



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Laura Hamblin: 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: Ms Laura Hamblin

Teacher ref number: 0655801

Teacher date of birth: 24 August 1985

TRA reference: 24498

Date of determination: 20 August 2025

Former employer: Apris Queenswood School, Ledbury, Herefordshire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 20 August 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Ms Laura Hamblin.

The panel members were Mr Paul Millett (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Jo Palmer-Tweed (teacher panellist) and Ms Susan Ridge (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr Graham Miles of Blake Morgan LLP 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 Ms Laura Hamblin that the allegation be considered without a hearing. Ms Hamblin provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Hamblin or her representative.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the Notice of Meeting dated 13 August 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Laura Hamblin has been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

On 8 October 2024 she was convicted at Gloucestershire Magistrates' Court for the offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child, contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Ms Hamblin admitted that she was convicted of the offence concerned.

Ms Hamblin also admitted that the conviction was for a relevant offence.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of Referral and Response – pages 4 to 20

Section 2: Notice of Meeting – pages 21 to 22

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts and Presenting Officer representations – pages 23 to 27

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 29 to 53

Section 5: Teacher documents – none

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, (the "Procedures").

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Ms Hamblin on 10 April 2025.

Decision and reasons

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

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Ms Laura Hamblin for the allegation 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.

Ms Laura Hamblin was employed as a Qualified Teacher at Aspris Queenswood School, Ledbury, Herefordshire ('the School') since her appointment in June 2017. On or around 30 March 2024, Ms Hamblin was arrested by Herefordshire Police on suspicion of sexual communication with a child. Ms Hamblin's employment was terminated following her resignation on 30 September 2024.

On 8 October 2024 Ms Hamblin pleaded guilty to an offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Ms Hamblin was then committed to the Crown Court for sentence.

On 14 November 2024 Ms Hamblin was sentenced at Gloucester Crown Court to a suspended sentence of imprisonment together with a rehabilitation activity requirement, an unpaid work requirement, a restraining order, a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and a requirement to sign the Sexual Offenders Register for 10 years.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

It was alleged that you have been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

On 8 October 2024 you were convicted at Gloucestershire Magistrates' Court for the offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child, contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Ms Hamblin admitted that she was convicted of the specified offence and she signed a statement of agreed facts to that effect. In addition, the panel was provided with a certificate of conviction from the Gloucester Crown Court which confirmed Ms Hamblin's conviction at Gloucester Magistrates' Court on 8 October 2024 and sentence at Gloucester Crown Court on 14 November 2024. The panel was also provided with a transcript of the judge's sentencing remarks.

The certificate of conviction confirmed the wording of the offence for which Ms Hamblin was convicted and sentenced as follows:

'Between 21 March 2024 and 29 March 2024 at Gloucester in the County of Gloucestershire being a person aged 18 or over, for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification, intentionally communicated with... a person under 16 who you did not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, the communication being sexual namely WhatsApp and voice notes of a sexual nature'

The panel found the allegation proved.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found the allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of the proven allegation amounted to conviction of a relevant offence.

Ms Hamblin admitted that the conviction was for a relevant offence. The panel took this admission into account but made its own determination.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Hamblin 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
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times 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
 - 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...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that Ms Hamblin's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting.

The judge's sentencing remarks referred to Ms Hamblin being in a position of trust in relation to the child concerned, who was a particularly vulnerable [REDACTED] pupil attending a special school at which Ms Hamblin was an English teacher, deputy head and a safeguarding lead. The judge said:

‘Because of his [REDACTED] ...there came a point when you arranged to have his telephone number and for him to have yours in order ostensibly to facilitate [REDACTED] to get him to school and...you were good at getting him to school...There was every reason for you to be admired and looked up to by him by giving him extra reward points and developing a much more personal relationship with him than was ever appropriate, as you must have known... The personal messages started to become flirtatious. So for a period really of about three weeks you were communicating... in an inappropriate way, and for the last week of that...those messages became full on sexual fantasy exchanges...’

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils. In this context the panel noted that the sentencing remarks of the judge included the following:

‘That activity and the fallout of it being revealed and the embarrassment to [the pupil] about it has put him back in school, [REDACTED] perhaps or worse, interrupting his education, losing the person who had been his favourite teacher, and so the effects reverberate up. They are serious for that boy and his family’.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Ms Hamblin’s 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.

The panel noted that Ms Hamblin’s behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, (albeit that it was suspended), which was indicative of the seriousness of the offence committed. The sentence also included a rehabilitation activity requirement, an unpaid work requirement, a restraining order, a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and a requirement to sign the Sexual Offenders Register for 10 years. The Sexual Harm Prevention Order, amongst other things, prohibits Ms Hamblin having any unsupervised contact or communication with any person under the age of 18 other than (a) such as is inadvertent and not reasonably avoidable in the course of lawful daily life or (b) with the consent of the child’s parent or guardian, who has full knowledge of the order and the conviction. If the child is under the care of the local authority than the express permission from the relevant children’s services is required.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. This was a case concerning an offence involving sexual communication with a child, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence.

The panel found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Ms Hamblin’s ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

Therefore, the panel found that the conviction was for a relevant offence.

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 safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession/declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the conviction for the serious offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Hamblin 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 Hamblin 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 Hamblin in the profession. The panel was not presented with evidence of Ms Hamblin's proficiency as a teacher which enabled the panel to conclude that such a public interest existed. In any event, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any potential public interest in retaining Ms Hamblin in the profession, since her behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and she exploited her position of trust.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should

be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest.

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 Hamblin.

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;
- 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 (particularly involving pupils);
- sexual misconduct, e.g. involving actions that were sexually motivated or of a sexual nature and/or that use or exploit the trust, knowledge or influence derived from the individual's professional position;
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE);
- violation of the rights of pupils;
- collusion or concealment including:
 - encouraging others to break rules;
 - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing;

In this context, the panel noted the finding that Ms Hamblin told the pupil to delete the messages between them as a way of covering up, which the judge described as a significant breach of trust.

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 evidence that Ms Hamblin's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Ms Hamblin was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation

Ms Hamblin did have a previously good history. The panel noted that the judge assessed Ms Hamblin's remorse as genuine and expressed the view that Ms Hamblin did not pose a very high risk of reoffending. Despite this, the judge did think it appropriate to impose a Sexual Harm Prevention Order with a prohibition against unsupervised contact with any person under the age of 18 as detailed above.

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 Ms Hamblin 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 Ms Hamblin. The serious nature of the offending behaviour and the significant breach of a position of trust were significant factors 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 2 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. These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

As already mentioned, the seriousness of the offence is reflected in the sentence imposed and in the sentencing remarks. In addition to those previously cited, the sentencing remarks referred to ‘1,500 pages of chat’ between Ms Hamblin and the pupil concerned, which the judge described as an ‘*abusive obsession*’ on the part of Ms Hamblin and which was ‘*damaging*’ to the pupil.

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 the allegation proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Hamblin 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
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times 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
 - 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...
- 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 Ms Hamblin involved breaches of the responsibilities and duties set out in statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a conviction for the relevant offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child, which resulted in a suspended sentence of imprisonment.

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 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 Hamblin, 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:

“There was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the conviction for the serious offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child.”

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 noted that the judge assessed Ms Hamblin's remorse as genuine and expressed the view that Ms Hamblin did not pose a very high risk of reoffending. Despite this, the judge did think it appropriate to impose a Sexual Harm Prevention Order with a prohibition against unsupervised contact with any person under the age of 18 as detailed above.”

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 has observed:

“Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Ms Hamblin were not

treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for the offence of sexual communication with a child 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 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 Hamblin herself. The panel has noted that Ms Hamblin did have a previously good history, but that it was not presented with evidence of Ms Hamblin’s proficiency as a teacher.

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Hamblin 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 serious nature of the offending behaviour and the significant breach of a position of trust. The panel has said:

“In any event, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any potential public interest in retaining Ms Hamblin in the profession, since her behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and she exploited her position of trust.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Ms Hamblin 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, 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 certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period. These include:

- serious sexual misconduct e.g. where the act was sexually motivated and resulted in, or had the potential to result in, harm to a person or persons, particularly where the individual has used their professional position to influence or exploit a person or persons;
- any sexual misconduct involving a child;

As already mentioned, the seriousness of the offence is reflected in the sentence imposed and in the sentencing remarks. In addition to those previously cited, the sentencing remarks referred to '*1,500 pages of chat*' between Ms Hamblin and the pupil concerned, which the judge described as an '*abusive obsession*' on the part of Ms Hamblin and which was '*damaging*' to the pupil."

I have considered whether not allowing a 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 allowing a review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offence of which Ms Hamblin was convicted, which resulted in a suspended sentence of imprisonment and a Sexual Harm Prevention Order that prohibits Ms Hamblin having any unsupervised contact or communication with any person under the age of 18.

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 Ms Laura Hamblin 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 allegation found proved against her, I have decided that Ms Hamblin shall not be entitled to apply for restoration of her eligibility to teach.

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

Ms Hamblin has a right of appeal to the High Court within 28 days from the date she is given notice of this order.

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 22 August 2025

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