



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Kevin Pratt

Professional conduct

panel meeting outcome

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

October 2024

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

Teacher:	Mr Kevin Pratt
Teacher ref number:	0967353
Teacher date of birth:	10 July 1987
TRA reference:	20254
Date of determination:	1 October 2024
Former employer:	Acorn Multi Academy Trust, Axminster and Cranbrook Education Campus, Exeter

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened virtually on Microsoft Teams, to consider the case of Mr Kevin Pratt.

The panel members were Mr Ronan Tyrer (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Lauren Grey (lay panellist) and Mrs Gerida Montague (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Jermel Anderson of Blake Morgan solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Pratt that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Kevin Pratt provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer Ms Louise Ravencroft, Mr Pratt, or his representative Mr Colin Henderson.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 18 July 2024.

It was alleged that Mr Kevin Pratt was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst at Acorn Multi Academy Trust (“Acorn School”) and Cranbrook Education Campus (“Cranbrook School”) he:

1. On one or more occasions between September 2020 and April 2021 he asked Person A (a subordinate colleague) not to tell anybody about your relationship;
2. In or around October 2020, he made inappropriate comments to a colleague Person D, in that you:
 - a. Sent a text message to Person D suggesting that he wanted to have sexual intercourse in her office;
 - b. Asked Person D to perform a sex act in her office while you watched
3. Between June 2020 and April 2021, he engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Person B, a subordinate colleague, in that he:
 - a. Engaged in sexual activity on school premises and/or during school hours;
4. On or around 29 March 2021, he:
 - a. performed a sexual act upon himself while on a video call with Person B on school premises;
5. He failed to disclose to the School promptly or at all details of his relationship with:
 - a. Person A
 - b. Person D
 - c. Person B
6. His conduct as may be found proved at paragraph 5 was dishonest.
7. By his conduct at any or all of paragraphs 1-6, he failed demonstrate consistently high standards of professional conduct expected of a head teacher.

Mr Pratt made full admissions to these allegations. Mr Pratt also admitted that the Allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 8

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 9 to 28

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 29 to 38

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 39 to 876

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 877 to 882

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Kevin Pratt on 24 June 2024.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case and reached a decision.

In advance of the meeting, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Pratt for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

Mr Pratt was employed as an Assistant Headteacher at Cranbrook Education Centre from 1 September 2017. On 1 September 2020, he was employed as Head of School for the Axminster Community Primary Academy, a school forming part of the Acorn Multi Academy Trust.

On 25 May 2021 Person A, a Teacher at the Axminster Community Primary Academy, approached the [REDACTED] of the Acorn Multi Academy Trust, Witness A, stating that she had previously had a sexual relationship with Mr Pratt where he had abused his position of authority. Her disclosures also indicated that a similar relationship had taken place between Mr Pratt and Person B, a Teacher at the Cranbrook Education Centre. The sending of explicit messages was a key feature of both of these relationships and

Person A reported that she had been instructed by Mr Pratt not to disclose the relationship to anyone.

Through the investigation of the concerns, it also emanated that Mr Pratt had also sent explicit messages to Person D, [REDACTED] at the Axminster Community Primary Academy.

It also became apparent that none of these relationships had been declared to Mr Pratt's employers at the respective times.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The Panel found Allegation 1, Allegation 2, Allegation 3, Allegation 4, Allegation 5, Allegation 6 proved. The panel found Allegation 7 not proved.

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

1. On one or more occasions between September 2020 and April 2021 you asked Person A (a subordinate colleague) not to tell anybody about your relationship

The panel saw throughout the evidence presented that between September 2020 and April 2021, Mr Pratt was in a more senior position than Person A.

The panel noted that Mr Pratt accepted that during the course of pursuing a sexual relationship with Person A, he told her not to tell anyone about their relationship. The panel also saw the witness statement of Person A whereby she stated that Mr Pratt had advised her of the need of their relationship to be kept "secret".

The panel therefore found Allegation 1 proved.

2. In or around October 2020, you made inappropriate comments to a colleague Person D, in that you:

a. Sent a text message to Person D suggesting that you wanted to have sexual intercourse in her office;

b. Asked Person D to perform a sex act in her office while you watched;

The panel saw that Mr Pratt accepted that he had pursued a personal relationship with Person D and had sight of messages that he had sent her, stating that he wished to have sexual intercourse with her, in her office.

The panel also saw evidence that Mr Pratt had accepted entering Person D's office and stating that he was going to stand by the door and watch her "play with herself". It noted that Mr Pratt accepted that this meant that he was referring to Person D performing a sexual act upon herself.

The panel accordingly found Allegation 2 proved.

3. Between June 2020 and April 2021, you engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Person B, a subordinate colleague, in that you:

a. Engaged in sexual activity on school premises and/or during school hours;

The panel saw that Mr Pratt admitted that during June 2020 and April 2021, he was in a senior position to Person B. It also saw that he accepted engaging in sexual activity on school premises and during school hours, noting that he had made admissions to sexual activity inside Person B's office and also within a School cupboard.

The panel noted that this activity was substantiated by incidents that were discussed in the messages between Person B and Mr Pratt.

The Panel therefore found Allegation 3 proved.

4. On or around 29 March 2021, you:

a. performed a sexual act upon yourself while on a video call with Person B on school premises;

The panel acknowledged that Mr Pratt accepted performing a sexual act upon himself whilst in a video call with Person B on 29 March 2021. It also noted that Mr Pratt accepted that he did this whilst on school premises.

It accordingly found Allegation 4 proved.

5. You failed to disclose to the School promptly or at all details of your relationship with:

a. Person A,

b. Person D

c. Person B

The panel noted that by his own acceptance, Mr Pratt made no admissions to his relationships insofar as they pertained to Person A and Person D at any time.

It noted that Witness A stated in her witness statement that Mr Pratt had broken down when shown evidence of the relationship with Person A and declared to her that he knew that he ought to have disclosed it.

The panel was therefore satisfied, on the basis of the material that it had seen that there had been no disclosure by Mr Pratt.

It accordingly, found Allegation 5 proved.

6. Your conduct as may be found proved at paragraph 5 was dishonest.

The panel noted that during the internal disciplinary investigation concerning his personal and sexual relationships with Person A and Person D, Mr Pratt denied having such relationships on 26 May 2021. It also noted that he admitted making no disclosures as to these relationships during his employment.

The panel, having considered the legal advice, first considered Mr Pratt's state of mind as to the above. It was satisfied that it could draw the inference that he must have known that his actions were dishonest in relation to his behaviour and noted that he had admitted this. The panel then went on to determine that the behaviour was also dishonest, when considered within the context of the standards of ordinary decent people.

The panel therefore found Allegation 6 proved.

7. By your conduct at any or all of paragraphs 1-6, you failed demonstrate consistently high standards of professional conduct expected of a head teacher

The panel did not feel that it could appropriately consider this allegation. The panel noted that the wording of the allegation effectively appeared to mirror the language of the test for unacceptable professional conduct. The panel noted that the phrasing of this allegation concerned behaviour that it could not directly comment upon, and more appropriately seemed to refer to the task before it when it considered the question of unacceptable professional conduct.

Accordingly, the panel did not engage with this allegation, and instead went on to the consider the question of unacceptable professional conduct with regard to Allegation 1, Allegation 2, Allegation 3, Allegation 4, Allegation 5 and Allegation 6.

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 Mr Pratt in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards. The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Pratt 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
 - ...observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher’s professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - not undermining ...individual liberty and mutual respect...
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards....
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Pratt fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel also considered whether Mr Pratt’s conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The panel found that the offence of sexual activity, serious dishonesty, controlling and coercive behaviour 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.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Pratt was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others 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

The findings of misconduct were serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on Mr Pratt's status as a teacher. The panel determined that his conduct could potentially damage the public perception of the teaching profession.

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

Having found the facts of particulars of allegations 1, 2 3, 4, 5 and 6 proved, the panel further found that Mr Pratt'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/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
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Pratt which involved sexual misconduct relating to three separate members of staff, there was a strong public interest consideration in relation to these public interest considerations.

The panel determined that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the issue of safeguarding, given the fact that sexual activity took place within school premises and during school hours.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Pratt were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel decided that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Pratt was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated. Mr Pratt's inappropriate behaviour was significantly aggravated by the power imbalance inherent within his conduct.

The panel felt that as he was in a leadership position, Mr Pratt was directly and professionally responsible for the ethos, culture and standards of conduct within the school. It therefore determined that his misconduct amounted to a significant failing when considered against the need to uphold proper standards within the profession.

The panel did not feel that it could determine that there was a strong public interest consideration in retaining Mr Pratt in the profession. Whilst no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator, the nature of the conduct and the fact that it primarily took place within the learning environment undermined any suggestion that he could make a particularly valuable contribution to the profession.

Notwithstanding 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 Pratt.

In carrying out the balancing exercise, the panel had regard to the public interest considerations both in favour of, and against, prohibition as well as the interests of Mr Pratt. The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that are relevant in this case are:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust
- an abuse of any trust, knowledge, or influence gained through their professional position in order to advance a romantic or sexual relationship ...
- sexual misconduct
- ... or other deliberate behaviour that undermines pupils, the profession, the school or colleagues;
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour;
- dishonesty
- collusion or concealment including:

- failure to challenge inappropriate actions, defending inappropriate actions or concealing inappropriate actions;
- encouraging others to break rules;
- lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing;

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

There was no evidence presented that suggested that Mr Pratt had previously been subject to any disciplinary proceedings which it took into consideration.

The panel noted that the evidence showed that Mr Pratt's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Pratt was acting under duress, and, in fact, the panel found Mr Pratt actions to be calculated and motivated. The panel did take into consideration that Mr Pratt had advised that he had experienced [REDACTED] at the relevant time, however it felt that this was limited in its ability to mitigate against the findings made. It also noted that he had an otherwise had a "blemish free" record.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings was sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Pratt of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Pratt. The pervasive nature of his conduct was a significant factor 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 to recommend that a review period of the order should be considered. 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 behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

One of these behaviours included:

- serious sexual misconduct

The panel also noted that there are behaviours set out at Paragraph 51 which would likely weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate, however none of these behaviours was present.

The panel found that Mr Pratt was responsible for seriously inappropriate behaviour which had a demonstrable impact upon colleagues whom he line managed. The scope of harm in relation to his conduct was therefore serious and it noted that the overall nature of the behaviour showed a disregard of safeguarding principles and professional standards.

The panel formed the view that Mr Pratt had shown little insight into his actions, though it did acknowledge that he had signed an agreed statement of facts as indicative of some degree of acceptance of his conduct.

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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven, including allegation 7, which the panel did not feel that it could appropriately consider. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Pratt 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
 - ...observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - not undermining ...individual liberty and mutual respect...
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach and maintain high standards....
- 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 Pratt fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of sexual misconduct relating to three separate members of staff.

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 or 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 Pratt, 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/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "The panel determined that there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the issue of safeguarding, given the fact that sexual activity took place within school premises and during school hours." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, "The panel formed the view that Mr Pratt had shown little insight into his actions, though it did acknowledge that he had signed an agreed statement of facts as indicative of some degree of acceptance of his conduct." 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, “the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Pratt were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of serious sexual misconduct 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 or 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 Pratt himself and the panel comment “The panel did not feel that it could determine that there was a strong public interest consideration in retaining Mr Pratt in the profession. Whilst no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator, the nature of the conduct and the fact that it primarily took place within the learning environment undermined any suggestion that he could make a particularly valuable contribution to the profession.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Pratt 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 “The panel felt that as he was in a leadership position, Mr Pratt was directly and professionally responsible for the ethos, culture and standards of conduct within the school. It therefore determined that his misconduct amounted to a significant failing when considered against the need to uphold proper standards within the profession.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that “Mr Pratt was responsible for seriously inappropriate behaviour which had a demonstrable impact upon colleagues whom he line managed. The scope of harm in relation to his conduct was

therefore serious and it noted that the overall nature of the behaviour showed a disregard of safeguarding principles and professional standards.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Pratt has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by full insight, 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.

I have considered the panel’s comments “The Advice indicates that there are behaviours that, if proved, would militate against the recommendation of a review period.

One of these behaviours included:

- serious sexual misconduct”

In this case, factors mean that allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the findings and the lack of full insight.

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 Kevin Pratt 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 Pratt 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 Kevin Pratt has a right of appeal to the King’s Bench Division of the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.



Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 3 October 2024

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