Teaching Regulation Agency

Mr Peter Roberts: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

November 2026

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

Teacher:	Mr Peter Roberts
Teacher ref number:	8839025
Teacher date of birth:	11 February 1967
TRA reference:	20145
Date of determination:	6 November 2026
Former employer:	Oldham Sixth Form College, Oldham

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 4 to 6 November 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Peter Roberts.

The panel members were Mr Terry Hyde (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Anila Rai (lay panellist), and Mr Benjamin Drouet (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Madison Taylor of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Brittany Buckell of Capsticks LLP solicitors.

Mr Roberts 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 14 August 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Roberts was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that while employed by Oldham Sixth Form College ("the School"):

1. He engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB, a current and/or former pupil at the School in that:

    a) In or around May/June 2010, he hugged Pupil AB and/or placed his hand on her lower back while in his office at the College;

    b) He exchanged messages with Pupil AB via Facebook;

    c) He exchanged text messages with Pupil AB using his personal mobile phone;

    d) One or more of the messages referred to at allegation 1(b) or 1(c) were sexually explicit and/or requested information about Pupil AB's sexual history and/or disclosed details of his sexual history;

    e) In or around August 2010 he arranged to meet Pupil AB at a café or bar;

    f) On various occasions after June 2010, he engaged in sexual activity with Pupil AB;

2. His conduct as may be found proved in relation to allegations 1 was sexually motivated.

In the Response to Notice of Referral dated 17 January 2023, Mr Roberts: admitted allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e) and 1(f); denied allegation 2 with the exception of allegations 1(d) and 1(f) and only in the stated context that Pupil AB was no longer a pupil at the College at the time, and; accepted that he was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 7

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 8 to 28

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 29 to 44

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 45 to 312

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 313 to 342

Section 6: Additional TRA documents – pages 343 to 347

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:

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Witness C – [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 Roberts commenced employment at the College in August 1993.

In May/June 2010, Mr Roberts allegedly hugged or placed his hand on Pupil AB's lower back whilst in his office at the College.

Shortly after, Pupil AB left the College.

Following this, Mr Roberts allegedly began to communicate with Pupil AB via Facebook and text message, including discussing their sexual histories. He also allegedly met Pupil AB at a café or bar during this period.

At some point after Pupil AB ceased to be a pupil at the College in 2010, until approximately 2016, Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had a sexual relationship.

On 12 July 2020, Pupil AB emailed Witness B, [REDACTED], to disclose a safeguarding concern relating to Mr Roberts' conduct towards them. The College initiated a disciplinary investigation into the matter.

On 24 July 2020, Mr Roberts was suspended pending that investigation.

On 26 February 2021, Mr Roberts resigned from the College with immediate effect.

On 4 March 2021, the disciplinary outcome meeting was held, during which the College determined Mr Roberts would have been dismissed if he had not already resigned.

On 9 July 2021, the matter was referred to the TRA.

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 engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB, a current and/or former pupil at the School in that:**

    a) **In or around May/June 2010, you hugged Pupil AB and/or placed your hand on her lower back while in your office at the College;**

As a matter of housekeeping, the panel noted that the words "School" and "College" were used interchangeably in the drafting of the allegations. The panel considered that there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the relevant institution was Oldham Sixth Form College, and the panel resolved to use the term "College" as shorthand throughout its deliberations and the rest of this document.

The panel had sight of evidence in the bundle confirming that Mr Roberts had been employed at the College since 1993, initially as a teacher and then subsequently as an assistant principal, vice principal, deputy principal and acting principal, until his resignation which took place with immediate effect on 26 February 2021.

The panel further understood that Pupil AB had been a student at the College until they completed their [REDACTED] studies and left in the summer of 2010.

It assisted the panel to remind itself at this stage that it was not in dispute whether Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had engaged in a personal relationship which commenced at some point in 2010 until approximately 2016, and that their relationship had been sexual for at least some of its duration. The panel had sight of evidence in the bundle that this fact was plainly accepted by both Mr Roberts and Pupil AB.

The panel understood that the earliest point in time to which these allegations relate was May 2010, at which point Pupil AB was [REDACTED] a "current" pupil at the College. Pupil AB left the College in the summer of 2010, after which point the panel considered Pupil AB to become a "former" pupil, for the purposes of the allegations.

The panel was mindful that neither Mr Roberts nor Pupil AB provided a witness statement for the purposes of these proceedings or gave oral evidence before the panel. Their respective accounts were therefore hearsay and could not be tested through cross-examination. The panel approached both accounts with appropriate caution and considered the reliability and weight to be attached to each, rather than treating either account as inherently determinative.

In relation to Pupil AB, the panel noted that the earliest account before it dated from 2019. It had sight of: communications between Pupil AB and Mr Roberts in 2019; communications between Pupil AB and Person C in 2019; communications between Pupil AB and Witness B in 2020; notes of Pupil AB's accounts as given during the College's investigation; and, hearsay comments provided by police officers setting out what Pupil AB had told them as part of the LADO investigation.

Having considered all the evidence relating to Pupil AB's accounts as a whole, the panel considered that Pupil AB had remained materially consistent as to the main thread of events. Pupil AB's account was also supported in certain respects by partial admissions made by Mr Roberts. The panel considered that those admissions gave aspects of Pupil AB's account greater credence than might otherwise have been attached to an untested hearsay account.

By contrast, the panel identified a number of inconsistencies within Mr Roberts' various accounts provided across his 2019 communications with Pupil AB, comments provided as part of the College's investigation and his engagement with the TRA via his representative. This included, in places, a lack of detail and attempts to provide context for conduct "if it did happen", without directly accepting that it had happened.

When comparing the respective accounts, the panel considered Pupil AB's evidence to be the more consistent and ultimately reliable of the two. It therefore determined that, where there was a material conflict between them, it would generally prefer Pupil AB's account to that of Mr Roberts, although the panel noted that there were in practice very few conflicts in the accounts.

The panel did not treat that conclusion as determinative of any individual allegation. In reaching its findings on each particular, it considered the entirety of the evidence relevant to that allegation, including whether any contemporaneous, documentary or witness evidence supported or displaced its general preference for Pupil AB's account. The panel remained mindful throughout that the burden of proving each allegation rested on the TRA and that it was for the TRA to satisfy the panel on the balance of probabilities.

In respect of allegation 1(a) the panel first considered whether the alleged physical contact between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had occurred.

The panel noted that, in his Response to Notice of Proceedings, Mr Roberts admitted allegation 1(a). However, his position on this was inconsistent on the evidence in the bundle, and it was not the case that Mr Roberts had consistently accepted that the conduct as alleged had taken place.

The panel had regard to the various accounts given by Mr Roberts during the College's investigation process.

The panel had sight of the notes prepared during the College's disciplinary investigation interview, in which Mr Roberts stated that he "*hugs members of his family and other colleagues and has hugged other students, male and female, he is not aware that this is not allowed*." Mr Roberts maintained that he could not be certain whether he had hugged Pupil AB and considered that Pupil AB was "*clutching at straws trying to give an evidential basis for something that did not happen*".

In a follow-up email sent after the interview but still as part of the disciplinary investigation, Mr Roberts stated:

> "*I genuinely cannot remember whether there was a hug or not, but I believe the meeting that is referred to in the minutes took place on AB's last day at College and was referred to in the investigation meeting as a 'goodbye' meeting. At that time of year, when students leave and later when they return to collect their results, there is a quite a bit of hugging as part of the farewell/well done/good luck process. If there was a hug, I am sure this is a good explanation for why it happened."*

The panel considered those accounts alongside the evidence of Pupil AB. In Pupil AB's emails to Witness B in July and August 2020, Pupil AB described a long hug with Mr Roberts shortly before leaving the College. She recalled "*the duration of the hug was longer than normal and he pulled back and still whilst holding me looking into my eyes for quite some time*".

The panel also had regard to the comments of a police officer made during a meeting with the LADO, in which it was recalled that Pupil AB had said that "*the only physical contact she had had [with Mr Roberts] during her time at the college was a hug after her last exam*."

In considering the evidence as a whole, the panel was mindful of the passage of time and the fact that aspects of the evidence before it were hearsay. Nevertheless, it considered Pupil AB's account of the hug to have remained consistent in its material respect across the different accounts before it.

By contrast, the panel considered Mr Roberts' position to have been less consistent, moving between an inability to recall whether the hug occurred, providing an explanation as to why a hug may have taken place, and subsequently admitting allegation 1(a) in his response to the notice of proceedings.

Taking those matters together, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Roberts had hugged Pupil AB on or around May/June 2010.

The panel did not consider there to be sufficient evidence to find, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Roberts had placed his hand on Pupil AB's lower back. Its factual finding in respect of allegation 1(a) was therefore confined specifically to the hug.

The panel went on to consider whether the conduct as found proved formed part of an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB.

The panel recognised that physical contact between a teacher and pupil is not necessarily inappropriate in every circumstance and that there may be legitimate circumstances in which some physical contact is appropriate, for example when comforting a pupil. However, the panel did not consider that any such circumstance arose here. On the evidence before it, the panel considered the hug occurred as Pupil AB was leaving the College, in the context of saying goodbye, when the two were alone in Mr Roberts' office, included making eye contact and enduring for a notable amount of time.

The panel considered the professional expectations concerning physical contact between teachers and pupils which applied at the relevant time. Drawing upon its collective experience of the teaching profession, the panel considered that teachers were expected

to exercise appropriate professional boundaries in relation to physical contact with pupils and that such expectations were well established by 2010. The panel was therefore not persuaded by Mr Roberts' suggestion during the earlier investigation that he was unaware that hugging pupils might be inappropriate, particularly in the circumstances as described.

In the circumstances, and in the apparent absence of any legitimate reason requiring physical contact with Pupil AB, the panel considered that hugging Pupil AB in the circumstances as described crossed appropriate professional boundaries. The panel therefore found the hug to be one example of conduct which may be found as part of an inappropriate relationship.

Accordingly, the panel found allegation 1(a) proved on the balance of probabilities.

b) You exchanged messages with Pupil AB via Facebook;

c) You exchanged text messages with Pupil AB using your personal mobile phone;

d) One or more of the messages referred to at allegation 1(b) or 1(c) were sexually explicit and/or requested information about Pupil AB's sexual history and/or disclosed details of your sexual history;

Given the overlap in evidence underpinning allegations 1(b), 1(c) and 1(d), the panel examined them and made findings individually, but as part of an overlapping factual analysis exercise.

The panel first considered whether the conduct alleged had occurred.

In respect of allegation 1(b), the panel noted that Mr Roberts admitted in his response to the Notice of Proceedings that he had exchanged messages with Pupil AB via Facebook. This was consistent with the account he had provided during the College's disciplinary investigation. During that investigation, Mr Roberts confirmed that *"when AB left the college they had kept in touch via Facebook"*, which he considered was *"not unusual for staff and former students."* Later in the same interview, Mr Roberts confirmed that the communications had included Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp messages.

The panel also considered Pupil AB's account in her emails to Witness B in July and August 2020. Pupil AB explained that Pupil AB had visited Mr Roberts in his office and they had agreed to stay in touch. Pupil AB recalled suggesting that he add Pupil AB on Facebook. According to Pupil AB, Mr Roberts initially told them that he had deactivated his Facebook account because he did not like it, but added them a couple of days later, following which they communicated through Facebook Messenger.

The panel noted that Mr Roberts disputed having reactivated Facebook specifically in order to add Pupil AB and that, during the disciplinary investigation, he stated that he could not remember who had added whom and that *"it is a two-way process as the other person has to accept the friend request."* However, the panel did not consider it necessary to resolve who had initiated the Facebook connection: that was not the factual issue raised by allegation 1(b). There was, in the panel's view, no material dispute that Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had exchanged messages through Facebook.

The panel therefore found the factual conduct alleged at 1(b) proved.

In respect of allegation 1(c), Mr Roberts admitted in his Response to the Notice of Proceedings that he had exchanged text messages with Pupil AB. The panel considered his explanation as to how Pupil AB had come to possess his mobile telephone number. In an email forwarded to the TRA by Mr Roberts' representative, Mr Roberts stated: *"I did not give [Pupil AB] my mobile number, [Pupil AB] had already had it, as [Pupil AB] was provided with my number as well as the numbers of other staff on the* [REDACTED]*This was policy at the time to ensure the students were safe on the visit eg if they became separated from the group."*

The panel had regard to the oral evidence of Witness B, who explained that the senior leadership team "*had mobile phones provided by College*". She recalled that she thought it was the case for Mr Roberts – as it was for herself – that that was the only mobile phone he used i.e. the phone provided by the College doubled up as his own personal mobile phone too.

The panel also heard oral evidence from Witness A and Witness B that the College had "*trip phones*" which were mobile phones owned by the College and used as the main telephone point of contact for parents and students during trips.

The panel noted that there was some lack of clarity as to precisely which telephone Mr Roberts had been using on the Berlin trip and therefore which number Pupil AB may have been provided with: Mr Roberts' College-issued phone, a potential separate personal phone, or the College-issued "trip" phone.

However, the panel did not consider that uncertainty to undermine the substance of allegation 1(c). Irrespective of the precise circumstances in which Pupil AB first obtained Mr Roberts' telephone number, it was clear that this had occurred at some point, and that Mr Roberts accepted that text communications subsequently took place.

Mr Roberts' admission was consistent with Pupil AB's account. In the notes of Witness B's discussion with Pupil AB as part of the College's investigation, Pupil AB described the correspondence with Mr Roberts as beginning *"over Facebook Messenger and then over*

text messages". The panel therefore considered the evidence of Pupil AB and Mr Roberts to be consistent on the central factual issue, namely that communications between them extended from Facebook Messenger to text messaging.

Having already found at allegation 1(b) that the Facebook communications began shortly after Pupil AB left the College, the panel considered the text messages to have occurred around that same time also.

The panel therefore found the factual conduct alleged at 1(c) proved.

In respect of allegation 1(d), the panel considered carefully the evidence concerning the content and nature of those communications.

In Pupil AB's email to Witness B disclosing the relationship, Pupil AB explained that *"the tone of the communication took on an exploratory sexual nature eventually (not sure of timing around this but was fairly soon after we began talking). I think this began by exploring my sexual past, and his, and then spiralled from there."* Pupil AB described conversations concerning their sexual experiences and those of Mr Roberts and stated that he encouraged them to explore their sexuality and try different things, which Pupil AB would then report back to him.

The panel also took account of Pupil AB's description of the communications as "*sexting*", which she described as "*a constant theme in our communication."* The panel considered this to be clear evidence from Pupil AB that sexual content was not confined to an isolated exchange but formed a recurring part of Pupil AB's communications with Mr Roberts.

The panel further considered the later messages between Pupil AB and Mr Roberts from 2019, of which it had had sight in the bundle. It recognised that these were not the original messages exchanged at the time of the relationship and approached them on that basis. Nevertheless, the panel considered them relevant evidence as to the nature of the earlier communications because they recorded Pupil AB putting specific matters directly to Mr Roberts and his responses to those matters.

In those messages, Pupil AB referred to Mr Roberts encouraging her to *"get with"* other men and subsequently provide him with details of what had occurred so that he could *"jerk off"*. In another exchange concerning a [REDACTED] Pupil AB referred to Mr Roberts encouraging her to have sex with that individual and to *"tell [Mr Roberts] in full detail afterwards what we'd gotten up to"*. Pupil AB challenged Mr Roberts in the later messages about having encouraged sexual behaviour and having sexualised their communications, including referring to him making them *"tell you details after and tell me*

you were hard and going to come etc". Mr Roberts responded: *"It wasn't intentionally sadistic. But I realise it was wrong."*

The panel considered that response significant. Mr Roberts did not respond by denying that the conduct described by Pupil AB had occurred. Rather, his response acknowledged that what had happened had been "*wrong*".

The panel also had regard to Mr Roberts' own account to the TRA. In an email dated 3 November, he stated:

> *"Any (private) intimate messages shared were in the period after AB had left college and certainly not initiated souly [sic] by myself.* [REDACTED]".

The panel considered that account important because Mr Roberts did not deny that "*private*" and "*intimate*" messages had been exchanged. His position was instead directed towards when those messages had occurred, Pupil AB's age and whether he had been solely responsible for initiating them.

The panel was mindful throughout that it had not been provided with the original Facebook or text messages exchanged at the relevant time. However, the panel considered Pupil AB's account to be materially supported by Mr Roberts' own admissions. He accepted that Facebook and text communications had taken place, referred to the exchange of *"(private) intimate messages"* and, when confronted by Pupil AB with specific descriptions of the sexualised nature of their earlier communications, did not deny that conduct and responded in respect of aspects of it that *"I realise it was wrong."*

Considering that evidence cumulatively, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that one or more of the messages exchanged between Pupil AB and Mr Roberts was sexually explicit, requested information concerning Pupil AB's sexual history and/or disclosed details of Mr Roberts' sexual history. The panel therefore found the factual conduct alleged at 1(d) proved.

Having found the factual conduct alleged at 1(b), 1(c) and 1(d) proved, the panel went on to consider whether that conduct demonstrated that Mr Roberts had engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB.

In reaching its decision, the panel was conscious that the sequence of relevant events began approximately 16 years ago. It therefore sought to consider the communications in the context of the practices and expectations prevailing at the relevant time, including the fact that social media was then a relatively emerging means of communication.

The panel took account of Witness B's oral evidence concerning the College's approach to social media. She explained that *"staff were advised that if they wanted to do that, they should do it on a professional profile, separate from their private profile."* However, Witness B also accepted that contact between staff and former pupils through Facebook was not unknown, stating that she *"know[s] some members of staff did connect via Facebook once students had left"* and that she knew of former colleagues who had former pupils as contacts.

The panel therefore did not proceed on the basis that the mere fact that a teacher had a former pupil as a Facebook contact was necessarily inappropriate in itself, nor did it consider that the question of who had sent or accepted the Facebook friend request was overly important.

However, the panel considered that the relationship between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB went considerably beyond the mere maintenance of social-media contact between a teacher and a former pupil.

Of particular significance was the timing and continuity of the relationship. Pupil AB's account was that, shortly before leaving the College, Pupil AB had visited Mr Roberts in his office and they had agreed to stay in touch. Communications thereafter began through Facebook and subsequently continued by text. Pupil AB's evidence was that the communications became sexual *"fairly soon after we began talking."*

The panel considered that evidence against the overall chronology. There had not been any perceptible break between the conclusion of the teacher-pupil relationship and the commencement of their private communications. Rather, there was a clean, unbroken continuity bridging from when Pupil AB was a pupil at the College where Mr Roberts was employed, to their conversation about staying in contact as Pupil AB left the College, to communications through Facebook and text message, and then to sexually explicit communications.

The panel considered the sexual character of those communications particularly compelling. This was not simply a case in which a teacher had maintained social contact with a former pupil. On the findings the panel had made, the communications involved "*sexting*", discussion of Pupil AB's sexual history, and Mr Roberts encouraging Pupil AB to undertake sexual activity and report details of it back to him. The panel had also found Pupil AB's account of that conduct to be materially supported by Mr Roberts' own description of *"(private) intimate messages"* and by his later acknowledgement, when confronted with aspects of the conduct by Pupil AB, that *"I realise it was wrong."*

The panel also considered the later exchanges in 2019 in which Pupil AB asked Mr Roberts, whether, where a student had suggested to a teacher that they should stay in

touch, the appropriate response was for him to connect with them *"on Facebook and begin sexting [them]"*. The panel considered this evidence in the context of the other evidence before it and not as a standalone account of events. It was nevertheless consistent with the continuity which the panel had identified between the pre-existing teacher-pupil relationship, the commencement of private communications and their subsequent sexualisation.

Taking those circumstances together, the panel was satisfied that the conduct formed part of an inappropriate relationship between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB. While it recognised that social media contact between teachers and former pupils was not necessarily regarded as wholly inappropriate at the relevant time, that did not, in the panel's view, provide an appropriate context for the sexualised communications it had found proved.

In particular, the panel considered the absence of any meaningful break between the teacher-pupil relationship and the subsequent private and sexual communications, together with the speed with which the communications became sexual, to be significant in demonstrating an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB.

Accordingly, the panel found allegations 1(b), 1(c) and 1(d) proven.

e) In or around August 2010 you arranged to meet Pupil AB at a café or bar;

The panel noted that Mr Roberts admitted this allegation in his response to the Notice of Proceedings. His admission was supported by the other evidence before the panel.

In her interview with Witness B during the College's investigation, Pupil AB recalled meeting Mr Roberts in Manchester in approximately July or August 2010 and referred specifically to the "*Slug and Lettuce*" in Deansgate, Manchester.

Similarly, during Mr Roberts' interview as part of the College's disciplinary investigation, the investigating officer referred to the Slug and Lettuce in Manchester and asked whether there had been a meeting there. The notes recorded *that "PRS explained that they did meet there".*

The panel considered this evidence to be clear and consistent and was satisfied that there was no doubt that Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had arranged to meet, and did meet, at the Slug and Lettuce in Manchester at the relevant time.

The panel therefore found, on the balance of probabilities, that the factual conduct alleged in allegation 1(e) occurred.

The panel then considered whether this conduct formed part of an inappropriate relationship.

The panel considered the evidence concerning Pupil AB's vulnerability at the relevant time.

[REDACTED]

The panel was satisfied Pupil AB had left the College by the time of the meeting.The panel considered that the meeting took place very shortly afterwards and before Pupil AB went to university. The panel also considered that Pupil AB was a vulnerable young person and that Mr Roberts knew of that vulnerability.

In those circumstances, taking account of the position of trust previously held by Mr Roberts, Pupil AB's vulnerability and the short period of time between Pupil AB finishing exams at the College and the meeting taking place at the Slug and Lettuce, the panel considered that arranging to meet Pupil AB was inappropriate. The panel did not consider it necessary to determine the precise nature, content or character of the meeting itself in reaching that conclusion.

The panel found allegation 1(e) proven.

f) On various occasions after June 2010, you engaged in sexual activity with Pupil AB;

The panel noted that there was no material dispute that Mr Roberts and Pupil AB had entered into a sexual relationship after Pupil AB had ceased to be a pupil at the College.

In his written submissions, Mr Roberts stated that the relationship became sexual in 2011 and during the College's investigation, he similarly accepted the sexual nature of the relationship, stating: *"Admittedly there is an age difference but the sexual relationship with AB was when [Pupil AB] was in [their]* [REDACTED] *and it was something [they] wanted."* He also described meeting Pupil AB at a hotel, where the physical aspect of their relationship took place, and accepted that he should not have had a sexual relationship with Pupil AB.

The panel also considered the 2019 messages between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB, in which Mr Roberts referred expressly to having had sex with Pupil AB, including that he had *"hardly had sex since [they] finished"*. The panel further noted Mr Roberts' email to the TRA dated 28 February 2022, in which reference was made to his being *"deeply ashamed of his infidelity"* and to Pupil AB having enrolled at university in autumn 2010, when Pupil AB was *"clearly an independent adult."* This evidence was consistent with

Witness C's evidence that a relationship had developed after Pupil AB left the College and subsequently became sexual.

The panel therefore found, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Roberts had engaged in sexual activity with Pupil AB after June 2010.

The panel then considered whether that conduct indicated an inappropriate relationship.

It was clear that there was no suggestion that sexual activity had taken place while Pupil AB was a pupil at the College. However, the panel considered the circumstances in which the relationship had developed.

Mr Roberts had first come to know Pupil AB through his senior professional role at the College. The panel considered that he had knowledge of Pupil AB's vulnerability and had personally become involved in matters concerning Pupil AB's welfare and safeguarding, including checking on Pupil AB during the Berlin trip and indicating that he would himself take forward a DSL/safeguarding report concerning Pupil AB.

The panel considered that this background created a significant imbalance in the relationship. Of particular importance was the absence of any meaningful break between the teacher/pupil relationship and the subsequent personal relationship. Although the panel accepted that Pupil AB had ceased to be a pupil at the College before the sexual relationship began, the panel considered there to have been a clear continuity between when the relationship formed while Pupil AB was a pupil and its subsequent development. In the panel's view, there was a direct bridge between the teacher/pupil dynamic and the later sexual relationship, which developed shortly after Pupil AB had left the College.

In those circumstances, notwithstanding that Pupil AB was no longer a pupil when the sexual activity occurred, the panel concluded that Mr Roberts' conduct in engaging in a sexual relationship with Pupil AB constituted an inappropriate relationship.

The panel therefore found allegation 1(f) proved.

Having found allegations 1(a) to 1(f) proved, the panel considered the conduct holistically and the extent to which it demonstrated that Mr Roberts had engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB.

The panel considered the circumstances in which Mr Roberts had come to know Pupil AB through his professional role at the College, the teacher/pupil dynamic which had existed between them, and Mr Roberts' specific knowledge of Pupil AB's vulnerabilities.

Of particular significance was the clear continuity in the relationship: there was no meaningful break between Pupil AB being a pupil at the College and the commencement and subsequent development of their personal relationship. Rather, the relationship progressed from the teacher/pupil relationship, through private social media communications and in-person meetings, to sexualised communications and ultimately a sexual relationship.

Taking the conduct and circumstances as a whole, including the position of trust and imbalance inherent in the earlier teacher/pupil relationship and Mr Roberts' knowledge of Pupil AB's vulnerabilities, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the conduct found proved under allegations 1(a) to 1(f) amounted to an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB.

2. Your conduct as may be found proved in relation to allegations 1 was sexually motivated.

The panel noted that Mr Roberts denied allegation 2, save in relation to allegations 1(d) and 1(f), and only insofar as such conduct occurred after Pupil AB had ceased to be a pupil at the College.

The panel had regard to the principles identified in *Basson v General Medical Council*, including that a sexual motive means that conduct was undertaken either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a sexual relationship. The panel was also mindful of the approach in *General Medical Council v Haris*, including that, in the absence of a plausible innocent explanation, the facts may speak for themselves.

In the context of the subsequent development of the relationship, the panel was satisfied that the hug was undertaken in pursuit of sexual gratification and/or a sexual relationship. In reaching that conclusion, the panel did not consider there to be a plausible innocent explanation for that conduct in the circumstances it had found, and it did not accept Mr Roberts' characterisation of this conduct as normal and not something which he should not have been doing. Mr Roberts and Pupil AB were alone, in his office at the time, and the panel accepted Pupil AB's description of the hug as being of notable duration and intensity.

The panel considered allegations 1(b) and 1(c) separately but reached essentially the same conclusion in respect of each. The Facebook and text communications were not isolated events but formed part of a developing relationship between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB. The panel considered that Mr Roberts had positioned himself as a source of support for Pupil AB, whose vulnerabilities he knew, before the communications transitioned from the teacher/pupil context into increasingly personal and ultimately sexual communications. Viewed in that context, and particularly in light of the sexualised

communications subsequently found proved under allegation 1(d), the panel was satisfied that the Facebook and text communications were undertaken in pursuit of a sexual relationship and for sexual gratification and were therefore sexually motivated.

In respect of allegation 1(d), the panel considered that the nature of the conduct itself was compelling. It had found proved that the communications included sexually explicit material, including discussion of both Pupil AB's and Mr Roberts' sexual histories. The panel was satisfied that such conduct was, by its nature and in the circumstances found, sexually motivated in that Mr Roberts was seeking sexual gratification and a future sexual relationship with Pupil AB through these messages.

In respect of allegation 1(e), the panel did not consider it necessary to determine what may or may not have occurred during the meeting at the Slug and Lettuce in order to consider if it was sexually motivated on Mr Roberts' behalf. Rather, it considered the meeting in the context of the developing relationship as a whole.

The panel noted the meeting took place very shortly after Pupil AB's last day on site at the College and represented a further shift away from the teacher/pupil relationship into a private relationship outside the College environment. In light of the communications which preceded and followed it, the panel considered arranging and attending the in-person meeting to be a deliberate step in pursuit of a future sexual relationship.

In respect of allegation 1(f), the panel considered that the sexual character of the conduct was self-evident. Having found that Mr Roberts engaged in sexual activity with Pupil AB on various occasions, the panel was satisfied that this conduct was sexually motivated as Mr Roberts sought sexual gratification from that conduct as well as an ongoing sexual relationship with Pupil AB.

Finally, the panel considered the conduct found proved under allegation 1 holistically. The panel considered that the individual findings formed parts of a consistent and escalating course of conduct: beginning with the physical contact in the form of the hug, progressing through Facebook and text communications which became sexualised, followed by an in-person meeting outside the College environment, and ultimately culminating in an ongoing sexual relationship.

There was, in the panel's view, a clear bridging and increasing intensity between those stages as Mr Roberts became increasingly involved in Pupil AB's life. The individual acts informed one another and, when viewed together, demonstrated a deliberate progression away from the pre-existing teacher/pupil relationship and towards a sexual relationship with a young person whose vulnerabilities Mr Roberts knew.

The panel rejected Mr Roberts' contention that he had not intended to pursue a sexual relationship with Pupil AB. Taking the evidence as a whole, the panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the conduct found proved under allegation 1 was undertaken in pursuit of sexual gratification and/or a sexual relationship and was therefore sexually motivated.

The panel therefore found allegation 2 proved.

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 noted that the conduct alleged in this case took place between 2010 and 2016 and that some of the conduct therefore pre-dated the introduction of the Teachers’ Standards on 1 July 2011. In considering the standards of conduct reasonably expected of Mr Roberts at the relevant times, the panel therefore had regard not only to the Teachers’ Standards in respect of the later conduct, but also to the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers, issued by the General Teaching Council and in place from 2004, in respect of conduct occurring before 1 July 2011. The panel considered both documents, as applicable to the relevant periods, when assessing Mr Roberts’ conduct.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards, Mr Roberts 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 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 considered that, by reference to the General Teaching Council's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers, Mr Roberts was in breach of the following standards:

Registered teachers may be found to be guilty of unacceptable professional conduct

Where they:

1. Seriously demean or undermine pupils […]

Where they fail to:

2. Take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare

3. Comply with relevant statutory provisions which support the wellbeing and development of pupils, including where these require co-operation and collaboration with a range of agencies, as well as teacher colleagues and other adults

[…]

Other conduct

Registered teachers may be found to be guilty of unacceptable professional conduct

Where they:

8. Otherwise bring the reputation and standing of the profession into serious disrepute.

The panel also considered whether Mr Roberts' 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.

[REDACTED], the panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel considered the circumstances particularly serious. Mr Roberts had come to know Pupil AB through his professional position at the College and had been aware of

Pupil AB's vulnerabilities, including through his involvement in concerns regarding Pupil AB's welfare [REDACTED]. Notwithstanding that knowledge and the position of trust he occupied, the panel had found that he embarked upon a course of sexually motivated conduct which progressed from physical contact with Pupil AB while Pupil AB remained a pupil, through to private and sexualised communications and meetings, and ultimately to a sexual relationship shortly after Pupil AB had left the College.

The panel recognised that allegations 1(b) to 1(f) concerned conduct which took place outside the educational setting and after Pupil AB had ceased to be a pupil. However, it considered that conduct to be directly connected to Mr Roberts' practice of the profession. The relationship arose from and developed directly out of the teacher/pupil relationship, with no meaningful break between Pupil AB leaving the College and the subsequent development of their personal and sexual relationship. The panel considered it particularly serious that Mr Roberts held a senior position at the College and was aware of Pupil AB's particular vulnerabilities.

Taking those matters together, the panel considered that Mr Roberts had failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and had disregarded his responsibilities towards the safeguarding and wellbeing of Pupil AB.

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

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

The panel considered it particularly significant that Mr Roberts had held such a senior position within the College and his involvement in matters concerning pupil welfare and safeguarding. The panel considered that Pupil AB had been a vulnerable student, that Mr Roberts knew of those vulnerabilities, and that there had been no meaningful break between the teacher/pupil relationship and the subsequent personal and sexual relationship.

The panel considered that the public would reasonably expect a teacher, and particularly a senior teacher with safeguarding responsibilities, to maintain proper professional boundaries with a vulnerable pupil and recent former pupil. In the panel's view, sexually motivated conduct of the nature found proved was capable of seriously damaging not only Mr Roberts' own reputation, but also the reputation of the College and public confidence in the teaching profession more generally.

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

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

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Roberts' 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/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 and protection of other members of the public;

- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession – assessed by reference to the standard of the ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen who both appreciates the seriousness of the proposed 'sanction' and recognises the high standards expected of all teachers, as well as other issues involved in the case;
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct within the teaching profession;
- that prohibition strikes the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest, if they are in conflict.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Roberts - which involved a range of conduct constituting an inappropriate relationship with a pupil/former-pupil at the College he taught at, which ultimately became sexual, and that all of the conduct which preceded that sexual relationship was found to have been 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 Roberts was 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 Roberts was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

The panel considered that the public interest considerations were particularly strong in this case. It had regard to the seriousness of the harm caused to Pupil AB, which it considered to be at the more serious end of the spectrum with evidence in the bundle showing that Pupil AB experienced ongoing negative effects even into adult life as a result of Mr Roberts' conduct.

The panel also considered it significant that Mr Roberts had occupied a senior leadership position at the College and had safeguarding responsibilities and knowledge of Pupil AB's particular vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding that, he formed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB which became sexual shortly after Pupil AB ceased to be a pupil at the College.

In the panel's view, an ordinary intelligent and well-informed member of the public would expect conduct of this nature by a senior, experienced teacher with safeguarding responsibilities to be treated with the utmost seriousness.

The panel also considered the need to strike the appropriate balance between Mr Roberts' interests and the public interest. It did not consider there to be any material conflict in this case. Mr Roberts had stated that he had no intention of returning to the

teaching profession. In any event, even if he had wished to return to teaching, the panel considered that his interests would be outweighed by the strong public interest considerations it had identified, in particular the need to safeguard pupils, maintain public confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct.

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 Roberts in the profession. Whilst there was no direct evidence calling into question Mr Roberts' ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Roberts in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and specifically because he had exploited his position of trust as a teacher and a member of the senior leadership team who was aware of Pupil AB's vulnerabilities.

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 Roberts.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate and proportionate 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 (and the panel also noted the departure from the GTC Code of Conduct);
- 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.

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 any mitigating factors which may be present. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

There was no evidence that Mr Roberts' actions were not deliberate. In fact, the panel considered they firmly were deliberate.

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

The panel had not had sight of any evidence that Mr Roberts had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel considered the extent of what the evidence showed was that he had fulfilled the educational expectations of the roles he held i.e. as a teacher and then in various leadership capacities, notwithstanding the obvious serious breaches of those expectations as found to have taken place during these proceedings.

The panel considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition and 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 Roberts of prohibition.

The panel considered that any outcome short of a recommendation for prohibition would seriously undermine public confidence in the profession and would be insufficient to declare and uphold proper standards of conduct.

The panel was therefore of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Roberts.

The degree of harm caused to Pupil AB, the seniority of Mr Roberts' position at the time of the inappropriate relationship, the exploitation of that position and the information

regarding Pupil AB which was made available to Mr Roberts by virtue of that position, and the continuity of the relationship bridging from teacher-pupil to personal and sexual, 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 recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 2 years.

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

These include:

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

The panel noted that it had found that Mr Roberts had formed an inappropriate and ultimately sexual relationship with a former pupil who had only very recently left the College, and that there had been no break whatsoever in the escalation of that relationship from a professional/education dynamic into an intimate/personal one. The panel specifically reminded itself that it had found all of Mr Roberts' conduct at allegation 1 as having been sexually motivated.

The panel also considered, on this point, the extent of harm which had been caused to Pupil AB according to Pupil AB's accounts in the bundle, which was an exceptionally high level, and this was plainly apparent from Pupil AB's 2019 communications with Mr Roberts in which Pupil AB [REDACTED].

The panel also specifically noted its view that Mr Roberts had been acting in his professional position as a teacher and member of the senior leadership team at the College at the time the conduct began and continued. By late-2011, he was an SLT member engaged in an ongoing sexual relationship with a former pupil less than half his age, within a year of them leaving the College where he had met them and known them as a vulnerable pupil.

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 went on to consider the extent to which Mr Roberts had demonstrated insight and remorse in respect of his conduct. The panel recognised that Mr Roberts was entitled to defend the allegations against him robustly and did not regard his decision to do so as evidence of a lack of insight. However, having considered the evidence as a whole, the panel found little evidence of genuine insight into the nature and seriousness of his conduct.

The panel acknowledged that Mr Roberts had, at various points, accepted that the relationship should not have happened, described it as a serious mistake and expressed regret for the hurt that he had caused. However, the panel considered that these expressions of regret had to be viewed alongside his wider characterisation of the relationship as a consensual relationship between adults, his reliance upon the fact that Pupil AB had left the College and was an adult when the sexual relationship began, and his apparent view that the relationship was otherwise a private matter.

The panel found no evidence that Mr Roberts properly understood his failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, the significance of his position as Pupil AB's former teacher and a senior leader with safeguarding responsibilities, or the circumstances in which the relationship had developed.

The panel considered that this was also reflected in the messages exchanged between Mr Roberts and Pupil AB in 2019. When asked whether he would do it all again if time could be turned back, Mr Roberts responded, *"The last week has been the worst of my life, no exaggeration. So, no, I wouldn't. Do I regret meeting you? No. You are brilliant."* In a further exchange, he stated, *"I regret any point in which I treated you badly. But I don't regret it in other ways. I grew to really like you, more than that in reality. So I'm glad it happened."*

The panel considered that these messages demonstrated regret concerning the consequences of the relationship and aspects of how Pupil AB had been treated, but did not demonstrate an understanding of why the relationship itself, and the conduct leading to it, represented a serious breach of professional boundaries.

The panel also considered the extent of Mr Roberts' remorse. Although it took account of his expressions of regret and acknowledgement that he had caused hurt, it was not satisfied that these demonstrated genuine remorse for the conduct found proved. In

particular, the panel considered that his expressions of regret appeared principally directed towards the consequences of his actions, including the impact upon his personal life, rather than demonstrating an understanding of the harm caused by entering into an inappropriate relationship with a former pupil in circumstances where the preceding conduct had been sexually motivated.

The panel had no evidence before it of any steps taken by Mr Roberts to address the conduct, reflect upon the professional boundary failures identified, or demonstrate how he would ensure that similar conduct would not occur again. Mr Roberts had not attended the hearing to provide evidence of developing insight or remorse, nor had he provided documentary evidence meaningfully addressing those matters. The panel therefore had no evidential basis upon which it could be reassured that the conduct would not be repeated.

Taking those matters together, the panel concluded that Mr Roberts had demonstrated limited remorse and insufficient insight into the fundamental nature of his misconduct. In the absence of meaningful insight or evidence of remediation, the panel could not be satisfied that the risk of repetition had been adequately addressed. The panel considered these matters to weigh significantly in favour of a recommendation for prohibition.

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 Peter Roberts should be the subject of a prohibition order, with no provision for a review period.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Roberts 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 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 Roberts fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding that Mr Roberts *"…embarked upon a course of sexually motivated conduct which progressed from physical contact with Pupil AB while Pupil AB remained a pupil, through to private and sexualised communications and meetings, and ultimately to a sexual relationship shortly after Pupil AB had left the College."* It is particularly concerning that the panel found that Mr Roberts knew Pupil AB was a vulnerable person.

I am also mindful of the impact the proven conduct had on Pupil AB. The panel record, *"…the extent of harm which had been caused to Pupil AB according to Pupil AB's accounts in the bundle, which was an exceptionally high level, and this was plainly apparent from Pupil AB's 2019 communications with Mr Roberts in which Pupil AB* [REDACTED]*."*

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 Roberts, 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 Roberts - which involved a range of conduct constituting an inappropriate relationship with a pupil/former-pupil at the College he taught at, which ultimately became sexual, and that all of the conduct which preceded that sexual relationship was found to have been 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, which the panel sets out as follows,

> *"…having considered the evidence as a whole, the panel found little evidence of genuine insight into the nature and seriousness of his conduct.*
>
> *The panel acknowledged that Mr Roberts had, at various points, accepted that the relationship should not have happened, described it as a serious mistake and expressed regret for the hurt that he had caused. However, the panel considered that these expressions of regret had to be viewed alongside his wider characterisation of the relationship as a consensual relationship between adults, his reliance upon the fact that Pupil AB had left the College and was an adult when the sexual relationship began, and his apparent view that the relationship was otherwise a private matter."*

The panel has also commented on its assessment of Mr Roberts remorse, in that,

> *"Although it took account of his expressions of regret and acknowledgement that he had caused hurt, it was not satisfied that these demonstrated genuine remorse for the conduct found proved. In particular, the panel considered that his expressions of regret appeared principally directed towards the consequences of his actions, including the impact upon his personal life, rather than demonstrating an understanding of the harm caused by entering into an inappropriate relationship with a former pupil in circumstances where the preceding conduct had been sexually motivated."*

In my judgement, the lack of full insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of 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 Roberts was 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 Roberts himself. The panel comment that it *"…had not had sight of any evidence that Mr Roberts had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. The panel considered the extent of what the evidence showed was that he had fulfilled the educational expectations of the roles he held i.e. as a teacher and then in various leadership capacities, notwithstanding the obvious serious breaches of those expectations as found to have taken place during these proceedings."*

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the seriousness of the conduct.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that *"…Mr Roberts had occupied a senior leadership position at the College and had safeguarding responsibilities and knowledge of Pupil AB's particular vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding that, he formed an inappropriate relationship with Pupil AB which became sexual shortly after Pupil AB ceased to be a pupil at the College."*

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Roberts 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 serious 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 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. In this case the panel has identified that the behaviour of serious sexual misconduct is relevant.

I have also considered the panel's comments on future risk. The panel record that it,

> *"…had no evidence before it of any steps taken by Mr Roberts to address the conduct, reflect upon the professional boundary failures identified, or demonstrate how he would ensure that similar conduct would not occur again. Mr Roberts had not attended the hearing to provide evidence of developing insight or remorse, nor had he provided documentary evidence meaningfully addressing those matters. The panel therefore had no evidential basis upon which it could be reassured that the conduct would not be repeated.*
>
> *Taking those matters together, the panel concluded that Mr Roberts had demonstrated limited remorse and insufficient insight into the fundamental nature of his misconduct. In the absence of meaningful insight or evidence of remediation, the panel could not be satisfied that the risk of repetition had been adequately addressed."*

In light of the elements of this case, including the seriousness of the proven conduct, and the panel's assessment of the risk of repetition, I have considered whether allowing a review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate response to the misconduct found in this case in order to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, these factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession.

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 Peter Roberts 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 Roberts 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 Roberts 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: 10 November 2026

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