



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mrs Tamzin Richards: Professional conduct panel outcome

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

September 2025

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

Teacher: Mrs Tamzin Richards

TRA reference: 23077

Date of determination: 17 September 2025

Former employer: St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcestershire

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 14 to 16 July 2025 and 15 to 17 September 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mrs Tazmin Richards.

The panel members were Mr Richard Young (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Jane Gotschel (teacher panellist) and Ms Geraldine Baird (lay panellist).

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

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Lee Bridges of Kingsley Napley LLP.

Mrs Richards was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 18 March 2025 [and as amended on 15 September 2025]:

It was alleged that Mrs Richards was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as Deputy Headteacher at St Barnabas CE First and Middle School ('the School'):

1. Between around 12 - 14 June 2023, she did not follow safeguarding procedures when she was made aware of serious concerns in relation to Pupil A [and/or Child A and/or Child B], in that she:
 - a) Said to Person A that Pupil A should stay with Person B "to keep the peace", or words to that effect, when she was aware or ought to have been aware of a disclosure made about Person B;
 - b) did not update the safeguarding system 'MyConcern' in relation to Pupil A in a timely manner or at all;
 - c) did not contact [REDACTED] to make a referral for Pupil A [and/or Child A and/or Child B] at all or in a timely manner;
 - d) did not escalate the safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A [and/or Child A and/or Child B] to a senior colleague at all or in a timely manner.
2. As a result of her conduct at paragraph 1a) – 1d), in respect of Pupil A [and/or her conduct at 1c) - 1d) in respect of Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B], she put them at risk of harm and/or did not adequately safeguard them.
3. On or around 19 June 2023, she did not handover and/or inform a senior colleague of the safeguarding concern regarding Pupil A [and/or Child A and/or Child B] when she was absent.

Mrs Richards did not admit the allegations in her written submissions to the TRA.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 4 to 6

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 7 to 11

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 15 to 31

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 33 to 370

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 371 to 375

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

The panel also considered the two page statement from Mrs Richards, dated 5 August 2025.

Witnesses

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

- Witness 1 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 2 – [REDACTED]
- Witness 3 – [REDACTED]

No witness were called on behalf of Mrs Richards.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mrs Richards was employed at St Barnabas CE First and Middle School (the “School”). The School is part of the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust. At the time of these allegations, Mrs Richards was the School’s Deputy Headteacher and its Designated Safeguarding Lead (“DSL”), having worked at the School for around the last 20 years.

The essential timeline of events and relationships between relevant family members of the pupil in question did not appear to be disputed between the parties.

On 12 June 2023, a mother of a pupil at the School (Pupil A) raised a concern with Mrs Richards that her daughter had told her that she had seen [REDACTED].

[REDACTED].

Over the following days, Mrs Richards managed the concern as the DSL. It is the subsequent actions Mrs Richards did and did not take in her capacity as the DSL which are the subject of these allegations.

On 19 June 2023, Mrs Richards was not in School as she was ill that day. On that day, Person A sought an update from another staff member about the ongoing concern that Mrs Richards had otherwise been dealing with in the week before. This staff member was not able to find an update on the School's system and raised that as a concern to the School's Headteacher.

Following this, an investigation was undertaken by the School which resulted in disciplinary action being taken. Following the conclusion of the School's disciplinary process, they made a referral to the TRA on 23 January 2024, which resulted in this hearing.

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses:

- Witness 1 was [REDACTED] at the Trust at the material time. Witness 1 was tasked by the Trust to take over as the School's [REDACTED] from Witness 2, who was originally allocated that role. Witness 1 produced a copy of her investigation report in her evidence which included copies of interviews with staff members she took at the time. She did not interview Mrs Richards as she was on sick leave but did ask some questions through email correspondence with Mrs Richards.
- Witness 2 was [REDACTED] and had been in that position since September 2022. Prior to this appointment, Witness 2 had not worked at the School. Witness 2 was originally allocated by the Trust to be the investigating officer into the concerns raised but was replaced by Witness 1 following representations from Mrs Richards, on the advice of her union. Witness 2 was also one of the School's [REDACTED].
- Witness 3 had been employed at the School since 2018 as a teaching assistant in [REDACTED]. She was also one of the School's [REDACTED] and was the staff member Person A spoke to on 19 June 2023.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

- 1. Between around 12 - 14 June 2023, you did not follow safeguarding procedures when you were made aware of serious concerns in relation to Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B, in that you:**

- a) Said to Person A that Pupil A should stay with Person B “to keep the peace”, or words to that effect, when you were aware or ought to have been aware of a disclosure made about Person B;**

Person A did not appear as a witness before the panel at this hearing.

Witness 3’s evidence was that on 19 June 2023, at around 3pm, she was speaking to Person A who had come to the School to pick up her child. Person A was also talking to another parent at the School at that time about the [REDACTED] difficulties she was having and told the other parent that Mrs Richards’ advice had been to send Pupil A to Person B’s house to ‘keep the peace’. Person A further remarked that she did not think it was good advice and queried if Witness 3 needed to report that. Witness 3 explained that following this conversation, she went and told Witness 2 about the concern.

Witness 2’s evidence was that after being made aware of the concern, in her follow up call to Person A on 19 June 2023, Person A had repeated that she was advised by Mrs Richards to send Pupil A to Person B [REDACTED] to ‘keep the peace’.

Person A was asked by Witness 2 to provide an account for the School’s investigation. In an email dated 23 June 2023, to Witness 2, Person A remarked:

“I first spoke to Mrs R[ichards] on Monday 12th June [at] 2.45...

I asked for advice as [REDACTED] [Person B] was asking to see her [REDACTED]...

[Mrs Richards] “can you not just send her [REDACTED] to keep the piece”

[REDACTED]”

In the School’s investigation Mrs Richards was asked if she had made this remark to Person A. Mrs Richards’ response was that she had not and thought it was possible that Person A might have misconstrued something she said, as she was in regular contact with her for support regarding her family circumstances.

In her response to the TRA, Mrs Richards again denied making the remark in the context of sending Pupil A to Person B for the weekend. Mrs Richards described the use of that phrase would have been related to other strategies of arranging alternative contact between Pupil A and Person B, such as using video calling apps.

The panel noted that the account of Person A amounted to hearsay evidence and as such, some caution is required in respect of the weight which may be attributed to it. The panel noted that Mrs Richards had provided an alternative explanation as to the use of the phrase to ‘keep the peace’. The panel considered this possible alternative explanation as not a remote possibility and one which could have been explored with

more forensic probability with Person A, if she had appeared as a witness in these proceedings.

As the panel was unable to further test this hearsay account and rule out a potentially reasonable alternative explanation, the panel did not consider the available evidential picture before it was sufficiently cogent to satisfy it that it was more likely than not, that Mrs Richards had made the comment in the context as alleged.

Therefore the panel found this sub-allegation not proved.

b) did not update the safeguarding system 'MyConcern' in relation to Pupil A in a timely manner or at all;

Witness 2's evidence was that the School had an electronic record keeping system for logging safeguarding concerns called MyConcern. In her written statement she stated that all staff were trained on the system and any concern regarding a pupil was required to be reported on that system. The DSL would then receive a notification, review the concern and take whatever action was required.

Before the panel were extracts taken from MyConcern which showed that Mrs Richards had made an initial entry on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 13:34, about the disclosure Person A had made to her the previous day. It also included her proposed plan for a member of the DSL team to speak with Pupil A.

There was evidence before the panel of other steps Mrs Richards had taken during the week, such as allocating one of the deputy DSLs to speak with Pupil A to get her account and having further contact with Person A.

On Monday 19 June 2023, Mrs Richards was not at School as she was ill and on 21 June 2023, Witness 2 asked Mrs Richards not to attend the School as she was now formally investigating the events around the safeguarding concerns.

There was no evidence before the panel in regards to any School policy or expectation regarding when updates were expected to be made on MyConcern. Witness 2's evidence was that she did not routinely check MyConcern notifications, as she was not the lead DSL. In the absence of this evidence, the panel used its own professional judgement and understanding of safeguarding practices to consider if Mrs Richards actions were 'in a timely manner' or not.

The panel noted the initial entry was made the following day and other actions taken that week were not updated on the system. The panel noted that Mrs Richards was ill the following Monday and shortly after that was subject to investigatory action of the incident itself.

The panel did not consider that in the context of this particular safeguarding concern, that the absence of the updated logs on MyConcern for the remainder of the week would be considered as untimely. Furthermore, due to illness and formal investigatory action, there was a reasonable explanation as to why they were not updated the following week.

The panel considered that whilst perhaps it would not be 'best practice' for updates to be left for a number of days, such a position reflected the real working practices of DSL staff, who have to prioritise taking swift action over the logging of the action itself. The panel also noted the evidence that not all members of the DSL team actually had access to MyConcern at that time, which somewhat suggested the need for more timely updates on the system was reduced.

On that basis, the panel found this sub-allegation not proved.

c) did not contact [REDACTED] to make a referral for Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B at all or in a timely manner;

The panel understood that '[REDACTED]' was the name for the Local Authority's child services department and the relevant agency to whom DSLs would regularly make referrals to in regards to taking action to safeguard children.

Witness 2's evidence was that following the concern being raised to her on Monday 19 June 2023 and seeing there was no update on MyConcern, she called Family Front Door who confirmed that no previous reports had been made regarding this concern. Witness 2 stated that Family Front Door's advice was that a referral should be made and that Person A should take protective action and withdraw contact until she felt that Pupil A was safe.

Mrs Richards stated in the School's investigation that she did not immediately try to contact Family Front Door as she was trying to contact Person B to get his consent, as that is what happened on a previous similar incident. She also made reference to trying to get through to Family Front Door with the office staff, but there were problems with the School's phone lines. Mrs Richards maintained this position in her response to the TRA.

In regard to the phone line issue, the panel asked Witness 2 if she was aware of any issues with the School's phone lines. Her evidence was that she had never been aware of an issue with the School's phone lines and that she would have been informed of this as it would have been a significant event for a school to lose phone contact, as parents and others would not be able to contact the school.

The panel was unpersuaded by Mrs Richards account. It was not a reasonable explanation to suggest that contact with the local authority was delayed on account of seeking to gain consent from the very person suspected of causing harm to the children. Had there been problems with the School's phone lines, an obvious solution would have been to use a mobile phone, which numerous staff members must have had at the time.

On this evidence, the panel was satisfied that it was more likely than not that Mrs Richards did not make any contact or did not make any meaningful attempt to contact Family Front Door, which should have been a priority due to the essential role local authority services have in safeguarding children.

Therefore, the panel found this sub-allegation proved.

d) did not escalate the safeguarding concerns relating to Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B to a senior colleague at all or in a timely manner.

There was a consistent evidential picture before the panel in regards to the structure of the School's leadership and safeguarding teams.

Mrs Richards was the lead DSL. There were three deputy DSLs. [REDACTED]. Mrs Richards' role as the lead DSL was to lead on all safeguarding matters and would use the deputies to support that role as and when required.

Mrs Richards was also the School's Deputy Headteacher. Witness 2 was [REDACTED]. In submissions, the TRA confirmed that its case was the 'senior colleague' to whom the escalation should have been made was the Headteacher.

On the evidential picture before it, the panel could not determine any requirement for Mrs Richards to 'escalate' the concern to the Headteacher. As the lead DSL, Mrs Richards was trained and expected to deal with all concerns to completion herself. The panel did not consider the nature of this concern as being the type which would usually require a discussion with the Headteacher. It fell squarely into the expected role and function of a lead DSL.

On that basis, the fact that Mrs Richards did not escalate the safeguarding concern to the Headteacher could not properly be regarded as being untimely, as the panel considered there was no obligation on her to do so.

Therefore, the panel found this sub-allegation not proved.

2. As a result of your conduct at paragraph 1a) – 1d), in respect of Pupil A, and/or your conduct at 1c) to 1d) in respect of Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B, you put them at risk of harm and/or did not adequately safeguard them.

The panel considered this allegation as it applied to the proven sub-allegation 1c).

In regards to Pupil A, the panel noted that Mrs Richards had identified Person A as a 'protective factor' and given her advice not to leave Pupil A with Person B whilst this issue was being resolved. The panel noted that this advice mirrored the advice which Family Front Door had given to Witness 2.

On that basis, the panel considered that Mrs Richards did not place Pupil A at a material risk of harm, nor did she fail to adequately safeguard her.

The panel, however, was not satisfied by Mrs Richards' response regarding Child A and Child B. Mrs Richards stated that through enquiries with Person A that she was content that Child A and Child B were not at risk, but there was no clear evidence before the panel on how Mrs Richards could have reasonably reached that conclusion. The panel considered the only realistic option open to Mrs Richards was to refer the concern to Family Front Door, which she had failed to do. On that basis, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Richards had placed Child A and Child B at risk of harm and did not adequately safeguard them.

The panel therefore found this allegation proved as it applied to sub-allegation 1c) for Child A and Child B, but not Pupil A.

3. On or around 19 June 2023, you did not handover and/or inform a senior colleague of the safeguarding concern regarding Pupil A and/or Child A and/or Child B when you were absent.

The undisputed evidence between the parties was that Mrs Richards was not at School on Monday 19 June 2023 because she was ill. Furthermore, no updates had been recorded on MyConcern since the original entry on 13 June 2023.

Witness 2's evidence was that she picked up the DSL duties in her absence and that she had received no handover or updates from Mrs Richards. This account was supported by the lack of any evidence before the panel which indicated Mrs Richards had not provided any handover information to Witness 2.

Mrs Richards stated that as she had logged the matter on MyConcern, the other deputies would have been notified of the event. She stated she did not handover anything as she was managing the event as the DSL herself.

Unlike a number of other allegations in this case, the TRA did not plead that Mrs Richards omissions were 'untimely' in nature. Therefore this allegation required a purely factual analysis and no consideration of professional judgement was required.

From a factual perspective there was no dispute between the parties that Mrs Richards did not handover or inform a senior colleague on 19 June 2023. On that basis the panel found this allegation proved.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct

and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as “the Advice”.

Decision in relation to allegation 3

The panel considered the proven facts at allegation 3. Whilst there was no handover provided when Mrs Richards was off ill, the panel noted that Mrs Richards was otherwise still managing the concern herself. For example, there was evidence that Mrs Richards had allocated one of the deputy DSLs to talk with Pupil A and gain further information, which was the plan she set out in MyConcern.

The panel considered it would have been ‘best practice’ to have undertaken a handover to ensure that all colleagues were aware of the present position. However, the panel considered that an omission to handover in these circumstances was not so serious or significantly below the expected behaviour of a teacher that it would amount to unacceptable professional misconduct. Mrs Richards was otherwise managing the concerns herself and there was no suggestion at that time that Mrs Richards’ absence would be anything other than for a short period.

The panel also considered whether Mrs Richards’ conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual’s conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

For the same reasons, the panel was also satisfied that Mrs Richards’ behaviour in this allegation would not impact the reputation of the profession to the extent that it would be called into disrepute.

The panel therefore found the facts proved at allegation 3 did not amount to unacceptable professional conduct or conduct that might bring the profession into disrepute.

Decision in relation to allegation 1c) and 2

Due to the link between these two allegations, the panel’s reasons apply equally to each.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards, Mrs Richards 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 an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel considered Mrs Richards' failings in regard to reporting the concerns to Family Front Door were a serious matter. Teachers' safeguarding obligations apply to all children. To not have ensured that Family Front Door was contacted suggested a significant 'blindspot' in Mrs Richards' approach to safeguarding. The panel considered these were actions that fell far below the expected behaviour of a teacher in the circumstances.

On that basis, the panel considered that Mrs Richards' actions did amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel took into account that Mrs Richards' behaviour was not akin to any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice, however due to the serious nature of the safeguarding failure, the panel was satisfied it still reached the required threshold for a finding of unacceptable professional conduct to be made.

In relation to whether Mrs Richards' actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It 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.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mrs Richards was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that none of the offences listed on page 12 and 13 of the Advice were relevant. However, the panel was satisfied that as the public place such a significant level of trust in teachers to safeguard children, a failure by a teacher to properly safeguard risked significantly eroding that trust. This was particularly so when that person was a trained DSL themselves.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mrs Richards' actions constituted 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. 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 protection of other members of the public,
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession,
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mrs Richards, which involved a significant safeguarding failure in relation to two children, there was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils. Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Richards were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. The panel was of the view that a public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mrs Richards 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 Mrs Richards 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 is able 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 Mrs Richards.

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;
- misconduct seriously affecting the... safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;

- failure to act on evidence that indicated a child's welfare may have been at risk e.g. ...make a referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies when abuse, neglect and/or harmful cultural practices were identified;
- 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);

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. The panel's view was that Mrs Richard's safeguarding omissions were deliberate in nature and that she was not acting under extreme duress. The panel considered a number of character references provided by Mrs Richards. The panel noted that although these references were written by colleagues and touched on Mrs Richards teaching abilities, it did not appear these references had been prepared in direct connection for these proceedings. The panel did note a reference from the former Headteacher at the School which stated:

"In her safeguarding role, Tamzin demonstrated a high level of professionalism and responsibility in ensuring the safety and well-being of all children under her care. She had a thorough knowledge of the relevant policies and procedures, and she was always vigilant and proactive in identifying and addressing any potential risks or concerns. She was very supportive and empathetic towards children who have experienced abuse or neglect, and she worked closely with other agencies and professionals, including prison, to provide them with the best possible help and protection. Within school she supported me in providing training updates to staff and was always on hand to offer advice to colleagues."

This passage shared a similarity with other colleagues' remarks, which suggested Mrs Richards' wider safeguarding practices were not in question. Whilst there was no evidence before the panel of 'demonstrating exceptionally high standards' or a 'significant contribution to the education sector', the references suggested Mrs Richards was widely regarded as a capable teacher. The panel noted that Mrs Richards held a number of senior responsibilities at the time including the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator and continued to teach some classes.

The panel also took into account that Mrs Richards had no previous regulatory matters recorded against her and, although had not attended this hearing, she had otherwise engaged with the TRA's regulatory process.

The panel noted that throughout the School's investigation and during these TRA proceedings, Mrs Richards has consistently sought to defend her failure in ensuring that Family Front Door was contacted. This was on the basis that she had not been able to

speak to [REDACTED]. This persistent reasoning by Mrs Richards is of significant concern to the panel, particularly taking account of her experience of safeguarding procedures. It would be readily apparent to anyone that requiring the consent from the alleged perpetrator to make a referral to the local authority would unlikely achieve the central aims of safeguarding children. On this basis, the panel was not satisfied that Mrs Richards had a degree of insight into her actions which suggests the risk of repetition of similar misconduct is not materially diminished at this time.

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. Whilst the panel had real concerns about Mrs Richards' insight into her safeguarding practice, it was limited to this one discrete issue on 'consent' and the panel was satisfied that the published findings in this case would alert further employers, who in turn would be able to properly address the remaining risk at a 'local' level. On that basis, the panel considered it would be disproportionate to recommend a prohibition order to address the protection risks in this case. It would otherwise remove a good teacher from the profession, which the panel considered was not necessary to address the risks present.

Furthermore, 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 maintaining confidence in the profession and declaring proper standards of the profession.

The panel therefore recommended to the Secretary of State that no prohibition order be imposed in this case.

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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven, and/or found that some allegations do not amount to unacceptable

professional conduct or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mrs Tamzin Richards should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and/or 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 Mrs Richards 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 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 Mrs Richards 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 Mrs Richards, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children/safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "In the light of the panel's findings against Mrs Richards, which involved a significant safeguarding failure in relation to two children, there was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils." A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, "The panel noted that throughout the School's investigation and during these TRA proceedings, Mrs Richards has consistently sought to defend her

failure in ensuring that Family Front Door was contacted. This was on the basis that she had not been able to speak to [REDACTED]. This persistent reasoning by Mrs Richards is of significant concern to the panel, particularly taking account of her experience of safeguarding procedures. It would be readily apparent to anyone that requiring the consent from the alleged perpetrator to make a referral to the local authority would unlikely achieve the central aims of safeguarding children. On this basis, the panel was not satisfied that Mrs Richards had a degree of insight into her actions which suggests the risk of repetition of similar misconduct is not materially diminished at this time.” In my judgement, the lack of full insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour, and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, “the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Richards were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession. The panel was of the view that a public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mrs Richards was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of significant safeguarding failures in relation to two children in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mrs Richards herself and the panel comment “The panel considered a number of character references provided by Mrs Richards. The panel noted that although these references were written by colleagues and touched on Mrs Richards teaching abilities, it did not appear these references had been prepared in direct connection for these proceedings. The panel did note a reference from the former Headteacher at the School.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mrs Richards 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 "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. Whilst the panel had real concerns about Mrs Richards' insight into her safeguarding practice, it was limited to this one discrete issue on 'consent' and the panel was satisfied that the published findings in this case would alert further employers, who in turn would be able to properly address the remaining risk at a 'local' level. On that basis, the panel considered it would be disproportionate to recommend a prohibition order to address the protection risks in this case. It would otherwise remove a good teacher from the profession, which the panel considered was not necessary to address the risks present."

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that "This passage shared a similarity with other colleagues' remarks, which suggested Mrs Richards' wider safeguarding practices were not in question. Whilst there was no evidence before the panel of 'demonstrating exceptionally high standards' or a 'significant contribution to the education sector', the references suggested Mrs Richards was widely regarded as a capable teacher. The panel noted that Mrs Richards held a number of senior responsibilities at the time including the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator and continued to teach some classes."

I have given weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mrs Richards has made and could continue to make to the profession.

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 'SABuxcey', with a horizontal line underneath.

Decision maker: Sarah Buxcey

Date: 23 September 2025

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