

FORMER TEACHER LOSES LICENCE FOR HAVING SEX WITH STUDENT

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A former Georgetown District High School teacher had his teaching licence revoked after a disciplinary hearing panel at the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) found him guilty of professional misconduct that involves sexual abuse of a student.

Darren Mansfield — who was not present and had no legal representation — pleaded guilty and admitted to the allegations, according to an agreed statement of facts read at the April 21 hearing.

Counsel for the college, Danielle Miller, told the panel that by pleading guilty Mansfield was waiving the right to require the college to prove the case against him and that he acknowledged he's executing

the agreed statement of facts and guilty plea voluntarily — having had the chance to obtain legal advice.

Attempts to reach Mansfield for comment were not immediately successful.

Providing an overview of the case, Miller, the college's counsel, said that Mansfield repeatedly crossed professional boundary lines by pursuing inappropriate personal relationships with five female students over the course of a six-year period from 2016 until 2021.

Many of the students were 17 years of age at the start.

"With respect to one of the students, his misconduct went beyond crossing professional boundaries to sexual abuse of this young woman," Miller said, noting that Mansfield admit-

ted to having sexual intercourse with the student on approximately 10 occasions.

"This is what you would describe as a classic grooming approach," she said.

The list of allegations also includes sending flirtatious text messages to multiple students, inviting a student to his home, providing and offering to buy alcohol, and admitting to kissing three of his students, as detailed in the hearing report.

There were also allegations of emotional abuse, which involved a student who felt pressured to keep communicating with him — with Mansfield reportedly texting her hundreds of times over five days — after asking him to be the verifier for her university application.

"It is emotionally abu-



Kathryn Boyle photo

Darren Mansfield is a former teacher at Georgetown District High School.

sive for a teacher to place a student in the uncomfortable position of being the recipient of flirtatious, drunken messages and to share inappropriate personal information," Miller said.

In the case of another student, Mansfield reached out to her on social media and started discussing his dating and relationship problems. The student

refused to give out her phone number and eventually cut off communication after finding the interaction "weird and creepy," the hearing heard.

The college's counsel said Mansfield failed to show respect for the five students by putting them in a compromising position of having to offer support to their teacher or former teacher for fear of the con-

sequences to him or themselves.

"It's also aggravating that the conduct began with (the first student) in 2016 — and five years later in 2021 he's still engaging in this similar kind of inappropriate behaviour," she said, adding his actions have significant detrimental effects on the students.

Back in January, Marlene Denton, communications manager with the Halton District School Board, said that the board was aware of the allegations and the hearing process.

She said at the time that Mansfield was assigned home and was no longer employed by the board.

A written decision with reasons by the Ontario College of Teachers will follow.

— With files from Melanie Hennessey

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