



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Laura Colledge: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

February 2025

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

Teacher: Ms Laura Colledge
TRA reference: 22895
Date of determination: 14 February 2025
Former employer: Cirencester Kingshill School, Gloucestershire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ('the panel') of the Teaching Regulation Agency ('the TRA') convened on 13 to 14 February 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Laura Colledge.

The panel members were Mr Ian McKim (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Antonia Jackson (teacher panellist) and Mr John Martin (former teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Josie Beal of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Kiera Oluwunmi of Three Raymond Buildings, instructed by Kingsley Napley LLP solicitors.

Ms Colledge was present and was represented by Ms Sarah Valentine, Regional Officer of NASUWT.

The hearing took place by way of a virtual hearing in public (save for parts which were heard in private) and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 28 November 2024.

It was alleged that Ms Colledge was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that whilst employed as a teacher at Cirencester Kingshill School she:

1. On 27 June 2022 whilst on a residential trip with pupils of Cirencester Kingshill School she:
 - a. Brought alcohol with her
 - b. Consumed this on site
 - c. Was incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption.

Ms Colledge admitted allegation 1(a). Ms Colledge denied allegations 1(b) and 1(c) and further denied that any of the allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Preliminary applications

Application for part of the hearing to be heard in private

The panel considered an application from the teacher's representative that part of the hearing relating to the teacher's health should be heard in private.

The panel heard submissions from the presenting officer on the application before reaching its decision. The presenting officer did not have an objection to the application.

The panel granted the application. The panel considered it was not contrary to the public interest for the part of the hearing, which was the subject of the application, to be heard in private.

The panel considered that the areas covered in the application legitimately related to aspects of Ms Colledge's private life and there was no contrary public interest in those areas being discussed in public. The hearing was still being held in public and these were discrete and limited areas which would not undermine the public's ability to otherwise understand the case. The panel therefore granted the application.

Application to admit an additional document

The panel considered a preliminary application from the teacher's representative for the admission of an additional document. The document was a witness statement from Witness C, a teacher at the School. The teacher's representative explained that Witness C would attend the hearing to give oral evidence.

Witness C witness statement had not been served in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.37 of the 2020 Procedures. Therefore, the panel was required to decide whether it should be admitted under paragraph 5.34 of the 2020 Procedures.

The panel heard representations from the teacher's representative and the presenting officer. The presenting officer did not object to the application.

The panel considered that Witness C witness statement was relevant to the issues it had to determine, particularly as she would be giving oral evidence during the course of the hearing. Accordingly, the document was added to the bundle.

Application to amend allegation 1(c)

During the course of the first day of the hearing, the presenting officer made an application to amend allegation 1(c) from: "*Were incapable of carrying out your duties as a result of alcohol consumption*" to "*Were incapable of carrying out your duties either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption.*"

The teacher's representative objected to the application on the basis that the proposed amendment would change the nature and substance of allegation 1(c). However, she was unable to comment on whether, had the allegation been amended prior to the hearing, it would have altered the preparation or presentation of Ms Colledge's case, save to confirm that she had taken instructions based on the original allegations.

The panel was advised that it had the power to amend allegations in accordance with paragraph 5.83 of the 2020 Procedures.

The legal adviser drew the panel's attention to the case of *Dr Bashir Ahmedsowida v General Medical Council [2021] EWHC 3466 (Admin), 2021 WL 06064095* which held that the lateness of amendments did not necessarily mean they were unjust, as acknowledged in the previous case of *Professional Standards Authority v Health and Care Professions Council and Doree [2017] EWCA Civ 319 at [56]*.

The panel acknowledged that the proposed amendment changed the nature and scope of allegation 1(c) to an extent. However, it did not consider that the proposed amendment would cause unfairness or prejudice to Ms Colledge, nor did it consider that her case would be presented differently had the amendment been made at an earlier stage in the proceedings.

The panel granted the application, although it remained alive to the need to assess the causative factors which may or may not have led to the position Ms Colledge found herself in on 27 June 2022.

The panel considered the amended allegation, which is set out in this decision document.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

- Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 4 to 5
- Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 6 to 31
- Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 32 to 45
- Section 4: TRA documents – pages 46 to 233
- Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 234 to 282.

In addition, the panel agreed to admit the witness statement of Witness C.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and had the opportunity to read the additional document before Witness C gave evidence.

Witnesses

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

- Witness A, [REDACTED] at Cirencester Kingshill School.
- Witness B, [REDACTED]

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called on behalf of the teacher:

- Ms Colledge.
- Witness C, a [REDACTED] at Cirencester Kingshill School.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Ms Colledge was employed by Cirencester Kingshill School ('the School') as an English teacher between 1 September 2017 and 15 May 2023. She was also part of the pastoral team and a head of year (for year 7).

From 27 June 2022 to 1 July 2022 the School held its annual residential trip for year 7 pupils, which took place at Whitemoor Lakes Centre ('the Centre'). The trip was attended by around 130 to 140 pupils, who were split into two groups. One group attended from 27 to 29 June 2022 and the other group attended from 29 June to 1 July 2022.

During the trip, pupils attended planned activities throughout the day, which were organised by the Centre and had meals provided to them by the Centre. The pupils also stayed overnight at the centre and staff members of the School were solely responsible for the pupils overnight.

Ms Colledge was responsible for arranging the trip and was the 'trip lead'. She was therefore expected to be present for the whole week and was given a bedroom of her own, which had an en-suite bathroom.

It was alleged that Ms Colledge brought alcohol with her and consumed it at the Centre during the trip. It was further alleged that Ms Colledge was incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of her consumption of alcohol.

The School investigated this matter under its disciplinary procedure and subsequently made referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (on 20 November 2023) and to the TRA (on 13 December 2023).

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. On 27 June 2022 whilst on a residential trip with pupils of Cirencester Kingshill School you:**
 - a. Brought alcohol with you**
 - b. Consumed this on site**

c. Were incapable of carrying out your duties either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption.

Ms Colledge admitted allegation 1(a) and denied allegations 1(b) and 1(c) and provided oral and written evidence.

The panel considered the written and oral evidence of the following witnesses, all of whom were present at the residential trip on 27 June 2022:

- Witness A, [REDACTED] at the School (and [REDACTED] at the time the allegations took place).
- Witness B, [REDACTED] at the Centre and the first aider on duty on 27 June 2022.
- Witness C, [REDACTED] at the School.

The factual evidence given by the witnesses as to the events that took place on 27 June 2022 was not in dispute and was largely consistent.

Events of 27 June 2022

At around 6pm on 27 June 2022, Witness C found Ms Colledge on the bed in her room at the Centre and was unable to rouse her. Witness C informed Witness A, who was also unable to rouse Ms Colledge and became concerned she was [REDACTED]. Witness B was called to assist, [REDACTED].

Ms Colledge began to come around but appeared drowsy and disorientated. It was established that she had not eaten that day. There was a blister packet of tablets in the bedroom with some tablets missing. Witness A believed there were 4 tablets missing and Witness B believed there were 2-4 tablets missing. Witness A and Witness B thought the tablets were paracetamol. Witness C believed they were antihistamines.

Witness A telephoned Individual D, [REDACTED] at the School and Ms Colledge's [REDACTED] at the time. Individual D informed Witness A that Ms Colledge was taking medication. Witness A assumed that, together with the fact that Ms Colledge had not eaten that day, this might explain her condition.

Witness B arranged for Ms Colledge to have something to eat. She explained that Ms Colledge was tearful, upset and apologetic but, after she had eaten, appeared fully conscious and seemed calm. Witness B did not believe Ms Colledge's condition was as a result of a medical issue. She thought it was likely Ms Colledge was "*running on empty*" as a result of organising the trip (which she described as a "*massive event*"), not having eaten all day and it being close to the end of the academic year.

Later that evening, Witness C found Ms Colledge in a distressed state in the Centre's communal lounge. Ms Colledge went to her room and Witness A continued to check on her. Witness A was concerned about Ms Colledge's wellbeing. When there did not appear to be any marked improvement in Ms Colledge's condition, she contacted Individual D at around 8.30pm and asked him to come and collect Ms Colledge. Whilst Individual D was packing Ms Colledge's belongings he found some wine bottles in the bathroom and showed them to Witness A. Witness A said there were two bottles of red wine on a shelf above the bathroom sink; one was empty and the other was half full.

After Ms Colledge left the Centre, Witness A went into her room to tidy it and found two empty beer cans and a mug with what appeared to be a small amount of red wine inside it. She also stated that there were ring marks of red wine on the furniture in the room.

None of the witnesses saw Ms Colledge consume alcohol on site at the Centre, nor did they suspect that Ms Colledge was under the influence of alcohol whilst they were assisting her. They did not smell alcohol, nor did they suspect, at the time they were assisting Ms Colledge, that her condition was owing to the consumption of alcohol.

"Zero-alcohol" policy

There was evidence before the panel that the Centre had a "zero-alcohol" policy. Witness B stated that alcohol consumption was not permitted on site. Witness B believed this was set out in the Centre's terms and conditions, which were provided as part of the booking process.

Witness C told the panel she was aware alcohol was not allowed at the Centre. She was unable to recall how she was aware of this and thought there might have been a sign on display. She was not aware of any staff members drinking alcohol during this residential trip.

Witness A told the panel she was not aware of this policy. She explained the residential trip had taken place annually for around 6 to 8 years and, on previous trips, there had been a tradition of School staff members having a small glass of wine with cheese and biscuits in the evenings. However, she would not expect staff members to have been drinking in their bedrooms. Witness A was aware of a previous occasion where the Centre staff had seen staff members with a bottle of wine and asked them to put it away. Witness A said that, as far as she was aware, staff members did not consume alcohol on the residential trip in question.

Ms Colledge also referred to the practice of staff members having a glass of wine with cheese during previous trips.

Ms Colledge's evidence

Ms Colledge admitted she took two bottles of red wine with her to the residential trip. She said they were thank you gifts for her colleagues. She stated that her partner had packed two cans of beer in her bag, which she was not aware of.

Ms Colledge explained that she had no recollection of the events of 27 June 2022 and was, therefore, unable to substantially comment on allegations 1(b) and 1(c).
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

Whilst Ms Colledge did not dispute the accounts given by her former colleagues, she denied that she had consumed alcohol on site whilst at the Centre on the basis that this was not something she would do given her professional integrity.

Ms Colledge further denied that she was incapable of carrying out her duties due to alcohol consumption. She suggested that the medication she was taking at the time, [REDACTED], could have caused her condition and referred to the side effects the medication caused. [REDACTED]. She provided medical evidence, [REDACTED]:

- [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED].

Panel's decision

The panel considered the evidence before it and the allegations in turn.

The panel was satisfied, from the evidence before it, that Ms Colledge brought alcohol with her to the residential trip on 27 June 2022. The panel therefore found allegation 1(a) proven.

In respect of allegation 1(b), the panel acknowledged that nobody had witnessed Ms Colledge consume alcohol on 27 June 2022, and Ms Colledge could not recall the events of that day.

However, there was undisputed evidence before the panel that alcohol consumption had taken place in Ms Colledge's bedroom. Two bottles of wine were found in the ensuite bathroom, one empty and one half-empty. Witness A later found two empty beer cans, a mug containing the remnants of red wine and ring marks of red wine on the furniture.

This indicated to the panel that alcohol had been consumed in Ms Colledge's bedroom. [REDACTED].

Whilst the panel was mindful that the burden of proof rested on the TRA and it was not for Ms Colledge to disprove the allegations against her, she did not offer any alternative explanations for this evidence because she could not remember the events of that day.

The panel was satisfied that it was more likely than not that Ms Colledge consumed alcohol whilst on site at the Centre on 27 June 2022. The evidence before the panel indicated that she had consumed a large quantity of alcohol, namely a bottle and a half of wine and two cans of beer. The panel did not consider there was any plausible alternative explanation for the evidence before it in this regard. The panel found allegation 1(b) proven on the balance of probabilities.

The panel moved on to consider allegation 1(c).

The panel was satisfied that Ms Colledge had professional duties to undertake whilst on the residential trip. The panel heard evidence that Ms Colledge's duties included: acting as 'trip lead', which meant she was responsible for the management and oversight of the trip; taking photographs throughout the trip; being present at mealtimes to supervise and eat with the pupils; and being responsible for pupils overnight (together with other staff members). Ms Colledge accepted that her responsibilities during the trip were "24/7".

The panel was further satisfied that, from around 6pm on 27 June 2022, Ms Colledge was incapable of carrying out her duties. She was in bed and unable to be roused at the time she should have been at dinner with the pupils. When she came around, she was disorientated and distressed and was unable to supervise or be responsible for pupils. When her condition did not improve, she was sent home and missed the remainder of the trip.

The key question before the panel was whether Ms Colledge's inability to carry out her duties was either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption. Ms Colledge's position was that her condition was solely as a result of the medication she was taking.

As outlined above, the panel concluded that it was more likely than not that Ms Colledge had consumed alcohol. There was also evidence before the panel that Ms Colledge was taking medication at the time of the incident.

The evidence before the panel did not provide a clear timeframe as to when the alcohol was consumed. The panel considered the possibility that Ms Colledge could have consumed the alcohol after Witness A made arrangements for her to be collected from the Centre at around 8.30pm, at which point Ms Colledge may have considered herself to have been discharged from her duties.

Whilst the panel did not need to make a determination as to when exactly the alcohol was consumed, it considered it was more likely than not that some alcohol was consumed prior to 6pm in view of the condition Ms Colledge was found in. However, and in any event, the panel was of the view that Ms Colledge maintained a level of responsibility until she left the Centre on 27 June 2022. The panel considered she had a responsibility to hand over her duties as 'trip lead' even after Witness A made arrangements for her to leave the trip. Accordingly, the panel considered that, even if Ms Colledge had only consumed alcohol after 8.30pm, she was still incapable of carrying out her duties.

In the panel's view, it was more likely than not that Ms Colledge's condition on 27 June 2022 was as a result of the consumption of alcohol mixed with the medication she was taking, which she knew or ought to have known could have had an adverse effect when coupled with alcohol. The panel was satisfied that, on 27 June 2022, Ms Colledge was incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption. The panel found allegation 1(c) proven on the balance of probabilities.

In summary, the panel found allegations 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) proven.

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

Having found 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.

The panel did not consider that the mere act of bringing alcohol to the residential trip was sufficiently serious so as to amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel accepted the evidence it heard regarding the custom and practice of staff members having a glass of wine at the end of an evening during residential trips. Whilst the panel acknowledged the Centre's policy regarding alcohol consumption on site, it did not appear that this was consistently enforced or adhered to in relation to the moderate consumption of alcohol. The panel did not find that the facts of allegation 1(a) amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel went on to consider whether the facts of allegations 1(b) and 1(c) 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 Ms Colledge, in relation to the facts found proved at allegations 1(b) and 1(c), involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards. The

panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Colledge 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
- 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 and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel also considered whether Ms Colledge's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel was satisfied that the conduct of Ms Colledge amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession. In reaching this conclusion the panel had particular regard to: (a) the volume of alcohol Ms Colledge imbibed; (b) the fact that she appeared to have consumed the alcohol alone in her room; and (c) the fact that she consumed alcohol whilst taking medication for which she was experiencing side effects and therefore ought to have appreciated the impact this might have had on her ability to undertake her duties.

The panel was satisfied that Ms Colledge 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 in the way that they behave.

The findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on Ms Colledge's status as a teacher, potentially damaging the public perception. The panel was of the view that members of the public would not expect a teacher to consume alcohol in large quantities; and in particular, whilst also taking medication whose side effects included adverse reactions to alcohol. Further, she engaged in this behaviour whilst acting as 'trip lead' and therefore whilst responsible for pupils and managing other staff members on a residential trip.

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

Having found the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) proved, the panel further found that Ms Colledge's conduct at allegations 1(b) and 1(c) 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 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.

The panel was aware that 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 the following to be relevant in this case: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct; and 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 Ms Colledge, which involved consuming alcohol during a residential trip and being incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of her alcohol consumption, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Colledge 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 Ms Colledge was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

However, the panel agreed that there was also a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since prior to the events of 27 June 2022, no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator, and indeed it was apparent that she had made and may be able to continue to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

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 Ms Colledge. The panel was mindful of the need to strike the right balance between the rights of the teacher and the public interest.

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 Ms Colledge. 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. The panel found one of those behaviours to be relevant in this case:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards.

Whilst the panel acknowledged that Ms Colledge's misconduct was serious, it considered that it sat at the lower end of the scale of severity. It noted, in particular, that this was an isolated incident, and that Ms Colledge otherwise had an unblemished record. It also noted that there was no evidence of any adverse impact on pupils or staff members.

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.

In considering whether Ms Colledge's actions were deliberate, the panel took account of the evidence before it regarding Ms Colledge's health at the time of her misconduct. [REDACTED]. The panel accepted that this could have affected her conduct. However, there was not sufficient medical evidence before the panel to demonstrate that [REDACTED] her actions were not deliberate.

Similarly, whilst the panel acknowledged Ms Colledge's personal circumstances at the time of the misconduct, it did not consider they amounted to extreme duress.

The panel took account of evidence it heard from Witness A that, in her view, Ms Colledge was an excellent teacher who was very committed to the School and its pupils. Witness A told the panel that Ms Colledge's progress records in relation to GCSE English results were excellent. The panel also accepted Ms Colledge's evidence that she loved being a teacher, cared about her job and had been a good teacher.

The panel considered that, prior to the incident on 27 June 2022, Ms Colledge had demonstrated high standards of personal and professional conduct and provided a valuable contribution to the education sector.

The panel heard that Ms Colledge continued to work as an AQA Examiner and has been volunteering at a church and at the charity, Blue Cross. The panel noted a letter from Individual E, [REDACTED], dated 9 September 2024 within which she stated: *“Laura’s personality shines through, she is extremely hard working and diligent, very trustworthy and has great communication skills. Laura shows considerable kindness to the customers and has always been very professional showing great customer service. Laura is a great asset to my volunteering team.”*

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

The panel considered, through her evidence and attendance at the hearing, it was clear that Ms Colledge had genuine regret and remorse for her misconduct and the impact on the School, its pupils and her colleagues. The panel was satisfied that Ms Colledge demonstrated insight. She explained that, at the time the conduct took place, she did not appreciate how unwell she was and, with hindsight, recognises that she should not have attended the trip. She also explained the steps she had taken to address the factors that led to her misconduct and the coping mechanisms and support network she now has in place.

The panel 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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. The panel was mindful that this was an isolated incident which it considered sat at the less serious end of the possible spectrum of severity. The panel took account of the mitigating factors that were present (as outlined above) and the contribution Ms Colledge had made, and could continue to make, to the education sector.

Noting the case of *Wallace v Secretary of State for Education [2017] EWHC 109 (Admin)*, the panel considered that the risk of repetition of misconduct by Ms Colledge was low and the panel did not consider that prohibiting Ms Colledge for a period of at least two years would *“produce any material change or serve any useful purpose”*.

The panel therefore 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 in relation to allegations 1(b) and 1(c) the proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel has found that allegation 1(a) does not amount to unacceptable professional conduct or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, and I have therefore put that matter entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Laura Colledge 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 Ms Colledge 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
- 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 and punctuality.
- 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 Ms Colledge 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 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 Ms Colledge, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed:

“In light of the panel’s findings against Ms Colledge, which involved consuming alcohol during a residential trip and being incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of her alcohol consumption, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public.”

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 has set out as follows:

“The panel considered, through her evidence and attendance at the hearing, it was clear that Ms Colledge had genuine regret and remorse for her misconduct and the impact on the School, its pupils and her colleagues. The panel was satisfied that Ms Colledge demonstrated insight.”

In my judgement, the insight and remorse shown by Ms Colledge means that there is a low risk of the repetition of this behaviour. 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 has observed:

“The panel was of the view that members of the public would not expect a teacher to consume alcohol in large quantities; and in particular, whilst also taking medication whose side effects included adverse reactions to alcohol.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding that the teacher was incapable of carrying out her duties either solely or in part as a result of alcohol consumption, 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 Ms Colledge herself. The panel has commented:

“The panel took account of evidence it heard from Witness A that, in her view, Ms Colledge was an excellent teacher who was very committed to the School and its pupils. Witness A told the panel that Ms Colledge’s progress records in relation to GCSE English results were excellent. The panel also accepted Ms Colledge’s evidence that she loved being a teacher, cared about her job and had been a good teacher.”

“The panel considered that, prior to the incident on 27 June 2022, Ms Colledge had demonstrated high standards of personal and professional conduct and provided a valuable contribution to the education sector.”

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Colledge 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.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the insight and remorse shown by Ms Colledge and the action she has taken to address the factors that led to the misconduct. The panel has noted that:

“[REDACTED].”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that:

“The panel was mindful that this was an isolated incident which it considered sat at the less serious end of the possible spectrum of severity. The panel took account of the mitigating factors that were present (as outlined above) and the contribution Ms Colledge had made, and could continue to make, to the education sector.”

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 'D Oatley', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 19 February 2025

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