



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Stephen Morris: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome**

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

**August 2025**

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

**Teacher:** Mr Stephen Morris

**Teacher ref number:** 9536716

**Teacher date of birth:** 08 January 1973

**TRA reference:** 23650

**Date of determination:** 13 August 2025

**Former employer:** The William Henry Smith School, Brighouse

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 13 August 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Stephen Morris.

The panel members were Miss Louisa Munton (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Paul Millett (lay panellist) and Mrs Pamela Thompson (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Ben Schofield of Blake Morgan LLP.

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 Morris that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Morris provided a signed statement of agreed facts in which he admitted the allegation and admitted it would amount to a conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer from the TRA, Mr Morris or a representative on his behalf. 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.

The meeting took place in private.

### **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of meeting dated 28 April 2025.

It was alleged that Mr Morris was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence namely:

1. On 30 January 2024, you were convicted of fraud by false representation between 31 January 2022 and 10 September 2022, contrary to S2 of the Fraud Act 2006.

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 3 to 4

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 5 to 10

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts – pages 11 to 13

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 14 to 104

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 105 to 105

Section 6: Notice of meeting – pages 106 to 107

The panel also had a 7 page bundle containing character references for Mr Morris and a 5 page personal statement from Mr Morris.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing.

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

### **Statement of agreed facts**

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Morris on 8 April 2025 and the TRA's presenting officer on 16 April 2025.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Morris was employed by The William Henry Smith School (the “School”) from September 2021 as the Vice Principal for Organisational and Workforce Learning and Development.

Concerns arose in 2022 regarding some invoices Mr Morris had asked the School to process. The School began an investigation into the invoices. Mr Morris resigned whilst the investigation was underway. The School referred the matter to the police, who began their own investigation into Mr Morris’ actions. The School also made a referral to the TRA.

The police investigation ascertained that Mr Morris had provided false invoices for additional services provided to the School by himself and a third party. The police investigation established that the third party was not aware of the fraud and had been told by Mr Morris that the money was being paid to their account because of issues with his own bank account. Mr Morris had approached a member of the finance team and pressured them into processing the payments. In interview with the police, Mr Morris did not answer any questions. Following its criminal investigation, Mr Morris was charged by the police with an offence of fraud by false representation.

Mr Morris appeared before Bradford Magistrates’ Court on 30 January 2024 and entered a guilty plea. Mr Morris was sentenced to 16 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months. The court also ordered that Mr Morris undertake 150 hours of unpaid work and up to 15 days rehabilitation activity requirement. A compensation order was also made for £1,200 to repay the School.

## **Findings of fact**

The findings of fact are as follows:

**You have been convicted of a relevant offence, namely:**

**1. On 30 January 2024, you were convicted of fraud by false representation between 31 January 2022 and 10 September 2022, contrary to S2 of the Fraud Act 2006.**

In the statement of agreed facts, Mr Morris admitted this allegation. Also before the panel were copies of an uncertified court register extract and copies of police statements.

The panel considered that Mr Morris’ admission was unequivocal and consistent with the surrounding evidence and therefore accepted his admissions and found the allegation proved.

## Findings as to a conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the factual allegation proved, the panel went on to consider if it amounted to a 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 Mr Morris, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Morris was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel also took into account the preamble of the Teachers’ Standards which states that “*teachers act with honesty and integrity*”. Mr Morris’ behaviour was in conflict with these Standards.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Morris’ behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. This was heightened in this case as Mr Morris held a senior position and was part of the senior management team in the School.

The panel noted that Mr Morris’ behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, (albeit that it was suspended), which was indicative of the seriousness of the offence committed. The Advice says the conviction of such an offence is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

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

In considering these factors, the panel considered that the conviction was for a relevant offence.

Therefore the panel found the allegation proven.

## **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 a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely:

- 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 Morris, which involved serious dishonesty, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Morris 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 Mr Morris 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 Mr Morris 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 his abilities as an educator and he is able to make a 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 Mr Morris.

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;
- abuse of position or trust...;
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity...

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.

The panel considered the list of factors at paragraph 43 of the Advice. Mr Morris' actions could not be described as anything other than 'deliberate'.

In his personal statement to the panel, Mr Morris set out a number of difficulties he was experiencing at the time in his personal life. Those included dealing with:

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

Whilst recognising such circumstances would have placed a significant strain on Mr Morris' life, the panel could not categorise it as acting under 'extreme duress'. The panel considered that Mr Morris' personal statement showed some insight and recognition of the surrounding circumstances which lead to the offending behaviour, which suggested the repetition of such offending behaviour was less likely.

Mr Morris provided a number of character references to the panel. A number of these were from teaching colleagues and appear to show that Mr Morris was a well-regarded colleague with a strong work ethic. The panel however did not consider it could be categorised as 'demonstrating exceptionally high standards' or 'contributing significantly to the education sector'.

The panel noted that Mr Morris did not have any previous regulatory findings and that he had engaged with the regulatory process for this case.

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 would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Morris of prohibition. Whilst there was evidence that Mr Morris had ability as a teacher, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed the interest in retaining Mr Morris in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher and he sought to exploit his position of trust. This was a position that Mr Morris himself appears to recognise in his personal statement, by understanding that prohibition was a realistic outcome of this case.

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 Morris. The inherent seriousness of a dishonesty finding and the breach of trust when in a senior position 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 for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. 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 two years.

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings. The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate. One of these include "fraud or serious dishonesty".

The panel considered the individual circumstances of this case. It noted that the fraud was of a short duration. Whilst the conviction period is expressed as taking place over a period of around 8 months, the panel understood that not all allegations were proceeded with and the level of fraud before the panel related to invoices dated between May and July 2022 totalling £1,200. The panel took into account the level of fraud was far from the top end of the possible spectrum and the difficult personal circumstances Mr Morris was dealing with at the time. The panel considered that on these particular facts the wider public interest factors, such as maintaining confidence in the profession and upholding and declaring standards would not be compromised by recommending a review period that was at the minimum level, notwithstanding the guidance set out in the Advice.

The panel therefore decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provision for a review period after a period of two years.

## **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 all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Stephen Morris should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Morris is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a teacher receiving a conviction for fraud involving the misuse of school funds which led to a sentence of imprisonment (albeit suspended).

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 Mr Morris, 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 does not record having seen any evidence that Mr Morris' behaviour directly 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 considered that Mr Morris' personal statement showed some insight and recognition of the surrounding circumstances which led to the offending behaviour, which suggested the repetition of such offending behaviour was less likely."

In my judgement, the evidence cited by the panel that Mr Morris has developed at least some insight into his actions suggests that the risk of the repetition is reduced although not removed entirely. I have therefore given this element some 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 makes this observation:

"In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Morris, which involved serious dishonesty, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Morris 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 Mr Morris was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated."

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for fraud involving the misuse of school funds by a senior member of staff in this case and the negative impact that such a finding is likely to 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 Mr Morris himself. The panel notes that:

"Mr Morris provided a number of character references to the panel. A number of these were from teaching colleagues and appear to show that Mr Morris was a well-regarded colleague with a strong work ethic. The panel however did not consider it could be categorised as 'demonstrating exceptionally high standards' or 'contributing significantly to the education sector'."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Morris 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 serious nature of the misconduct found which led to a custodial sentence (suspended) as well as the likely injury to the reputation of the profession resulting from a teacher attempting to misuse school funds. I have also placed some weight on the evidence of insight and the reduced risk of repetition.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mr Morris 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 remorse and 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 a two-year review period.

I have considered the panel's concluding comments:

"The panel considered the individual circumstances of this case. It noted that the fraud was of a short duration. Whilst the conviction period is expressed as taking place over a period of around 8 months, the panel understood that not all allegations were proceeded with and the level of fraud before the panel related to invoices dated between May and July 2022 totalling £1,200. The panel took into account the level of fraud was far from the top end of the possible spectrum and the difficult personal circumstances Mr Morris was dealing with at the time. The panel considered that on these particular facts the wider public interest factors, such as maintaining confidence in the profession and upholding and declaring standards would not be compromised by recommending a review period that was at the minimum level, notwithstanding the guidance set out in the Advice.

The panel therefore decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provision for a review period after a period of two years."

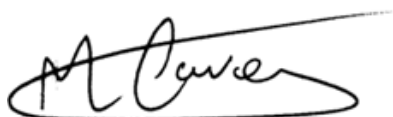
I have considered whether a two-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that, in my judgment, allowing a two-year review period is a sufficient and proportionate response to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the seriousness of the misconduct found as well as the likely negative impact on the reputation of the profession. I have also taken into account the possible risk of repetition while noting that Mr Morris has shown at least some evidence of insight into his behaviour which serves to reduce this risk.

I consider therefore that a two-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession. It will also allow Mr Morris to demonstrate that he has developed full insight into and remorse for his behaviour.

**This means that Mr Stephen Morris is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England.** He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 2027, two years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Morris remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

This order takes effect from the date on which it is served on the teacher.

Mr Morris has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date he is given notice of this order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Cavey', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

**Decision maker: Marc Cavey**

**Date: 15 August 2025**

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