



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mrs Rebecca Aslam: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

July 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Preliminary applications	4
Summary of evidence	7
Documents	7
Witnesses	7
Decision and reasons	8
Findings of fact	8
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	13
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	16

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

Teacher: Mrs Rebecca Aslam
TRA reference: 0020020
Date of determination: 27 July 2023
Former employer: Lord Williams’s School, Oxfordshire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened virtually on 26 July 2023, to consider the case of Mrs Rebecca Aslam (“Mrs Aslam”).

The panel members were Mrs Michelle Chappell (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Anila Rai (lay panellist) and Dr Martin Coles (former teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Carly Hagedorn of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Matilda Heselton of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Mrs Aslam was present and was represented by Mr Simon Pettet of National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT).

The hearing took place in public, save for parts of the hearing which were heard in private, and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 6 July 2023.

It was alleged that Mrs Aslam was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed by Lord Williams's School (School A) from November 2019 to February 2021:

1. She failed to declare on her application form to the Princes Risborough School (School B) and/or at her interview with School B that;
 - a. she had ever been employed by School A;
 - b. she was still in fact employed by School A.

2. Her conduct as may be found proven at allegations 1 was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

Mrs Aslam admitted the facts of allegation 1 and 2. Mrs Aslam denied that her conduct in allegations 1 and 2 amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

It was clarified during the hearing that Mrs Aslam was employed at School A from September 2019, rather than from November 2019, as stipulated in the stem of allegation 1. The presenting officer noted that this would not change the scope of the allegation and therefore did not apply to amend the allegation.

Preliminary applications

Date of Notice of Hearing

At the outset of the hearing, it was noted that the date of the Notice of Proceedings ("the Notice") was 6 July 2023; less than the ten week period required for the TRA to send the Notice to the teacher in accordance with paragraph 5.23 of the Teacher Misconduct – Disciplinary Procedures for the Teaching Profession (May 2020) ("the Procedures").

The procedures state that the TRA will send the Notice to the teacher at least ten weeks before the date of the hearing unless otherwise agreed with the teacher.

The TRA provided the panel with written confirmation from Mrs Aslam's representative to waive the ten week notice period, which stated "*Mrs Aslam has confirmed she is in agreement to waive the ten week notice period...*"

The panel was content to proceed on the basis that Mrs Aslam had waived the notice period of ten weeks and she was in attendance with her representative at the hearing.

Excluding the Public

The panel considered whether to exercise its discretion under paragraph 11 of the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 (the "Regulations") and paragraph 5.85 of the Procedures to exclude the public from all or part of the hearing. This followed a request by the teacher's representative that any part of the hearing pertaining to Mrs Aslam's [redacted] should be heard in private.

The panel determined to exercise its discretion under paragraph 11(3)(b) of the Regulations under the second limb of paragraph 5.85 of the Procedures for the public to be excluded from this part of the hearing.

The panel took into account the general rule that hearings should be held in public and that this is generally desirable to maintain public confidence in the administration of these proceedings and also to maintain confidence in the teaching profession. On this occasion, however, the panel considered that the request by the teacher's representative was a reasonable one given concerns about confidential matters relating to the teacher's [redacted] being placed in the public domain.

The panel did not consider that there were any steps short of excluding the public from these parts of the hearing that would serve the purpose of protecting the confidentiality of matters relating to the teacher's [redacted]. The panel took account of the [redacted].

The panel had regard to whether the teacher's request ran contrary to the public interest. The panel is required to announce its decisions in public as to whether the facts have been proven and whether those facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In the event that the case continues, any decision of the Secretary of State will also be in public. The panel considered that in the circumstances of this case that the public interest will be satisfied by these public announcements. Those public announcements will ensure that public confidence in these proceedings and in the standards of the profession are maintained.

Additional Documents

The presenting officer informed the panel that the [redacted] of Princes Risborough School who was going to be called on behalf of the TRA to give evidence was now unavailable to attend the hearing, as he was out of the country.

Instead, the presenting officer stated that another witness, [redacted] at Insignis Academy Trust ("the Trust") was available to be called as a witness ("Witness B"). The panel was

informed that the Trust was comprised of a number of schools, which included Princes Risborough School. The presenting officer applied to admit the witness statement of Witness B on the basis that her evidence was relevant to the matters around recruitment and employment at Princes Risborough School.

The teacher's representative applied to admit Mrs Aslam's original response to the Notice of Proceedings dated 13 May 2023 and Mrs Aslam's witness statement dated 25 July 2023.

The aforementioned documents were not served in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.36 or 5.37 of the Procedures, and as such the panel was required to decide whether those documents should be admitted under paragraph 5.34 of the Procedures at the discretion of the panel.

The panel took into account the representations from the presenting officer and the teacher's representative in respect of their applications. No objection was raised by either party in respect of the applications.

Under paragraph 5.33 of the Procedures, the panel may admit any evidence, where it is fair to do so, which may reasonably be considered to be relevant to the case.

The panel was satisfied that all of the documents were relevant to the case. The panel agreed with the presenting officer that the witness statement of Witness B would be relevant to the matters around recruitment and employment of Mrs Aslam at Princes Risborough School. The TRA had also informed the panel that Witness B would be available to give evidence at the hearing.

The panel noted that the response to the Notice of Proceedings and the recent witness statement of Mrs Aslam was also relevant to address her position in respect of the allegations.

With regard to the overall question of fairness, the panel noted that if the witness statement of Witness B was admitted, the teacher's representative would have the opportunity to cross examine Witness B during the hearing. The presenting officer stated that the witness statement was shared with the teacher at the earliest opportunity and there was an agreement between the TRA and the teacher prior to a professional conduct panel hearing commencing to admit this evidence. No objections were made by the teacher's representative in respect of this application.

Similarly, the TRA would have the opportunity to ask Mrs Aslam questions in respect of her recent witness statement and response to the Notice of Proceedings. No objections were made by the presenting officer in respect of this application.

The panel concluded that it would be fair, by the reasons outlined above to admit the documents.

The panel decided to admit each of the documents and these were paginated as follows:

- Response to Notice of Proceedings dated 13 May 2023 – pages 193 to 204
- Witness Statement of Mrs Aslam dated 25 July 2023 – pages 205 to 209
- Witness Statement of Witness B – page 210

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology– page 5

Section 2: Notice of Referral Response, Notice of Proceedings, Response, Statement of Agreed and Disputed Facts – pages 7 to 24

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 27 to 65

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 67 to 133

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 136 to 192

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

Section 5 (continued):

- Response to Notice of Proceedings dated 13 May 2023 – pages 193 to 204
- Witness Statement of Mrs Aslam dated 25 July 2023 – pages 205 to 209

Section 6:

- Witness Statement of Witness B – page 210

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

Witnesses

The following witnesses were called on behalf of the TRA to give oral evidence at the hearing:

- Witness A, [redacted] at Lord Williams's School
- Witness B, [redacted] at the Insignis Academy Trust

Mrs Aslam gave oral evidence at the hearing.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mrs Aslam was employed as a teacher of Business Studies at the Lord Williams's School ("School A") from 1 September 2019 until 26 February 2021.

Mrs Aslam was away from School A on sick leave between the periods of November 2019 and May 2020; and September 2020 and February 2021.

The panel was informed that in or around November 2020, Mrs Aslam completed and submitted an application form to the Princes Risborough School ("School B") for the position of Business Teacher. The application form was dated February 2020, but the teacher noted that this was a typing error and this should have been November 2020. Mrs Aslam attended an interview with School B on 26 November 2020 and was successful with her application to School B. Mrs Aslam's start date at School B was set to 4 January 2021.

On 15 January 2021, the [redacted] at School A noticed Mrs Aslam was listed as a member of staff on School B's website, whilst she was on sick leave.

On 25 January 2021, School B confirmed to School A that they had employed Mrs Aslam and did not know Mrs Aslam was simultaneously employed by School A as Mrs Aslam had not declared it on her application form.

A disciplinary hearing took place at School A on 26 February 2021. Mrs Aslam's employment ceased with School A on the same date. School B also ceased Mrs Aslam's employment at that time.

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 declare on your application form to the Princes Risborough School (School B) and/or at your interview with School B that;**
 - a. you had ever been employed by School A;**

Mrs Aslam admitted this allegation.

The panel had sight of the statement of agreed facts which said:

“Mrs Aslam accepts she failed to declare on her application form to and during her interview at School B in 2020 that she had ever been employed at School A and was in fact still employed at School A.”

The panel noted that the [redacted] from School B was not available to give evidence. The [redacted] of School B’s witness statement was included in the hearing bundle. The panel determined that the witness statement was admissible. The teacher’s representative raised no objection to the inclusion of the witness statement as hearsay evidence now that this witness was not in attendance at the hearing.

The panel noted that the [redacted] of School B has stated the following in his witness statement:

“Within her application form, Mrs Aslam did not declare that she was employed at the time of her application and/or interview, nor did she mention this in the interview. I can recall Mrs Aslam speaking about the schools listed in her application form but I do not recall Mrs Aslam mentioning Lord Williams School (“School A”) or referring to the fact that she had been employed at School A.”

The panel heard evidence from Witness A who confirmed that Mrs Aslam was employed at School A from September 2019 to February 2021.

The panel had sight of Mrs Aslam’s application form which did not declare that she had ever been employed by School A. Mrs Aslam’s application form suggested that she was still employed at Highcrest Academy.

The panel found allegation 1(a) proved.

b. you were still in fact employed by School A.

Mrs Aslam admitted this allegation.

The panel had sight of the statement of agreed facts which said:

“Mrs Aslam admits that when she attended her interview at School B on 26 November 2020 she did not declare she had been employed at School A, nor did she declare that she was still employed by School A.”

The panel noted the evidence contained in the [redacted] of School B’s witness

statement as noted above.

The panel heard evidence from Witness A who confirmed that Mrs Aslam was employed at School A from September 2019 to February 2021 and was on sick leave during the time of her interview.

The panel had sight of Mrs Aslam's application form which did not declare that she was currently employed by School A at the time of her application and/or interview. In fact, the application form suggested that she was still employed at Highcrest Academy.

The panel found allegation 1(b) proved.

2. Your conduct as may be found proven at allegations 1 was dishonest and/or lacked integrity.

Mrs Aslam admitted this allegation.

The panel had regard for the legal adviser's advice when considering an allegation of dishonesty. The panel needed first to ascertain subjectively the actual state of Mrs Aslam's knowledge or belief as to the facts. Secondly, the panel needed to determine whether Mrs Aslam's state of mind was honest or dishonest by the application of the objective standards of the ordinary honest person.

The panel firstly turned its mind to the actual state of Mrs Aslam's knowledge or belief as to the facts. The panel noted that Mrs Aslam had inputted her previous employers' details into the form, but omitted her current employer, School A. It appeared that Mrs Aslam was employed at Highcrest Academy. The panel noted that the application form for the role at School B contained a section for "*Present or Most Recent Employment*". Mrs Aslam failed to stipulate School A's details i.e. her present employer, despite the application form requesting this information. The panel was of the view that Mrs Aslam's failure to insert School A's details in her application form was deliberate and a conscious decision. When Mrs Aslam was asked by School A whether she had declared her employment at School A on her application form to School B, Mrs Aslam said "*I did not include Lord Williams on my application form because I knew I would not get another job due to getting a bad reference.*"

Mrs Aslam stated that she was under a lot of pressure at the time of completing her application form and attending the interview at School B due to the [redacted]. Mrs Aslam said that she "*wasn't thinking straight at all*". Mrs Aslam also stated that she "*didn't have a choice*" [redacted].

Mrs Aslam also informed the panel about her [redacted]. The panel noted that Mrs Aslam had described herself as "*enthusiastic*", "*cheerful*", and having a "*positive attitude towards*

life". When Mrs Aslam was questioned about whether this was a true reflection of her character at the time, she said "*not at all*".

The panel was sympathetic to Mrs Aslam's circumstances during this time, but noted that Mrs Aslam was aware that what she was doing was wrong, given that when she drove to the job interview, she said that she had to "*pull over on the side of the road because I left physically sick and actually vomited*".

The panel noted that by the time of her interview at School B, she could have taken the opportunity, at that point, to inform School B that she was currently employed at School A but she chose not to do so. Furthermore, the panel found that her actions would be regarded by the standards of ordinary, decent people to be dishonest.

When considering lack of integrity, the panel recognised that this allegation connotes adherence to the ethical standards of one's own profession that involves more than mere honesty. It is linked to the manner in which the profession professes to serve the public.

The panel recognised that in addition to Mrs Aslam acting dishonestly, her actions impacted on the pupils of School A and School B, her colleagues at both School A and B, parents and the wider community.

The panel noted that at the time of Mrs Aslam's employment with School B, she was also employed by School A where she was receiving occupational sick pay. The panel had sight of Mrs Aslam's payslip from School B which showed that Mrs Aslam also received a salary for one month of employment at School B.

The panel considered that Mrs Aslam's behaviour did not adhere to the ethical standards of a teacher and was in contrast to the manner in which the profession professes to serve the public.

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

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Aslam, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mrs Aslam was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including the rule of law
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Aslam, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE").

The panel noted that KCSIE Safer Recruitment places legal requirements on schools colleges in respect of what they must do, what they should do, what is considered best practice and important information about the recruitment and selection process. Schools and colleges should require applicants to provide details of their present (or last) employment. School B requested this information in the application form. Mrs Aslam was aware of these requirements, but Mrs Aslam deliberately omitted the details of her present employer.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Aslam fell significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher.

The panel also considered whether Mrs Aslam's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant.

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 noted that at the time of Mrs Aslam's employment with School B, she was also employed by School A where she was receiving occupational sick pay. The panel had sight of Mrs Aslam's payslip from School B which showed that Mrs Aslam also received a salary for one month of employment at School B.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Aslam was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others, the responsibilities and duties of teachers in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of

pupils and 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.

The panel also considered whether Mrs Aslam's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offence of serious dishonesty was relevant.

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 conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

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

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

The panel therefore found that Mrs Aslam's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Having found the facts of particulars 1 and 2 proved, the panel further found that Mrs Aslam's conduct amounted to both unacceptable professional conduct and 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 is appropriate, the panel had to consider the public interest, the seriousness of the behaviour and any mitigation offered by Mrs Aslam and whether a prohibition order is necessary and proportionate. 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 maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mrs Aslam, which involved a finding of dishonesty and lack of integrity for failing to disclose her current employment with School A on her application form and at interview with School B which resulted in Mrs Aslam being employed at two schools, when on sickness leave at School A, there was a strong public interest consideration in the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

The panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Aslam 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 Mrs Aslam was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

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 took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a panel will likely consider a teacher's behaviour to be incompatible with being a teacher if there is evidence of one or more of the factors that begin on page 15. In the list of such factors, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- actions or behaviours that undermine fundamental British values of the rule of law
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, taking account of the public interest and the seriousness of the behaviour and the likely harm to the public interest were the teacher be allowed to continue to teach, the panel went on to consider whether there were mitigating circumstances.

The panel considered that Mrs Aslam's conduct was deliberate. The panel was of the view that Mrs Aslam's failure to insert School A's details in her application form or mention her employment at School A when attending the interview with School B was deliberate and a conscious decision. When Mrs Aslam was asked by School A whether she had declared her employment at School A on her application form to School B, Mrs Aslam said *"I did not include Lord Williams on my application form because I knew I would not get another job due to getting a bad reference."* The panel was of the view that

Mrs Aslam deliberately failed to disclose her employment at School A to improve her prospects of obtaining a job with School B.

The panel accepted that Mrs Aslam was acting under extreme duress at the time of the misconduct. The panel had sight of [redacted] at the time of the allegations. Mrs Aslam stated that she had to “[redacted].” The panel noted that Mrs Aslam became upset during the hearing when she described [redacted]. She said “*I wasn’t thinking straight at all. I didn’t have a choice.*” [redacted].

The teacher’s representative provided the panel with a copy of the [redacted]. Whilst this guidance was dated April 2022, after the dates of Mrs Aslam’s misconduct, the panel found the document was relevant to provide guidance on the behaviours [redacted]. The panel found that a great deal of the behaviour types listed in this document applied [redacted]

The panel noted that Mrs Aslam became very upset when giving her evidence when describing her [redacted] at the time of the allegations. Mrs Aslam was apologetic and said “*I know what I’ve done is wrong. At the time I didn’t.* [redacted]”

The panel noted that there was no evidence to suggest that Mrs Aslam did not have a previously good history as an educator. The panel did not see evidence that showed Mrs Aslam was previously subject to disciplinary proceedings and/or warnings.

Witness A stated that he “*did not receive concerns from parents and students around the quality of Mrs Aslam’s teaching.*”

The panel had seen a reference that was provided by Highcrest Academy to School B which stated “*Definitely suitable to work with children. Very high standards.*”

When Mrs Aslam was asked for her view on whether she thought applicants are expected to be transparent, she said “*of course*”. Mrs Aslam sincerely apologised to the people affected by her actions.

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 noted that the Advice states that it is likely that a panel will consider a teacher’s behaviour to be incompatible with being a teacher, if there is evidence of one or more of the following factors, such as a serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers’ Standards; and dishonesty or a lack of integrity. Whilst the panel considered the above factors to be relevant, the panel was of the view that Mrs Aslam was acting under extreme duress [redacted].

The panel also noted that Mrs Aslam’s behaviour was linked to behaviour associated with serious dishonesty, but again, the panel was of the view that at the time, Mrs Aslam was acting under extreme duress [redacted].

The panel recognised that Mrs Aslam was remorseful and displayed a good level of insight into her actions. The panel considered that the risk of Mrs Aslam repeating this behaviour was very low, especially as the Panel heard evidence that Mrs Aslam is now [redacted].

Mrs Aslam explained that she had undertaken a thirty three part course about [redacted].

Mrs Aslam said that that she now feels safe and is getting help. She said that her mother is a social worker and she has the support of her family who were previously unaware of [redacted].

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour did not pose a risk to children and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found 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 Mrs Aslam should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mrs Aslam is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions

- not undermining fundamental British values, including the rule of law
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Aslam, involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The panel finds that the conduct of Mrs Aslam fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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 that may 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 Mrs Aslam and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and/or safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, “the nature and severity of the behaviour did not pose a risk to children.”

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, “The panel recognised that Mrs Aslam was remorseful and displayed a good level of insight into her actions.” 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, “In the light of the panel’s findings against Mrs Aslam, which involved a finding of dishonesty and lack of integrity for failing to disclose her current employment with School A on her application form and interview with School B which resulted in Mrs Aslam being employed at two schools, when on sickness leave at School A, there was a strong public interest consideration in the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty 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, 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 Mrs Aslam herself and the panel comment “The panel noted that there was no evidence to suggest that Mrs Aslam did not have a previously good history as an educator. The panel did not see evidence that showed Mrs Aslam was previously subject to disciplinary proceedings and/or warnings.”

I have considered the panel’s comments related to witness statements, including;

Witness A stated that he “*did not receive concerns from parents and students around the quality of Mrs Aslam’s teaching.*”

The panel had seen a reference that was provided by Highcrest Academy to School B which stated “*Definitely suitable to work with children. Very high standards.*”

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

I have placed weight on the panel’s comment regarding insight and remorse “The panel noted that Mrs Aslam became very upset when giving her evidence when describing her [redacted] at the time of the allegations. Mrs Aslam was apologetic and said “*I know what I’ve done is wrong. At the time I didn’t.* [redacted]”

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning dishonesty. The panel has said, “The panel also noted that Mrs Aslam’s behaviour was linked to behaviour associated with serious dishonesty, but again, the panel was of the view that at the time, Mrs Aslam was acting under extreme duress [redacted].”

I have also placed considerable weight on the following comment “The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour did not pose a risk to children and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send

an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.”

I have given weight in my consideration of sanction to the contribution that Mrs Aslam has made to the profession.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Buxcey', with a horizontal line underneath.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 1 August 2023

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