



Mr Mark Fletcher: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

October 2026

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

Teacher: Mr Mark Fletcher

Teacher ref number: 0859059

Teacher date of birth: 21 May 1981

TRA reference: 22802

Date of determination: 7 October 2026

Former employer: Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College, Swindon

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 5 to 7 October 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Mark Fletcher.

The panel members were Mrs Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Paul Hawkins (lay panellist), Mrs Alexandra Burton (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Amy Tinsley of Birketts LLP.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Oyin Makinde of Browne Jacobson LLP.

Mr Fletcher was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the undated notice of proceedings, as amended at the outset of the hearing.

It was alleged that Mr Fletcher was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as a Classroom Teacher at Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College (“the School”) between 1 September 2017 and 4 October 2023;

- 1) He failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A by:
 - a) Writing to Pupil A words to the effect of:
 - i. “It is rare to meet someone who changes who you are” on or around 23 July 2019;
 - ii. “You have had a real effect on me” on or around 23 July 2019;
 - iii. “Do you actually want to meet up and talk ... Free most days from midnight ... I can do tomorrow/the early hours of Saturday ...” on or around 30 August 2019;
 - b) Contacting Pupil A:
 - i. outside of school hours;
 - ii. in order to meet with her outside of the School premises and/or school hours;
 - iii. via his personal email address.
 - c) Driving to and/or by Pupil A's home and/or meeting up with Pupil A at or around midnight on or around 30 August 2019.
- 2) He engaged in inappropriate and/or unprofessional behaviour on one or more occasions towards Pupil A in that he told and/or asked Pupil A words to the effect of “You’re not gonna tell anyone are you” on or around 30 August 2019.
- 3) His behaviour as may be found proven at 2 above lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.
- 4) He engaged in and/or developed a personal and/or romantic relationship with Pupil A whilst she was still a student at the School and/or after Pupil A left the School.
- 5) His conduct as may be proven at 1 and/or 2 and/or 4 above was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

Mr Fletcher provided no admissions and the panel proceeded on the basis that he disputed all allegations.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of hearing and response – pages 4 to 16

Section 2: TRA witness statements – pages 18 to 66

Section 3: TRA documents – pages 68 to 205

Section 4: Teacher documents – page 207

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 May 2020 (“the Procedures”).

Witnesses

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

- Pupil A – Pupil A
- 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.

Mr Fletcher commenced employment at the School on 1 September 2009.

On or around 28 June 2023, Pupil A made an allegation to the School that she had been in a relationship with Mr Fletcher. The School subsequently referred the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (“LADO”).

On 3 July 2023, Mr Fletcher was suspended from his role at the School and the School commenced an investigation. On 4 October 2023, Mr Fletcher’s employment at the school was terminated.

The police investigated allegations against Mr Fletcher, but no formal action was taken.

The matter was referred to the TRA on 22 November 2023.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

1) You failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A by:

a) Writing to Pupil A words to the effect of:

- i. **“It is rare to meet someone who changes who you are” on or around 23 July 2019;**
- ii. **“You have had a real effect on me” on or around 23 July 2019;**
- iii. **“Do you actually want to meet up and talk ... Free most days from midnight ... I can do tomorrow/the early hours of Saturday ...” on or around 30 August 2019;**

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii).

The panel noted a document that appeared to be a typed and undated letter, although it was not immediately clear who the sender or recipient of the letter was. The panel had sight of an image showing a card which read “[PUPIL A] FAREWELL BUT NOT FAREWELL. YOU ARE AMAZING. DO NOT FORGET US. ALWAYS HERE. KEEP IN TOUCH! MR FLETCHER”. It appeared from the image that the typed letter had been folded and inserted into the card. The letter included the following:

- *“It is rare to meet someone who changes who you are.”*
- *“You have had a real effect on me...”*

Whilst the letter was undated, the panel noted an email from Pupil A to Mr Fletcher dated 23 July 2019 which stated: *"I decided to wait till I was in a bad mood to read your card..."*. The panel was satisfied after careful consideration and taking into account Pupil A's evidence that, on the balance of probabilities, it was more likely than not that the letter it had sight of was the letter referred to in that e-mail and therefore that it was given by Mr Fletcher to Pupil A, on or around 23 July 2019.

The panel also noted a copy of an email sent from Mr Fletcher to Pupil A dated 30 August 2019 at 1:44am which included the following: *"Do you actually want to meet up and talk... Free most days from midnight... But yeah, would be good, reckon I can do tomorrow/the early hours of Saturday if that works, so long as it's not raining..."*.

The Panel noted the minutes of the School's disciplinary hearing. Mr Fletcher explained that his intention in writing Pupil A a leaving card was to respond to the card that Pupil A had given him, and that much of the language used was *"mirroring"* or responding to Pupil A's comments. Mr Fletcher said that the comment *"you have had an effect on me"* explains the context of him then saying that Pupil A had made him a better teacher, as he had to explain physics in more detail and think about his explanations. Mr Fletcher also explained that the email in which he suggested meeting with Pupil A *"tomorrow/the early hours of Saturday"* was partly a joke. Mr Fletcher stated that Pupil A had mentioned walking during the night, but that he did not have a preference as to the time that they met.

The panel also considered an undated statement provided by Mr Fletcher as part of the School's investigation. In this statement, Mr Fletcher explained that, having received a card from Pupil A, he gave her a thank you card in return, wishing her the best of luck and also included his personal contact details. Mr Fletcher stated that he had given similar cards to former students and was aware that other members of teaching staff had done the same. Mr Fletcher stated that some emails were exchanged with Pupil A in August 2019 regarding holiday plans and university choices but described these emails as *"wholly platonic"*.

The panel considered the witness statement and oral evidence of Pupil A, who explained that she was a pupil at the School during [REDACTED]. Pupil A submitted that she started to receive letters and emails from Mr Fletcher, during July and August 2019, including words to the effect of those outlined in each of allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii).

The panel considered the witness statement and oral evidence of Witness A, [REDACTED]. Witness A said Pupil A attended the School in 2023 to report allegations against Mr Fletcher. Witness A set out that, as part of the School's investigation, Pupil A provided the School with printed evidence of emails and other written communications she had had with Mr Fletcher, in which Witness A could see that Mr Fletcher had used

words to the effect of those identified at allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii). Witness A described the communications as inappropriate and lengthy.

The panel considered the letter in its entirety and the context of the words outlined in allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii). The panel noted that the letter did, at points, refer to Mr Fletcher's role as a teacher and the subject matter that he taught. Mr Fletcher also referred to his class as a whole, in that he said "*You already know how special this class has been to me*".

However, the panel was satisfied that the communication between Mr Fletcher and Pupil A represented a clear failure by Mr Fletcher to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A. The letter and emails to Pupil A contained a significant amount of personal information and used language of a personal and emotive nature, which was not appropriate in the context of the professional relationship between a teacher and pupil, specifically the language identified within these allegations.

The panel also noted Witness A's evidence that Pupil A was the only pupil known to have received a message of this nature and that Mr Fletcher had provided no evidence of comparable communications with others.

The panel found that each of the statements in allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii) had been written to Pupil A by Mr Fletcher on the dates referred to in the allegations. The panel considered that the nature, level of detail and emotional character of the communication went beyond the proper parameters of the teacher pupil relationship and constituted Mr Fletcher failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A.

The panel found allegations 1(a)(i), 1(a)(ii) and 1(a)(iii) proven.

b) Contacting Pupil A:

- i. outside of school hours;**
- ii. in order to meet with her outside of the School premises and/or school hours;**
- iii. via your personal email address.**

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 1(b)(i), 1(b)(ii) and 1(b)(iii).

The panel noted that it had before it a number of emails from Mr Fletcher to Pupil A. These included, without limitation, emails sent by him on the following dates and times:

- Tuesday 23 July 2019, 2:38am

- Wednesday 24 July 2019, 10:20pm
- Thursday 25 July 2019, 4:04am
- Friday 26 July 2019, 1:44am
- Sunday 28 July 2019, 3:50am
- Wednesday 31 July 2019, 12:39am
- Saturday 10 August 2019, 1:06am

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher had sent a large number of emails to Pupil A, most of which were during the middle of the night or early hours of the morning. Some of the emails were also sent at weekends. The panel considered what constituted “*school hours*”, noting that some of the communications between Pupil A and Mr Fletcher took place during the school holiday. The panel was satisfied that, by any definition, the communications took place outside of school hours on the basis that they were variously sent: a) outside of normal school hours, including at weekends; and b) during school holidays.

The panel noted an email sent from Mr Fletcher to Pupil A which read as follows: “*Do you actually want to meet up and talk... reckon I can do tomorrow/the early hours of Saturday if that works...*”. The email was sent on Friday 30 August at 1:42am and the panel concluded from it that Mr Fletcher was seeking to meet with Pupil A outside of school premises and outside of school hours.

The panel noted that the emails within the documents before the panel were from an email address: [REDACTED]. The panel also noted an email from Mr Fletcher to Pupil A dated 23 July 2019 which states: “*Yeah this is a really random email address ngl. I figured I should use my normal email as well before I get logged out of school email lol.*”, and a further email dated Wednesday 24 July 2019 in which Mr Fletcher stated “*I’ll explain the odd email address another time...*”. During the School’s investigation, Mr Fletcher accepted that this was his personal email address and the panel therefore concluded this was a personal e-mail address of Mr Fletcher.

The panel noted the minutes of the School’s disciplinary hearing. Mr Fletcher asked Witness A how he arrived at the conclusion that Mr Fletcher was aware of Pupil A’s [REDACTED].

Mr Fletcher also confirmed during the School’s disciplinary hearing that he had never given his personal contact details to a current student but was aware of a culture at the School of keeping in touch with former students, as he had done this previously. Mr Fletcher explained that his reason for providing his personal email address was that he was going away over the summer and was not very good at accessing work emails from

his phone, nor was he likely to check work emails over the summer. Mr Fletcher explained that his intention in communicating via email with Pupil A over the summer was to support someone who was worried about their academic performance, results day and university.

Mr Fletcher stated that the tone of his emails and the suggestion to meet with Pupil A was based on the assumption that Pupil A was no longer a student. On reflection, Mr Fletcher acknowledged that, had he known Pupil A was still considered a student, he would not have used the same tone or suggested meeting up outside of school hours.

The panel considered the witness statement and oral evidence of Pupil A, who stated that she started to receive letters and emails from Mr Fletcher, in July and August 2019. Pupil A submitted that, looking back, she considered these messages were inappropriate as they breached proper professional boundaries. The panel noted the conflict between Mr Fletcher's assertion that he no longer believed Pupil A to be a pupil at the School in July and August 2019, while also stating that he was maintaining contact with Pupil A to provide support to her as a teacher.

Pupil A submitted that some messages were sent from Mr Fletcher's school email account, whilst others came from his personal email. She further submitted that emails were sent outside of school hours and late in the middle of the night and were often "*casual chat*" rather than being education related.

The panel considered the witness statement and oral evidence of Witness A, who stated that he had noted from the evidence gathered during the investigation that Mr Fletcher had sent emails to Pupil A outside of school hours, and often in the middle of the night. Some of the emails were also sent via his personal email address.

Witness A submitted that Mr Fletcher's behaviour was concerning, especially in that Pupil A was [REDACTED]. Witness A considered that it would have been important for there to be clear professional boundaries, and the use of a personal email address to contact Pupil A, together with frequent and casual correspondence, breached this boundary. Witness A submitted that regardless of a [REDACTED], he believed professional boundaries must always be observed, as teachers are in a position of power and trust and must not abuse this position.

The panel carefully considered the evidence before it, focusing on the evidence of the documents which it had in the bundle before it and the oral and written evidence of Pupil A and Witness A. The panel found that Mr Fletcher had been contacting Pupil A outside of school hours in order to meet with her outside of the School premises and/or school hours via his personal email address. The panel considered that the emails sent from Mr Fletcher to Pupil A were of a personal nature and not what would be expected between a student and teacher. The panel considered that the content, frequency and times of those e-mails as well as the use of a personal email address were inappropriate and that

Mr Fletcher had, by sending these, failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A.

The panel found allegation 1(b)(i), 1(b)(ii) and 1(b)(iii) proven.

c) Driving to and/or by Pupil A's home and/or meeting up with Pupil A at or around midnight on or around 30 August 2019.

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 1(c).

The panel noted an email in the bundle of documents before it dated 30 August 2019, in which Mr Fletcher asked Pupil A to meet up and talk in the early hours of the morning or the following day.

The panel noted the witness statement and oral evidence of Pupil A. Pupil A submitted that she and Mr Fletcher had been exchanging emails and she told him where she lived. Pupil A recorded that at around 1am on or around 30 August 2019, Mr Fletcher drove to her house and Pupil A "*snuck out*" to meet him, and that they spoke until around 6am in the morning.

The panel noted that it was unfortunate that Mr Fletcher had not attended the hearing to give oral evidence, nor had he engaged in the proceedings. Recognising the absence of Mr Fletcher, and the pivotal nature of Pupil A's testimony to the allegations, the panel and presenting officer repeatedly sought to test Pupil A's evidence during oral submissions. The panel found Pupil A to be plausible and noted that her evidence had remained consistent both during the School's investigation and the TRA proceedings.

The panel noted that during the School's investigation, Pupil A confirmed that she and Mr Fletcher first met up outside of school on 31 August 2019. Pupil A's account was also supported by the contemporaneous email in which Mr Fletcher proposed meeting during the early hours of the morning.

Accordingly, the panel found it proven on the balance of probabilities that Mr Fletcher had driven to and/or by Pupil A's home and/or had met up with Pupil A at or around midnight on or around 30 August 2019. The panel considered that, in so doing, Mr Fletcher had clearly failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Pupil A. The panel was clear that it was obviously wholly inappropriate for a teacher to arrange to, and then to meet up with a pupil, and the panel could conceive of no justifiable reason for this in these circumstances.

The panel found allegation 1(c) proven.

2) You engaged in inappropriate and/or unprofessional behaviour on one or more occasions towards Pupil A in that you told and/or asked Pupil A words

to the effect of “You’re not gonna tell anyone are you” on or around 30 August 2019.

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 2.

The panel noted the minutes of the School’s disciplinary appeal hearing included in the bundle of documents before it, which recorded that, when asked about Pupil A’s allegation that Mr Fletcher had asked her to keep the meeting a secret, Mr Fletcher responded: “*That is a lie...*”.

The panel considered the minutes of the School’s investigation meeting with Pupil A, in which she stated that Mr Fletcher asked if she felt their meeting up was weird. Pupil A stated that Mr Fletcher went on to comment that he trusted her, which implied he did not want other people to know.

The panel also considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A, who stated that Mr Fletcher emailed her about meeting up on 30 August 2019 and then proceeded to drive to her house at 1am. Pupil A submitted that she sat in the car with Mr Fletcher talking until around 6am. Pupil A further submitted that it was during this first meet up with Mr Fletcher, that he said “*You’re not gonna tell anyone are you*”. When Pupil A told Mr Fletcher that she would not, he responded “*good, I trust you*” or words to that effect.

Pupil A stated that she understood that Mr Fletcher was referring to the fact that they had met up but also understood that he was alluding to the general correspondence between them and the nature of the relationship generally. Pupil A explained that Mr Fletcher tried to “*make a joke of it*” but she knew it was not a joke, and she understood him to be indicating that she was supposed to keep the relationship a secret. Pupil A believed this was due to the fact that Mr Fletcher was a teacher and also because he was married.

The panel was satisfied that on one or more occasion, Mr Fletcher told and/or asked Pupil A words to the effect of “*You’re not gonna tell anyone are you*” on or around 30 August 2019. The panel concluded that, in making such a statement and in apparently seeking to conceal their interaction, Mr Fletcher was clearly in breach of professional boundaries between a teacher and a pupil. The panel was satisfied therefore that by engaging in the conduct it had found proven towards Pupil A, Mr Fletcher engaged in inappropriate and/or unprofessional behaviour

The panel found allegation 2 proven.

3) Your behaviour as may be found proven at 2 above lacked integrity and/or was dishonest.

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 3.

Having found allegation 2 proven, the panel first considered whether Mr Fletcher's conduct amounted to a failure to act with integrity. In doing so, the panel had regard to *Wingate & Anor v Solicitors Regulation Authority*, which describes integrity as the "*higher standards which society expects from professional persons*." The panel was mindful that professionals are not required to be "*paragons of virtue*", but they are expected to act in accordance with the ethical and behavioural standards that underpin their professional role.

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher occupied a position of trust and considered that, as a sixth form teacher he would likely have been aware that Pupil A was [REDACTED]. The panel considered the oral evidence of Witness A who explained that the School shared details in respect of a pupil's [REDACTED] during sixth form teacher meetings and that Mr Fletcher was part of these meetings. The panel noted Mr Fletcher's response during the School's investigation was that he was not aware of Pupil A's [REDACTED]. However, the panel considered that Mr Fletcher would in any event have known that Pupil A was [REDACTED] due to the information shared with him in her emails and, furthermore, that meeting a pupil in the middle of the night and seeking to get her to keep their meeting secret would be wholly unacceptable and inappropriate.

Notwithstanding this, Mr Fletcher proceeded to meet with Pupil A and asked "*You're not gonna tell anyone are you*". The panel was clear that, in doing so, Mr Fletcher acted in a manner which was wholly inconsistent with the expectations of a teacher and that his conduct, as found proven at allegation 2, lacked integrity.

The panel then went on to consider whether Mr Fletcher acted dishonestly and, in doing so, had regard to the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford*.

The panel firstly sought to ascertain the actual state of Mr Fletcher's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel reminded itself that the minutes of the School's disciplinary appeal hearing included in the bundle before it, which recorded that, when asked about Pupil A's allegation that Mr Fletcher had asked her to keep the meeting a secret, Mr Fletcher responded: "*That is a lie...*".

The panel was clear that, in making the comment which it had found proven, Mr Fletcher was attempting to conceal the fact that he had met with Pupil A. The panel did not find that there was any plausible, alternative explanation for his conduct in these circumstances. The panel noted that Mr Fletcher had not, at any point, made the School aware that he was corresponding or meeting with Pupil A. The panel considered it was proven that Mr Fletcher was attempting to keep his relationship with Pupil A secret. The panel therefore concluded that in knowingly seeking to keep his inappropriate and unprofessional actions secret, Mr Fletcher was clearly being knowingly dishonest.

The panel then went on to consider whether Mr Fletcher's conduct was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel considered that Mr Fletcher knew that meeting Pupil A in the middle of the night was inappropriate, yet he proceeded to do so without informing the School and then sought an assurance from Pupil A that she would not tell anyone about the meeting. The panel considered that this was a deliberate attempt by Mr Fletcher to conceal his conduct. In these circumstances, the panel was satisfied that ordinary decent people would consider Mr Fletcher's conscious attempt to conceal his inappropriate meeting with Pupil A to be dishonest.

In all the circumstances, the panel concluded that Mr Fletcher's conduct as found proven at allegation 2 was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

Therefore, the panel found allegation 3 proven.

4) You engaged in and/or developed a personal and/or romantic relationship with Pupil A whilst she was still a student at the School and/or after Pupil A left the School.

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 4.

The panel considered an undated written statement provided by Mr Fletcher as part of the School's investigation, in which he submitted that he did not commence a personal relationship with Pupil A until May 2020, 11 months after she had left the School. The panel also considered the minutes of the School's disciplinary hearing, in which Mr Fletcher questioned Witness A as to his understanding of when pupils are able to leave school. It was Mr Fletcher's position that it is widely accepted that Year 13 pupils are able to leave school on the conclusion of exams and therefore he no longer believed Pupil A to be a student. Mr Fletcher also acknowledged that he met up with Pupil A in September to discuss university.

The panel considered the oral evidence and written statement of Pupil A. Pupil A submitted that she and Mr Fletcher built a very strong bond, although her intimate relationship with Mr Fletcher did not start until after she had left the School.

Pupil A submitted that Mr Fletcher was a friendly and encouraging teacher and was particularly complimentary of her ability in physics. Although she did not enjoy the subject at GCSE level, Pupil A explained that this became her favourite subject as she received more encouragement from teachers and could see the impact of her hard work during her A levels.

Whilst Pupil A did receive encouragement from multiple teachers whilst a pupil at the School, she submitted that her relationship with Mr Fletcher developed as he began to "*open up*". Pupil A explained that this happened in the lead up to her exams in 2019, when she would spend more time in Mr Fletcher's classroom for revision, sometimes alone.

Pupil A submitted that when she mentioned matters of a personal nature, such as discussing her home life, Mr Fletcher would ask questions and show interest which other teachers would not do.

Once Pupil A's exams were finished, Mr Fletcher gave Pupil A a letter, which included his personal contact details. Pupil A explained that when she received Mr Fletcher's letter, she was surprised that he had put so much effort into it and felt that there was a sense of eagerness to stay in touch. Pupil A found it interesting that Mr Fletcher was still so interested in spending time with her or speaking to her, after her exams had finished. At the time, Pupil A stated that she did not "*overthink*" this, as she enjoyed the conversations and interaction that she had with Mr Fletcher.

Pupil A submitted that Mr Fletcher initially helped her contact universities, after she had not achieved the results for her first choice. Conversations took place over email and became increasingly lengthy and more frequent. Pupil A detailed occasions where she then met Mr Fletcher, including when he had driven to her house at 1am. Pupil A also described having received a lot of support from Mr Fletcher, which she liked.

Pupil A submitted that Mr Fletcher's behaviour encouraged an emotional bond, which she considered to be flattering at the time and made her feel special.

Pupil A explained that up until December 2019, nothing physical other than hugs took place between her and Mr Fletcher. However, from the first meeting in August 2019 up until December 2019, Pupil A submitted that she was having a lot of emotional conversations with Mr Fletcher, which became increasingly more about how they felt about each other. Pupil A described these conversations as conversations that you would have with someone you were in a relationship with, due to the length and intimacy of them. Pupil A submitted that during this time, whilst in the car with Mr Fletcher, he would also reach out and hold her hand.

Pupil A submitted that the relationship progressed into a sexual relationship in December 2019 when they began engaging in physical sexual activity. This would often happen late at night, in Mr Fletcher's car. When questioned as to when Pupil A considered Mr Fletcher had the intent to have a sexual relationship, Pupil A believed this was evident from when Mr Fletcher asked her if she found him attractive, in or around December 2019.

Pupil A also explained that, in December 2019, [REDACTED] and Mr Fletcher would offer to bring her things and provide support. The panel considered that the nature of these interactions was akin to that of a romantic relationship.

Pupil A submitted that she disclosed her relationship with Mr Fletcher to the School in or around June 2023, after the relationship ceased.

The panel considered the witness statement and oral evidence of Witness A, who submitted that Pupil A disclosed that she was in a sexual relationship with Mr Fletcher after she had left the School. In Witness A's written statement, he submitted that Mr Fletcher had also admitted this, although the panel did not have sight of any contemporaneous documentary evidence to support that Mr Fletcher acknowledged it was a sexual relationship.

Witness A also submitted that Pupil A was a pupil up until the end of August 2019 and explained that her details remained on the School's information management system until the beginning of September.

The panel carefully considered the point at which Pupil A left the School and was no longer a pupil. It was accepted by the panel that Pupil A would have remained on the School roll until 31 August 2019 and was therefore a pupil up until this point. The panel was mindful that Mr Fletcher, by his own admission, had met with Pupil A in September to discuss university and was, nevertheless, carrying out the role of a teacher even after this point. The panel believed that Mr Fletcher, in his position as a teacher, should have informed the School that he was still in communication and/or meeting Pupil A after she had left the school.

The panel found, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Fletcher had developed a personal relationship with Pupil A whilst she was still a student at the School, particularly noting the tone, nature and frequency of the communication between Mr Fletcher and Pupil A which it had seen. Mr Fletcher shared very personal information about him and his family with Pupil A, as evidenced in the emails before the panel. Mr Fletcher was emailing Pupil A very late at night and on weekends and often in frequent succession. He was also communicating with Pupil A whilst away on holiday. The panel considered this was illustrative of his developing a personal relationship with Pupil A whilst she was still at school.

The panel further found, having considered Pupil A's oral evidence, that this relationship developed into a romantic and, ultimately, sexual relationship after Pupil A left the School. Pupil A stated that Mr Fletcher and Pupil A were engaging in very emotional and personal conversations and that Mr Fletcher and Pupil A were also meeting late at night, often in Mr Fletcher's car. The panel believed that Mr Fletcher's intent to form a romantic relationship was evident when he asked Pupil A if she found him attractive, in or around December 2019. The panel found this to be wholly inappropriate and that there was no other plausible explanation as to why Mr Fletcher would ask Pupil A, a former pupil, if she found him attractive if he did not intend to engage in and/or develop a romantic relationship.

The panel therefore found allegation 4 proven, in that Mr Fletcher had developed a personal relationship with Pupil A whilst at the School and went on to develop a romantic relationship with Pupil A after she had left the School.

5) Your conduct as may be proven at 1 and/or 2 and/or 4 above was conduct of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated.

Having found allegation 1, 2 and 4 proven, the panel went on to consider whether Mr Fletcher's conduct was of a sexual nature and/or was sexually motivated. The panel noted that Mr Fletcher provided no admission in respect of allegation 5.

In considering whether conduct was of a sexual nature, the Panel considered Section 78 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, *"For the purposes of this part, penetration, touching or any other activity is sexual if a reasonable person would consider that: a) Whatever its circumstances or any person's purpose in relation to it, it is because of its nature sexual; or b) 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."*

Although the panel did not find that the relationship was romantic while Pupil A was a pupil at the School, it considered that Mr Fletcher's conduct during that period laid the foundations for the romantic and ultimately sexual relationship which followed. By sharing personal information, encouraging increasingly frequent and intimate communications, showing a particular interest in Pupil A's personal circumstances and fostering an emotional bond which made her feel special, Mr Fletcher progressively blurred the boundaries between teacher and pupil. The panel considered that this pattern of behaviour was akin to grooming, in that it served to establish Pupil A's trust and emotional dependence and facilitated the subsequent development of a romantic and sexual relationship after she left the School.

The panel considered whether the conduct as found proven at allegation 1 and 2 was sexual in nature, noting the definition in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The panel considered that, because of the circumstances and the purpose of Mr Fletcher, in ultimately pursuing a romantic relationship, the conduct found proven at allegation 1 and 2 was sexual in nature. The panel further found that the conduct found proven at allegation 4 was also of a sexual nature due to Mr Fletcher developing a romantic relationship with Pupil A.

The panel's attention was drawn to section 78 *Sexual Offences Act 2003* and to the cases of *Sait v The General Medical Council [2018]*, *Basson v General Medical Council [2018]* and *The General Medical Council v Haris [2020] EWHC 2518*.

The panel considered whether the conduct was sexually motivated. It noted that in *Basson* it was stated that, *"A sexual motive means that the conduct was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship"*.

The panel was also mindful of the Court of Appeal's conclusion in *General Medical Council v Haris [2021] EWCA Civ 763*. The court found in that case that, *"In the absence of a plausible innocent explanation for what he did, the facts spoke for themselves."*

The panel noted that Mr Fletcher had, during the School's investigation, accepted that he was in a relationship with Pupil A, although there was a discrepancy as to the dates of that relationship provided by Pupil A and Mr Fletcher. As noted above, although the panel did not find that the relationship was romantic while Pupil A was a pupil at the School, it considered that Mr Fletcher's conduct during that period laid the foundations for the romantic and ultimately sexual relationship which followed. The panel considered that, noting the absence of a plausible alternative explanation, the conduct found proven at allegation 1, 2 and 4 was done in pursuit of a future sexual relationship.

The panel found allegation 5 proven.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The panel also considered whether Mr Fletcher'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.

The panel noted that, whilst some parts of the allegations found proven occurred outside of the education setting, for example emails that occurred after 31 August 2019, the majority of the allegations occurred within the education setting. In the case of those parts that were not part of the education setting, the panel still considered these to be unacceptable professional conduct as it affected the way Mr Fletcher fulfilled his teaching role, in particular due to his serious breach of professional boundaries with a pupil and his attempt to conceal his actions, and that this could have led to pupils being exposed to or influenced by the behaviour in a harmful way.

The panel received legal advice and noted that professionals are not expected to be paragons of virtue. However, the panel considered the personal and emotive communications with Pupil A, contact outside of school hours and through his personal email address, meeting her at or around midnight and the development of a romantic and sexual relationship represented a serious and sustained failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The panel was mindful of the influential role that teachers hold in the lives of pupils and was particularly concerned about Pupil A's [REDACTED] and the level of dependency she appeared to place on Mr Fletcher.

The panel also considered that the secrecy surrounding aspects of Mr Fletcher's contact with Pupil A, together with his failure to inform the School, which it had found demonstrated a lack of integrity and to be dishonest. The panel's view was that this was serious and entirely unacceptable behaviour and that his conduct fell significantly short of the standards expected of a teacher.

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

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

The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher. As outlined above, the panel was particularly concerned by Pupil A's [REDACTED] at the relevant time and the degree of dependence she had placed on Mr Fletcher, who remained in a position of trust. The content and tone of the communications between Mr Fletcher and Pupil A, together with the times at which the messages were exchanged, and the fact that Mr Fletcher was developing a personal and romantic relationship with Pupil A, was wholly inconsistent with the maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries and standards expected of a teacher. The panel considered that the public would reasonably expect teachers, as trusted professionals, to maintain appropriate boundaries with pupils and former pupils. The panel considered that Mr Fletcher's serious breach of professional boundaries and lack of integrity would be likely to undermine public confidence in him as a teacher and damage the reputation and standing of the teaching profession as a whole, particularly given that he did not attempt to make the School aware of the relationship.

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

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition

orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

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

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Fletcher, which involved failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, behaving in a way that lacked integrity and being dishonest, and its finding that Mr Fletcher's conduct was of a sexual nature and sexually motivated, there was a strong public interest consideration in 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 Fletcher 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 Fletcher 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 Fletcher in the profession. Whilst there was some evidence that Mr Fletcher had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Fletcher in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he sought to exploit his position of trust.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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

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;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship with a pupil or former pupil;
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position; and
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests.

The panel noted that some of Mr Fletcher's conduct took place online, including his email communications with Pupil A. The panel was mindful of the legal advice it had received regarding the appropriate weight and seriousness to be attached to online behaviour, including both relationships conducted solely online and those which subsequently progress to in-person contact. In this case, the panel noted that Mr Fletcher's email communications with Pupil A ultimately progressed to him meeting Pupil A in person and engaging in physical contact with her.

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.

There was no evidence that Mr Fletcher's actions were not deliberate.

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

There was no evidence before the panel to indicate that Mr Fletcher had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel noted that there was very limited evidence before it as to mitigation or Mr Fletcher having developed insight and demonstrated remorse in respect of his conduct. The panel reiterated that it was regrettable that Mr Fletcher had not attended the hearing

or otherwise engaged with the TRA proceedings, as this limited the evidence available to the panel in relation to these matters.

The panel noted an undated statement provided by Mr Fletcher during the School's investigation, in which he stated that, throughout his 15-year teaching career, he had not previously acted inappropriately or had a personal relationship with a pupil. Mr Fletcher also stated that he had never provided his personal details to a current pupil.

The panel also considered the oral evidence of Witness A, who was asked about Mr Fletcher's teaching history and abilities. Witness A described Mr Fletcher as a good teacher who had a strong passion for his subject, strong subject knowledge and was effective in delivering sixth form classes. Witness A was not aware of any previous concerns having been raised regarding Mr Fletcher.

However, the panel considered that the evidence before it demonstrated limited insight into the seriousness and inappropriateness of Mr Fletcher's conduct. Rather than acknowledging the nature of his actions, Mr Fletcher had focused on technical matters, including whether Pupil A remained on the School roll and whether she could properly be regarded as [REDACTED]. The panel considered that these matters were of limited significance when the conduct was viewed in its full context. Mr Fletcher had come to know Pupil A through his position as her teacher and the panel had found that he had abused that position. The panel also noted that Mr Fletcher had failed to report his communications and relationship with Pupil A to the School.

The panel further considered that there was limited evidence that Mr Fletcher had reflected meaningfully upon the impact of his conduct on Pupil A. The panel did note that Mr Fletcher, as part of the School's investigation, stated that, on reflection, his conduct was something that he regretted. However, the panel was not satisfied that this went sufficiently far as to demonstrate genuine remorse for his actions, particularly when considered alongside the manner in which he had otherwise sought to challenge or minimise the significance of his conduct.

In all the circumstances, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Fletcher had demonstrated meaningful insight or remorse. In particular, there was insufficient evidence that he had recognised why his conduct was inappropriate, properly reflected upon its impact on Pupil A, or demonstrated an understanding of how he would avoid similar conduct in the future. The panel therefore considered that there remained a significant risk of repetition of the behaviours it had found proven.

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 Fletcher 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 Fletcher. The failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and his sexually motivated behaviour towards a pupil progressing to engaging in inappropriate sexual relationship with a former pupil were significant factors in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

One of these include:

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

The panel considered this type of case to be engaged due to the fact that Mr Fletcher's conduct, as found proven, was sexually motivated. As noted above, the panel considered that Mr Fletcher's conduct whilst Pupil A was a pupil at the School was sexually motivated and laid the foundations for a romantic and ultimately sexual relationship which followed. Mr Fletcher progressively blurred the boundaries between teacher and pupil. The panel considered the conduct to be particularly serious because Mr Fletcher had come to know Pupil A through his position as her teacher and had abused his position of trust and responsibility.

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.

The panel found that Mr Fletcher's failure to demonstrate insight and remorse, taken with the nature of the conduct, represented a real risk of repetition. The panel was not persuaded that, should Mr Fletcher be allowed to return to the teaching profession, similar conduct would not happen again. The panel concluded it was not appropriate to impose a review period.

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 provisions for a review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexual motivation in developing an ultimately romantic and sexual relationship with a pupil and also that Mr Fletcher was dishonest in that he sought to persuade Pupil A to conceal the relationship.

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 Fletcher, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, *"In light of the panel's findings against Mr Fletcher, which involved failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, behaving in a way that lacked integrity and being dishonest, and its finding that Mr Fletcher's conduct was of a sexual nature and sexually motivated, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils."*

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

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, *"The panel noted that there was very limited evidence before it as to mitigation or Mr Fletcher having developed insight and demonstrated remorse in respect of his conduct."*

The panel has also commented that *"...the evidence before it demonstrated limited insight into the seriousness and inappropriateness of Mr Fletcher's conduct. Rather than acknowledging the nature of his actions, Mr Fletcher had focused on technical matters, including whether Pupil A remained on the School roll and whether she could properly be regarded as [REDACTED]."*

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

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, *"...that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr*

Fletcher were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of sexual motivation 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 Fletcher himself. The panel considered the evidence of Witness A, who “...described Mr Fletcher as a good teacher who had a strong passion for his subject, strong subject knowledge and was effective in delivering sixth form classes. Witness A was not aware of any previous concerns having been raised regarding Mr Fletcher.”

However, the panel conclude that “*There was no evidence before the panel to indicate that Mr Fletcher had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.*”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse. The panel has said,

“In all the circumstances, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Fletcher had demonstrated meaningful insight or remorse. In particular, there was insufficient evidence that he had recognised why his conduct was inappropriate, properly reflected upon its impact on Pupil A, or demonstrated an understanding of how he would avoid similar conduct in the future. The panel therefore considered that there remained a significant risk of repetition of the behaviours it had found proven.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that, whilst Pupil A was still at school, Mr Fletcher laid the foundations for an ultimately sexual relationship.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Fletcher 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 identified that in cases which involve serious sexual misconduct, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. The panel has found that to be engaged in this case.

I have considered the panel's comments *"The panel found that Mr Fletcher's failure to demonstrate insight and remorse, taken with the nature of the conduct, represented a real risk of repetition. The panel was not persuaded that, should Mr Fletcher be allowed to return to the teaching profession, similar conduct would not happen again."*

I have considered whether allowing a review period, which would afford Mr Fletcher a future opportunity to apply for the prohibition to be lifted, reflects the seriousness of the findings and is proportionate 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 seriousness of the conduct, including the findings of sexual motivation and dishonesty, and the risk of repetition of the behaviour identified by the panel.

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 Mark Fletcher is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. Furthermore, in view of the seriousness of the allegations found proved against him, I have decided that Mr Fletcher 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 Fletcher has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.



Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 9 October 2026

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