ‘child’s voice’.

i. chronologies;

‘Chronologies’ were described in the evidence as the overall presentation of the safeguarding concern raised on the system, from its creation to closing, with relevant intervening steps included and following in a logical order. To some extent the building of a chronology would include aspects further identified in this allegation, such as the actions taken, the underlying rationale for those actions and capturing the child’s voice.

For each of the scheduled pupils the panel was able to identify a relevant safeguarding record. On occasion, these were condensed into a single record which related to multiple [REDACTED]. All these records set out a broadly understandable sequence of entries. They set out the underlying safeguarding concern, any actions and proposed actions and the closure of the case. Therefore, in each example there was an identifiable and recorded chronology of some sort. There were no chronologies which the panel was able to identify as being generally untimely.

This was with the exception of Child R. The panel could not identify any relevant downloaded entries for this pupil. However, the panel noted from the TRA’s evidence it suggested a safeguarding entry must have existed for Child R. In Witness 1’s investigation report, it was recorded: *“Further chronologies and concerns have been reviewed on SMS”* and went on to list Child R. On that evidence, the panel considered it was more likely than not that a chronology did exist for Child R. In the absence of being able to consider that record, the panel considered the TRA would not be able to discharge its burden of proof in relation to Child R for this sub-allegation.

For those reasons, the panel found allegation 1.a.i, not proved.

ii. actions;

‘Actions’ were described in the evidence as being the actual acts the DSL team took in response to the concern raised, for example making contact or referrals with third parties.

Similarly to the chronologies sub-allegation, in most of the records for the scheduled pupils the panel were able to see some identifiable actions taken by the DSL team. Whilst it was apparent that in some cases, not every action may have been recorded, the panel considered it could not be said that no actions ‘at all’ were recorded for each of those concerns. Furthermore, the panel was not able to identify any action, where recorded, which appeared to have been recorded in a particularly untimely fashion.

In regard to Child N, the record did not appear to show any action taken by the DSL/DDSL at all. Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved, but only in so far as it applied to Child N.

iii. rationales; and/or

A 'rationale' was described in the evidence as documenting the reasoning for the DSL team member taking a certain action or closing the concern.

In many of the records reviewed by the panel, there was simply no recording as to the DSL/DDSL's rationale for taking, or not taking, any proposed actions noted in the record.

In regard to Child A2, Child B2 and Child L, the panel considered that although no remarks were expressly recorded as being a 'rationale' for decision-making, there were sufficient remarks from which an underlying rationale could be inferred for the actions taken by the DSL team.

Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved in relation to the scheduled pupils, except for the three noted pupils above.

iv. the child's voice.

The 'child's voice' was described in the evidence as ensuring the safeguarding process properly captured the pupil's lived experience throughout the safeguarding process and understanding their wishes and feelings. Its intention is to place the pupil at the centre of the process, rather than it resulting in them simply being recorded as a pupil who is a subject of a safeguarding concern.

In all but one of the records reviewed by the panel, there was no recording at all of the child's voice as the concerns progressed through the safeguarding process. The exception to this appeared to be Child T, where there were some recorded follow up discussions with Child T about how he was feeling about the concerns raised.

Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved in relation to the scheduled pupils, except for Child T, for the reasons given.

b) submit and/or oversee the submission of referrals to relevant external agencies at all or in a timely manner.

From the evidence of Witness 2, there appeared to be eight or nine instances in which Ofsted raised that a referral to MASH ought to have taken place but had not. The School subsequently raised those referrals following the inspection. Those referrals related to: Child H2 (and H3), Child N, Child H4, Child A, Child T, Child B, Child A2 and Child T2. As noted above, these cases involved the pupils being exposed to violence at home or showing signs of neglect. The panel also considered that a referral to MASH would have been the relevant external agency for which a referral would have been necessary. This is owing to the underlying nature of the concern present, which might have required intervention from agencies outside of the school to properly safeguard those pupils.

Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved in so far as it applied to those scheduled pupils.

The panel then went on to consider the scheduled pupils, who were not subject to the Ofsted concerns, but were identified in further reviews following the inspection.

In regard to Child L (who was a [REDACTED] had gone 'missing in education') and Child B2 (who was [REDACTED], but was a vulnerable pupil), the panel considered a referral to MASH was likely needed in the circumstances and no apparent referral had been made. Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation further proved in relation to those two pupils.

In regard to Child R (who had disclosed concerns relating to the use of violence and alcohol at home), although there was not a MASH referral made, the panel noted there had been involvement of the local authority via a 'common assessment framework' pathway, which the panel considered was capable of amounting to a relevant referral. Furthermore, in the linked concern for Child C, Child J, and Child H (where the concern was about violence [REDACTED]), the panel considered that it could infer a relevant referral must have been made due to the involvement of the 'early help team', which was part of the local authority. Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation not proved in relation to these two scheduled pupils.

2. Between March 2020 to May 2023, with respect of the School's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DDSL') and/or Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead ('ADSL'), you:

a) Did not ensure a job description was in place for the DDSL/ADSL;

All those with formalised DSL roles, namely Witness 5 as the Deputy DSL and Witness 3 and Witness 4 as the Alternative DSLs, gave evidence to the panel that they were not provided with a formal job description for their DSL roles.

In his statement to the panel, Mr Valentine explained that he thought he had made job descriptions for the team. He said this was following his realisation that this was an issue when he joined in 2018. He further stated he could not otherwise prove the position in the absence of being able to access the school systems.

The panel noted that multiple witnesses had given unambiguous positions on not receiving a job description. The panel was not able to identify any reason for doubting their individual evidence, which was supported by the corroboration between each of the witnesses. Furthermore, the panel noted each of these witnesses otherwise spoke positively of Mr Valentine throughout their evidence at the hearing.

On that basis, the panel considered it was more likely than not that formalised job descriptions were not in place for members of the DSL team. Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved.

b) Did not ensure that the DDSL/ADSL was appropriately supported and/or supervised by you;

Having received evidence that the work of the DSL team was effectively confined to Witness 5 and Mr Valentine themselves, the focus of the panel's consideration in this sub-allegation was the support and supervision given to Witness 5 as the Deputy DSL.

Witness 5's evidence was that notwithstanding a clear intention and desire from Mr Valentine to support and supervise the safeguarding processes at the School, she did not receive this support from him. Her evidence was that she understood this occurred due to difficulties in securing his availability, usually due to other competing priorities for his time.

Witness 5's evidence was that a weekly safeguarding meeting was scheduled to take place between them. However, only 54 of those meetings took place in a 126 week period. Witness 5 described those meetings often being cancelled at short notice or even during the course of the meetings, as Mr Valentine would be pulled away on other urgent commitments.

In his statement to the panel, Mr Valentine said that by September 2022 he accepted he was not adequately supporting Witness 5 in her Deputy DSL role and he also accepted that he had put too much responsibility on her. He agreed the weekly meeting he had set up to try and offer his support was often interrupted with other competing needs in the school community.

Taking into account this essentially undisputed evidence, the panel found this sub-allegation proved.

c) Did not discuss effective strategy with the DDSL/ADSL and/or to follow up with her on specific cases, at all or in a timely manner;

The panel firstly considered what would amount to 'discussing an effective strategy'. On the basis the allegation separately deals with discussing case specific issues, the panel inferred that strategy discussions must refer to discussions based around higher level safeguarding processes. It was apparent from the evidence of both Witness 5 and Mr Valentine that there was simply no time for discussions of a strategic nature to take place between them, owing to the ongoing day-by-day challenges.

As noted above there was undisputed evidence that there were discussions, at least, about some specific cases.

Accordingly, the panel found the first aspect of this sub-allegation (relating to effective strategy discussions) proved and the second aspect of following up on specific cases not proved.

d) Did not ensure that the DDSL/ADSL completed training, at least every two years.

It is a requirement under KCSIE that DSLs (including Deputies and Alternatives) receive safeguarding training every two years.

Witness 5's evidence was that her safeguarding training expired in 2021; she did not retake the training until April 2022, thus leaving a gap of around a year during her duties as a deputy DSL.

Furthermore, Witness 3's evidence was that her training was permitted to lapse due to her upcoming [REDACTED] however she remained in post until September 2022. Witness 4's evidence was that he didn't obtain his DSL training until December 2022, which provided a further training gap in the Alternative DSL cover provision.

In his statement to the panel, Mr Valentine stated that without access to the records he could no longer recall when the training took place, but that he could recall attending safeguarding training with both Witness 3 and Witness 5.

In light of the clear evidence from the TRA's witnesses, which as noted above there was no reason to doubt, the panel considered it was more likely than not that Mr Valentine did not ensure the compulsory training was completed by the full DSL team. Accordingly, the panel found this sub-allegation proved.

3. With respect to the conduct alleged at paragraphs 1a) – 1b), he did not safeguard the pupil(s) as set out in Schedule A.

In regard to the record keeping failures found proved at sub-allegation 1.a, the panel considered those pupils would not have been safeguarded as a result of Mr Valentine's omission in not ensuring those appropriate records were kept. KCSIE itself highlights the importance of good record keeping, which at its heart ensures there can be a proper degree of information sharing between those undertaking safeguarding functions. There are inherent safeguarding risks to information sharing when those records do not contain the full information they should, such that the panel was satisfied that it could amount to those pupils not being appropriately safeguarded.

In regard to the scheduled pupils as found proved in allegation 1.b, the panel considered they were not safeguarded as a result of Mr Valentine's omission in not ensuring such referrals were made. Having considered the underlying concerns raised in each of those instances (as noted above), the panel was satisfied that an external referral was needed in those circumstances to properly safeguard those pupils.

Accordingly, the panel found this allegation is proved.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Valentine, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Valentine 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...
- 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 Valentine’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 was relevant.

It was readily apparent that Mr Valentine’s safeguarding failures did not arise from purposeful disregard or indifference to them. It appears there were a number of factors which might legitimately be considered as impacting on the culpability of Mr Valentine. However, as the DSL, the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the School’s pupils lay with Mr Valentine. Safeguarding can be considered a fundamental aspect of a teacher’s practice and these were not minor breaches of safeguarding provisions. Nor could Mr Valentine’s actions be regarded as isolated or a momentary lapse. The failures were multiple and extended over a significant period of time, in which several pupils were exposed to unnecessary safeguarding risks. The panel considered that Mr Valentine’s proven conduct in regard to these safeguarding failures could only be properly considered as being serious enough to cross the high threshold for a finding at this stage. It appeared to the panel that a number of potential mitigating factors would weigh heavily in its consideration at the following stage.

Whilst this stage is not subject to any formal admissions, it was apparent that Mr Valentine himself was also able to recognise the seriousness of the concerns present in this case. In his statement to the panel, he remarked:

“I recognise that the primary responsibility for the headteacher and all members of the team is safeguarding of the children. Therefore, I acknowledge that my failings in this aspect of my role were serious. I do regret massively that the shortcomings in my actions put these children at risk.”

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

In relation to whether Mr Valentine’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 again considered whether Mr Valentine’s conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel’s findings as to whether Mr Valentine was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant to its consideration in this case.

The panel considered the findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher. The public places significant trust in the profession to protect children. As noted above, safeguarding is a fundamental aspect of any teacher’s practice and becomes a heightened consideration when in a leadership position such as being a Headteacher or DSL. The panel therefore considered there would be a real risk to the reputation and trust placed in the profession if a finding of disrepute was not made in these circumstances.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Valentine’s actions also 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;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Valentine, which involved misconduct relating to the improper safeguarding of pupils, 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 Valentine 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 Valentine 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 Valentine in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and he is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

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 Valentine.

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;
- failure to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk e.g. failed to notify the designated safeguarding lead and/or make a referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies when abuse, neglect and/or harmful cultural practices were identified;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);

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.

Although not present at this hearing, the panel noted that Mr Valentine had otherwise fully engaged throughout the TRA's processes and had no previous regulatory findings against him in his three decade long career.

The panel further considered the list of mitigating factors at paragraph 43 of the Advice.

Regarding the issue of deliberateness, the panel had earlier noted that Mr Valentine's safeguarding failures were not a result of purposeful disregard or indifference to them. In submissions to the panel on sanction, Ms Manning-Rees accepted this was a fair assessment of the evidence and that accordingly, Mr Valentine's actions were not 'deliberate'.

The panel also noted that a number of TRA witnesses also appeared to hold this view. For example, Witness 5's evidence to the panel was:

"He was so caring. He absolutely had the well-being and the interests of the children at heart in everything he did".

Witness 4's evidence was that he thought Mr Valentine "*would be mortified*" by the fact he was facing regulatory action for safeguarding failures.

The Advice further lists the factor of 'extreme duress' (eg being under physical or significant intimidation). Whilst that is not a relevant factor in this case, it was apparent to the panel that Mr Valentine was facing extremely difficult circumstances in the School's environment at the time these failures occurred, which are set out below.

[REDACTED]

The evidence showed the governance at the School during the period of the allegation was particularly turbulent. The School was subject to an Interim Executive Board intervention and following the reintroduction of a governing body in September 2022, there was a succession of four chairs of governors until April 2023. It did not appear to the panel that the School's safeguarding issues had been identified by any oversight bodies, until the Ofsted inspection occurred. The evidence showed that during this time the governing body considered safeguarding was a 'strength' of the School.

There was no suggestion in the evidence that Mr Valentine was concealing the difficulties he had with keeping up with appropriate safeguarding duties. Witness 5's evidence to the panel was that both she and Mr Valentine had sought help. She recalled that Mr Valentine had emailed the local authority about seeking extra support with safeguarding, but nothing was forthcoming. Witness 5, who did the majority of the safeguarding work at the School, explained in her evidence that she did not know who the safeguarding governor was and had no working relationship with them. The panel noted that following the Ofsted inspection, there was a significant increase in the School's safeguarding resources. The panel heard evidence that although the School's roll had now reduced to around 150, there were now four members of staff actively dealing with the DSL duties at the School.

Witness 4 commented in his evidence that whilst Mr Valentine was subject to some intervention from outside bodies (albeit not in regard to safeguarding), his perception was that it did not appear to be particularly supportive of Mr Valentine. The evidence clearly showed that significant pressure was being placed on Mr Valentine's time to focus on significant behaviour difficulties at the School and improving pupil outcomes.

There also appeared to be a number of internal difficulties at the School. There was a high level of staff turnover, successive maternity leave taken by key members of the senior leadership team and other staff illnesses within the DSL team. Furthermore, a number of witnesses commented on how the electronic safeguarding system that was recently brought in was not easy to use and navigate.

The panel also took into account that during the relevant period the Coronavirus pandemic and its lockdowns were in full effect. This was an exceptionally difficult time for schools.

The mitigating factor of demonstrating 'exceptionally high standards' and 'contributing significantly to the education sector' is naturally a very high bar to cross. The panel considered whilst the available evidence did not suggest that Mr Valentine had reached this high bar, it was readily apparent to the panel that Mr Valentine was a respected member of the profession. In Witness 4's evidence, he described Mr Valentine as possessing "*very strong ethics*" and that he thought that "*morally he was a role model to staff*".

Mr Valentine provided a character reference in his evidence. It was from a retired CEO of a multi academy trust and Headteacher of a nearby school who thereby had a number of professional interactions with Mr Valentine, when he worked at a former school. The reference said:

“I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work with Shaun over a number of years. I found him to be a highly professional, supportive colleague, who held himself to the highest standards, and always put the children and families at the heart of everything he did.”

As earlier noted, Mr Valentine’s statement to the panel gave broad admissions to the concerns raised in this case. The panel considered his evidence did not seek to minimise his actions and showed a significant degree of remorse for the failures that had occurred. The panel was satisfied that Mr Valentine therefore had insight into his misconduct.

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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response.

Given the significant difficulties and pressures Mr Valentine was facing at the time, the panel considered a prohibition order would not be proportionate in these circumstances. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession. Furthermore, the panel was satisfied that publication would suitably inform any future teaching employer of any potential risks to pupils, such that it did not need to recommend prohibition in this case in order to properly protect pupils. On those grounds the panel considered it would not be appropriate to recommend a prohibition.

Accordingly, the panel recommended to the Secretary of State that no prohibition order be imposed in this case.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Shaun Valentine should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Valentine 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...
- 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 Valentine involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel has found that the conduct of Mr Valentine fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include failing to discharge safeguarding responsibilities and thereby putting pupils at risk.

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 Valentine, 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, "In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Valentine, which involved misconduct relating to the improper safeguarding of pupils, 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 has set out as follows:

"As earlier noted, Mr Valentine's statement to the panel gave broad admissions to the concerns raised in this case. The panel considered his evidence did not seek to minimise his actions and showed a significant degree of remorse for the failures that had occurred. The panel was satisfied that Mr Valentine therefore had insight into his misconduct."

I have therefore given this element some weight in reaching my decision.

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

"The panel considered the findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher. The public places significant trust in the profession to protect children. As noted above, safeguarding is a fundamental aspect of any teacher's practice and becomes a heightened consideration when in a leadership position such as being a Headteacher or DSL. The panel therefore considered there would be a real risk to the reputation and trust placed in the profession if a finding of disrepute was not made in these circumstances."

I am particularly mindful of the finding that pupils were not properly safeguarded because a headteacher had failed to carry out their responsibilities 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 Valentine himself. The panel has commented:

“Although not present at this hearing, the panel noted that Mr Valentine had otherwise fully engaged throughout the TRA’s processes and had no previous regulatory findings against him in his three decade long career.”

The panel has also commented:

“The mitigating factor of demonstrating ‘exceptionally high standards’ and ‘contributing significantly to the education sector’ is naturally a very high bar to cross. The panel considered whilst the available evidence did not suggest that Mr Valentine had reached this high bar, it was readily apparent to the panel that Mr Valentine was a respected member of the profession. In Witness 4’s evidence, he described Mr Valentine as possessing *“very strong ethics”* and that he thought that *“morally he was a role model to staff”*.”

The panel also noted a positive character reference which attested to Mr Valentine’s professional conduct.

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Valentine 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 mitigating factors. The panel has found that “Mr Valentine’s safeguarding failures were not a result of purposeful disregard or indifference to them” and that “There was no suggestion in the evidence that Mr Valentine was concealing the difficulties he had with keeping up with appropriate safeguarding duties.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel’s finding “Mr Valentine was facing extremely difficult circumstances in the School’s environment at the time these failures occurred”. On the basis of the evidence available to it, the panel has noted that “there was [REDACTED], “the governance at the School during the period of the allegation was particularly turbulent”, “significant pressure was being placed on Mr Valentine’s time to focus on significant behaviour difficulties at the School and improving pupil outcomes” and there “appeared to be a number of internal difficulties at the School.”

I have also placed weight on the panel’s finding that Mr Valentine had shown a significant degree of remorse and also had insight into his misconduct.

Whilst the multiple safeguarding failures in this case are serious and extended over a significant period of time, in view of the specific mitigating factors in this case, I have agreed with the panel's recommendation that "the panel was satisfied that publication would suitably inform any future teaching employer of any potential risks to pupils, such that it did not need to recommend prohibition in this case in order to properly protect pupils."

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

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 2 October 2026

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