



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Kirstie Reynolds: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

July 2025

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

Teacher: Ms Kirstie Reynolds

TRA reference: 23268

Date of determination: 21 July 2025

Former employer: Prudhoe West Academy, Northumberland

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 21 July 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Kirstie Reynolds.

The panel members were Mr Neil Hillman (teacher panellist – in the chair), Miss Sue Davies (lay panellist) and Mrs Anila Rai (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lucy Churchill of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Lee Silas of Mountford Chambers instructed by Brabners Solicitors LLP.

Ms Kirstie Reynolds was present and was not represented.

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

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of hearing dated 8 April 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Reynolds was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

1. On 8 June 2023 she was convicted at South Shields Magistrates' Court of committing fraud by false representation contrary to Section 1 and 2 of the Fraud Act 2006.
2. On 23 June 2023 she was convicted at South Shields Magistrates' Court of committing fraud by false representation contrary to Section 1 and 2 of the Fraud Act 2006.

Ms Reynolds admitted allegations 1 and 2, as set out in the statement of agreed facts, signed by Ms Reynolds on 3 July 2025.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Pleadings – pages 3 to 16

Section 2: TRA documents – pages 17 to 102

Section 3: Teacher documents – pages 103 to 155

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the additional documents, namely the thank you cards received by the teacher from parents at her current employer.

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020, (the "Procedures").

Witnesses

The TRA did not call any witnesses to give oral evidence at the hearing.

The panel heard oral evidence from the teacher.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

On multiple occasions between 25 February 2023 and 30 March 2023, Ms Reynolds allegedly attended two Asda stores and used a discount code at the self-checkout machines that was created to reduce the price of rotisserie chicken to £0.01.

Ms Reynolds allegedly used the discount to purchase items costing a total of £1,030.77 in one store and £1,700 in another store.

On 8 June and 28 June 2023, Ms Reynolds pleaded guilty at South Shields Magistrates' court to fraud by false representation in relation to her conduct. Ms Reynolds was sentenced on 4 July 2023.

Ms Reynolds' conduct took place whilst she was undertaking teaching work at Prudhoe West Academy, Northumberland ("the School"). The matter was referred to the TRA on 26 February 2024.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel found the following particulars of the allegation(s) against you proved, for these reasons:

- 1. On 8 June 2023 you were convicted at South Shields Magistrates' Court of committing fraud by false representation contrary to Section 1 and 2 of the Fraud Act 2006.**
- 2. On 23 June 2023 you were convicted at South Shields Magistrates' Court of committing fraud by false representation contrary to Section 1 and 2 of the Fraud Act 2006.**

The panel noted that Ms Reynolds admitted the allegations in the statement of agreed facts (and orally during the hearing) but still considered the evidence placed before it.

The panel was provided with a copy of the court extracts from South Shield's Magistrates Court, which detailed that Ms Reynolds had been convicted of fraud by false representation on 8 June 2023 and on 23 June 2023 respectively. The panel noted that Ms Reynolds pleaded guilty to the offences.

In respect of the offences, Ms Reynolds was sentenced on 4 July 2023 to a 12-month community order with a 15-day rehabilitation requirement, to pay a fine of £400, to pay

compensation to Asda of £3,000, to pay a victim surcharge of £160 and to pay prosecution costs of £85.

The panel noted the evidence gathered as part of the School's investigation, including Ms Reynolds' admission of committing the offences.

On examination of all the documents before the panel, including the admissions in the signed statement of agreed facts, the panel was satisfied that the facts of allegations 1 and 2 were proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to conviction of a relevant offence.

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 first considered whether the conduct of Ms Reynolds, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Reynolds 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
 - 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.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Ms Reynolds' behaviour in committing the offences could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. This was a case concerning offences involving fraud or serious dishonesty, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel further noted that in the statement of agreed facts, signed by Ms Reynolds, she admitted the facts amounted to a conviction of a relevant offence. Notwithstanding her admission, the panel, having considered all the evidence before it, was satisfied that Ms Reynolds had been convicted of a relevant offence.

The panel considered the evidence of mitigating circumstances put forward by Ms Reynolds, [REDACTED]. Whilst the panel accepted the mitigation evidence, the panel did not feel this diminished the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction, or that it affected its relevance to the teaching profession.

The panel considered that a finding that these convictions were for relevant offences was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, 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 several 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.

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Ms Reynolds in the profession.

The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator and she had and continued to make a valuable contribution to the profession. For example, the panel noted that Ms Reynolds had secured new employment in an Early Years setting

following her convictions, developed her skills and knowledge in SEND benefiting pupils and received an invitation to join a local authority SEND steering group.

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.

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 Reynolds.

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 were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures; and
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity relating to fraud.

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 that Ms Reynolds' actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence that Ms Reynolds was acting under extreme duress.

[REDACTED].

Ms Reynolds demonstrated, except for her conviction, high standards in her personal and professional conduct, having made a considerable contribution to the schools in which she has previously worked and within her current employment.

The panel considered the written statement and oral evidence of Ms Reynolds. The panel accepted the mitigating evidence put forward by Ms Reynolds which related to work pressures (acting up into a deputy head role in an under resourced senior leadership team), [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The panel noted that the conduct leading to the conviction occurred approximately over a four-week period, however, based on the evidence the panel considered that her conduct was entirely out of character.

The panel noted Ms Reynolds' evidence that she had spent every day for the last 2 years reflecting on how much her actions had hurt and negatively impacted her family, colleagues and the profession. She took full responsibility for her actions, and the implications for her profession. The panel considered that Ms Reynolds had not sought to diminish her actions and had demonstrated real insight and remorse.

The panel was satisfied that Ms Reynolds had taken steps to mitigate recurrence of the behaviour. [REDACTED]. The panel noted she actively engaged with her probation order, [REDACTED]. Further Ms Reynolds recognised the need to communicate more openly with both her family and employer about any pressures, which she evidenced that she had been doing in her latest employment. She stated that she had also strengthened her support network, [REDACTED].

The panel noted that Ms Reynolds had continued to pursue a career in the education sector, obtaining employment with a nursery in January 2024 with her new employer being aware of her conviction and these proceedings. Ms Reynolds stated that she has been committed to making lasting changes and improvements, both for herself, pupils, parents and her colleagues. The panel noted the recent thank you messages from parents at the nursery, and a level 3 course student whom Ms Reynolds had mentored, showing her to be a valued and respected member of the nursery.

Ms Reynolds stated that she has been invited by the local authority to take part in a SEND steering group, has continued her role as designated safeguarding lead and after a year of training has successfully completed the ELKLAN communication friendly settings project. The panel considered that Ms Reynolds has a passion and commitment for teaching.

The panel considered the character reference of Individual A. The panel considered the following comments in particular:

- *"From the start, I could see how devastated and remorseful Kirstie was."*
- *"In my opinion, to remove Kirstie's teaching registration would be a disservice to the teaching profession and the many children and families she could positively impact upon in the future."*

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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour was serious, albeit at the less serious end of the possible spectrum 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 felt it would not make any material change or serve any useful purpose to make a prohibition order in the circumstances of the 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 a relevant conviction.

The panel has recommended that the findings of a relevant conviction should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Reynolds 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
 - 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.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher being convicted of committing fraud.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing 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 a relevant conviction, 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 Reynolds, 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 notes no evidence that Ms Reynolds' behaviour jeopardised the wellbeing of pupils.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which it sets out as follows:

"The panel noted Ms Reynolds' evidence that she had spent every day for the last 2 years reflecting on how much her actions had hurt and negatively impacted her family, colleagues and the profession. She took full responsibility for her actions, and the implications for her profession. The panel considered that Ms Reynolds had not sought to diminish her actions and had demonstrated real insight and remorse."

The panel was satisfied that Ms Reynolds had taken steps to mitigate recurrence of the behaviour. [REDACTED]. The panel noted she actively engaged with her probation order, [REDACTED]. Further Ms Reynolds recognised the need to communicate more openly with both her family and employer about any pressures, which she evidenced that she had been doing in her latest employment. She stated that she had also strengthened her support network, [REDACTED]."

In my judgement, the evidence set out above renders a repetition of this behaviour unlikely.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel makes the following observation:

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher receiving a conviction for offences that involved fraud in this case and the negative impact that such a finding may have 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 a relevant conviction, 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 Reynolds herself. The panel provides the following observation:

“Ms Reynolds demonstrated, except for her conviction, high standards in her personal and professional conduct, having made a considerable contribution to the schools in which she has previously worked and within her current employment.”

The panel also comments as follows:

“The panel noted that the conduct leading to the conviction occurred approximately over a four-week period, however, based on the evidence the panel considered that her conduct was entirely out of character.”

In addition, the panel references both character evidence attesting to Ms Reynolds’ commitment to teaching and the fact that she has returned to working in education.

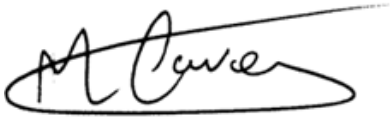
A prohibition order would prevent Ms Reynolds from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s concluding comments:

“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 was serious, albeit at the less serious end of the possible spectrum 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 felt it would not make any material change or serve any useful purpose to make a prohibition order in the circumstances of the 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 concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. While the misconduct found in this case was undoubtedly serious, and is likely to damage the reputation of the profession, I do not think that preventing Ms Reynolds from working as a teacher would serve any useful purpose. I consider therefore 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 'M. Cavey', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

Decision maker: Marc Cavey

Date: 24 July 2025

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