



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Ronan Preston: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

December 2025

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

Teacher: Mr Ronan Preston

TRA reference: 23744

Date of determination: 12 December 2025

Former employer: Ursuline High School, London

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 11 and 12 December 2025 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Ronan Preston.

The panel members were Mr Adnan Qureshi (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Claire Shortt (teacher panellist) and Ms Shelley Barlow-Ward (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr John Lucarotti of Blake Morgan LLP Solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Lee Bridges.

Mr Ronan Preston was present and represented by Mr Austin Welch.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of hearing dated 29 August 2025.

The allegation to Mr Preston was as follows:

You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as a Teacher of Religious Education at Ursuline High School ("the School"):

1. Between on or around 19 January 2024 and on or around 22 April 2024 you posted offensive and/or inflammatory comments on X, a social media platform, as set out in Schedule 1.

Schedule 1

- a. 19 January 2024 - "So yes October 7 was a justified act of resistance under a brutal and crushing occupation".
- b. 19 January 2024 - "Alan, your attempt to think critically here would make sense only if #Palestinians went in ships and forcibly brought white European Jews to #Palestine to work as slaves and then struggled to live with them when civil rights became a thing! White European Jews came as colonisers".
- c. 25 January 2024 - "I'm delighted to inform you monsters # Hamas committed no crime. @IsrealinIreland. Their actions were entirely legitimate resistance to a criminal state masquerading as Jewish, colonising their country!"
- d. 1 March 2024 - "Yes we will and are ALL praying for the soldiers of destiny #HAMAS. May God grant them victory in their homeland over the grotesque, barbaric, idol worshipping invaders @IDF".
- e. 26 March 2024 - "You mean # Hamas and #Hezbollah freedom fighters and defenders of humanity".
- f. 31 March 2024 - "Glory to # Hamas and freedom for humanity [praying hands emojis] victory over the imperialist racists! The destruction of the racist state of #Israel is coming soon".
- g. 8 April 2024 - "We stand shoulder to shoulder with # Hamas #Palestine who have been invaded by American and European colonisers masquerading as a Jewish state".
- h. 11 April 2024 - "May their deaths be an inspiration to the cause of # Hamas and the #Palestinians against this great satanic evil the world faces".
- i. 22 April 2024 - "# Hamas are not terrorists, they are resistance to occupation. #Israel is not a true Jewish state, but an inversion and perversion to Judaism. It's stated goal is rebuild the Temple – to erect a false Messianic state in rebellion of G-d. Without justice prayers are in vain Amos 5". >>

Mr Preston admitted the allegation, both in terms of the facts alleged and that he was guilty of unprofessional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 4 to 5

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 6 to 13

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 14 to 21

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 22 to 255

Section 5: Teacher's documents – pages 256 to 283

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 Procedures.

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from two witnesses:

- [REDACTED] – Witness A
- Mr Preston

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

Findings of fact

In light of the unequivocal admissions by Mr Preston, the evidence of [REDACTED] and the documentary evidence, the panel found the following factual allegation against Mr Preston proved:

- 1. Between on or around 19 January 2024 and on or around 22 April 2024 you posted offensive and/or inflammatory comments on X, a social media platform, as set out in Schedule 1.**

The panel noted that the relevant factual background was as follows:

Mr Preston was a Religious Education (“RE”) Teacher at the School. He was employed in this role between September 2017 and 19 July 2024. As part of his role, Mr Preston was responsible for the coordination of key stage 4.

On 23 April 2024, the School received an email, which was marked for the attention of [REDACTED], who was the headteacher of the School. The email raised concerns regarding Mr Preston, stating that he was an open supporter of a prescribed terrorist group, namely, Hamas.

The email also attached screenshots of posts made on the social media platform X, by username ‘[REDACTED]’, on 26 March, 31 March and 8 April 2024. The email stated that Mr Preston was the person behind username ‘[REDACTED]’.

The content of the posts related to the Israel Palestine conflict and contained comments that were supportive of Hamas, critical of Israel and referenced Jewish people. These posts were largely posted in response to posts made by others.

On the same day as receiving the email, [REDACTED] spoke to Mr Preston with regards to the above concerns. [REDACTED] showed the screenshots to Mr Preston and asked him whether he recognised them.

Mr Preston stated that he recognised the posts, he had made them, they were a mistake, and he had since deleted them. He also apologised. He maintained this position throughout the subsequent internal investigation.

On 19 July 2024, following a disciplinary hearing, Mr Preston was dismissed from his employment at the School.

[REDACTED] evidence detailed the various investigative steps taken by the School in light of the posts. He noted that Mr Preston had been consistent in accepting responsibility for what he had done and apologising for its impact on the school.

[REDACTED] further informed the panel that Mr Preston had been an excellent and conscientious teacher in the seven years that he had worked at the school and that the allegations in relation to the posts were completely out of character.

Mr Preston’s own evidence to the panel was that he was “mortified” and “ashamed” by his conduct in early 2024 and recognised that his posts were “abhorrent”, “ill-informed” and “highly offensive.” In his witness statement, he stated that at the relevant time he had become “rather consumed” with the events in Israel and Palestine and that he had “struggled to look beyond the scenes being portrayed.”

Mr Preston told the panel that, at the time he made the posts, he had been working long hours at the School and that he had become socially isolated. He described the posts as

an “emotional” response to what he was learning about events in the Middle East and that he greatly regretted both what he had posted and the manner in which he had done so.

Mr Preston further informed the panel that, following the loss of his job at the School, he had returned to Ireland (where he had originally undertaken teacher training) and had been working there as a substitute teacher. He indicated that he had carried out significant amounts of reflective learning and had read widely on the subject of the Palestine Israel conflict. In addition, he had completed extensive training in relation to radicalisation, including ‘Prevent’, ‘Flick radicalisation’, and Smart Horizon online safety training. He had also explored these issues within the context of face-to-face counselling. He stated that this had all led to a profound realisation on his part as to the inaccuracy and offensiveness of his posts.

Mr Preston explained why he thought that the allegations against him amounted to unacceptable professional conduct. He stated that he should not have been engaging with that sort of subject in the way that he did online. He stated that he should instead have been “modelling rational and constructive engagement.”

Mr Preston told the panel that he wished to apologise unreservedly to the Jewish community, the School and its community, the TRA and anyone else affected by his posts.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct / conduct that might bring the profession into disrepute

Having found the factual allegation proved, the panel went on to consider whether this amounted to unprofessional conduct and / or conduct that might bring the profession into disrepute. It noted that Mr Preston had admitted that his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct but acknowledged that this was ultimately a matter of judgement for the panel itself.

In doing so, the panel had regard to *Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers* (“the Advice”) and *Teachers’ Standards, Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies* (“the Standards”).

The panel first considered whether Mr Preston’s admitted conduct involved breaches of the Standards. It noted that Part Two of the Standards stated:

“Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others

- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs”

The panel considered that these standards had been breached by Mr Preston and that these breaches were serious. The panel considered that the relevant posts were abhorrent and extremely offensive, demonstrating a lack of tolerance and respect for Israel, Jewish people and Judaism, and that they undermined British values.

The panel had regard to the circumstances in which the posts were made, the nature of the views expressed, and the fact that Mr Preston had been identifiable as the author of the posts.

The panel noted that Mr Preston had been working as an RE teacher at the time that he made the posts set out at Schedule 1. It considered that a teacher in his particular position should have been especially aware of the importance of adopting a constructive and tolerant stance towards matters of such sensitivity.

The panel considered that Mr Preston’s acts in making the various posts amounted to misconduct of a serious nature, falling significantly short of the standards of behaviour expected by a teacher.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Preston was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Preston’s 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.

The panel noted that its findings of misconduct are serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel also found that Mr Preston’s actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel’s recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel’s finding in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct bringing the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. The panel recognised that prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found some of them to be relevant in this case, namely, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

The panel was of the view that there was a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession, as the conduct found against Mr Preston was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

The panel noted that the posts were both offensive and inflammatory and had the potential to undermine confidence in the teaching profession. Equally, it recognised that they were a serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Standards, and that they could be considered to be actions that promoted extreme political or religious views.

However, it also noted that the posts were made during a relatively brief period in Mr Preston's life when he was subject to [REDACTED], and that these posts had been described by others as being "entirely out of character." It further noted that there is no evidence that any pupil at the School saw the posts in question or was harmed by them.

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 Preston in the profession.

The panel heard and read glowing evidence about Mr Preston's qualities as a teacher noting that he had been described by [REDACTED] as "conscientious" and "diligent" and a "consummate professional." It further had regard to Mr Preston's own evidence around his love and aptitude for teaching and was impressed by Mr Preston's evident desire to ensure that this experience ultimately had a positive impact on his approach to teaching.

In view of the countervailing 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 Preston.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order might be appropriate, the panel went on to consider any mitigating factors that may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

The panel had no evidence of any previous findings against Mr Preston, and there was evidence before the panel that he had in the past demonstrated high standards in his personal and professional conduct and contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel noted that Mr Preston had demonstrated deep levels of remorse and insight around his acts and that this had been consistently present in some shape or form since the point that he was first confronted with the existence of the posts in April 2024. It further noted that Mr Preston had taken numerous steps to re-educate himself on the subject of Israel and Palestine and internet usage, and this amounted to considerable remediation.

The panel noted Mr Preston's considered and reflective evidence and considered that Mr Preston had not been radicalised but that the posts amounted to an ill-informed emotional response to events relating to Israel and Palestine at the end of 2023 and early 2024. Accordingly, the panel considered that the risk of any repetition of this behaviour was negligible.

It concluded that notwithstanding the serious nature of the misconduct and the fact that it has brought the profession into disrepute, a prohibition order would not be proportionate in this case. In coming to this conclusion, the panel had considerable regard to the extensive insight and remediation demonstrated by Mr Preston since he was confronted with the existence of the posts, the negligible risk of repetition of this conduct, the fact that the posts had not had an impact on any pupils at the School, and the evidence that he was clearly a highly talented and motivated teacher.

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 a prohibition order. It considered that publication of the findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and disrepute would adequately mark the seriousness of this matter, and meet the public interest in upholding standards and maintain public confidence.

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 the allegation proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Ronan Preston should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Preston 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:

- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Preston fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of posting offensive and inflammatory comments on a social media platform.

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 and 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 Mr Preston, 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 that “a teacher in his particular position should have been especially aware of the importance of adopting a constructive and tolerant stance towards matters of such sensitivity.” However, the panel has also found that “there is no evidence that any pupil at the School saw the posts in question or was harmed by them.”

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 Mr Preston had demonstrated deep levels of remorse and insight around his acts and that this had been consistently present in some shape or form since the point that he was first confronted with the existence of the posts in April 2024. It further noted that Mr Preston had taken numerous steps to re-educate himself on the subject of Israel and Palestine and internet usage, and this amounted to considerable remediation.”

In my judgement, the insight, remorse and remediation demonstrated by Mr Preston means that there is a low risk of the repetition of this behaviour. 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 that “the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual’s status as a teacher.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of posting offensive and inflammatory remarks and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

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

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Preston himself. The panel has commented:

“The panel heard and read glowing evidence about Mr Preston’s qualities as a teacher noting that he had been described by [REDACTED] as “conscientious” and “diligent” and a “consummate professional.” It further had regard to Mr Preston’s own evidence around his love and aptitude for teaching and was impressed by Mr Preston’s evident desire to ensure that this experience ultimately had a positive impact on his approach to teaching.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Preston 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 panel’s comments concerning the high level of insight and remorse shown by Mr Preston and the low risk of repetition. I have taken account of the panel’s comments:

“The panel noted Mr Preston’s considered and reflective evidence and considered that Mr Preston had not been radicalised but that the posts amounted to an ill-informed emotional response to events relating to Israel and Palestine at the end of 2023 and early 2024. Accordingly, the panel considered that the risk of any repetition of this behaviour was negligible.

It concluded that notwithstanding the serious nature of the misconduct and the fact that it has brought the profession into disrepute, a prohibition order would not be proportionate in this case. In coming to this conclusion, the panel had considerable regard to the extensive insight and remediation demonstrated by Mr Preston since he was confronted with the existence of the posts, the negligible risk of repetition of this conduct, the fact that the posts had not had an impact on any pupils at the School, and the evidence that he was clearly a highly talented and motivated teacher.”

I agree with the panel that the findings of misconduct in this case are serious and have the potential to undermine the standing of the teaching profession. However, I also agree with the panel that there is a public interest in retaining Mr Preston in the profession and that Mr Preston has taken extensive steps which substantially reduce the risk that he might repeat this behaviour.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 17 December 2025

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