



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr James Samways: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

December 2025

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Allegations | 4 |
| Summary of evidence | 4 |
| Documents | 4 |
| Statement of agreed facts | 4 |
| Decision and reasons | 5 |
| Findings of fact | 5 |
| Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State | 7 |
| Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State | 11 |

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

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Teacher: | Mr James Samways |
| Teacher ref number: | N/A |
| Teacher date of birth: | 28 February 1999 |
| TRA reference: | 21310 |
| Date of determination: | 2 December 2025 |
| Former employer: | Our Lady's Abingdon, Oxfordshire |

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 2 December 2025 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr James Samways.

The panel members were Ms Jackie Hutchings (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Nigel Shock (lay panellist) and Ms Kelly Dooley (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Ms Lara Small of Birketts 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 Mr Samways that the allegation be considered without a hearing. Mr Samways 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 Emma Dowd, Mr Samways or any representative for Mr Samways.

The meeting took place in private.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of meeting dated 7 August 2025.

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

1. On 6 December 2022 at Oxfordshire Magistrates' Court he was convicted of fraud by false representation contrary to the Fraud Act 2006.

Mr Samways admitted allegation 1, as set out in his response to the Notice of Referral Form.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology, anonymised pupil list and list of key people – pages 4 to 8

Section 2: Notice of referral, response and notice of meeting – pages 9 to 20

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts and presenting officer representations – pages 21 to 24

Section 4: TRA documents – pages 25 to 237

Section 5: Court documents – pages 238 to 240

Section 6: Teacher documents – pages 241 to 242

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 the 2020 Procedures.

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Samways on 12 March 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mr Samways was employed from 1 September 2017 as a part time Boys' Sports Assistant and co-curricular coordinator at Our Lady's Abingdon Trustees Limited ('the School'). Mr Samways was completing his PGCE at the School, but he dropped out of the course in December 2021. Mr Samways was carrying out regulated activity by completing PE teaching, acting as textiles technician and co-curricular coordinator unsupervised.

[REDACTED].

On 18 February 2022, Mr Samways resigned.

Mr Samways also worked as a casual worker for [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is a sports coaching and holiday childcare company that runs clubs and camps for children aged 4 to 13 years old. [REDACTED] informed Mr Samways that [REDACTED]; he could not work for [REDACTED].

On 23 February 2022, Mr Samways forwarded a letter to [REDACTED] that the School had sent him, which he had changed. The letter the School had sent to Mr Samways confirmed that, despite him no longer being an employee of the School, [REDACTED]. Mr Samways amended this letter before he sent it to [REDACTED] and changed its contents to state that [REDACTED].

On 1 March 2022, Mr Samways was arrested and was subsequently investigated by the police.

On 30 November 2022 the matter was referred to the TRA.

On 6 December 2022 Mr Samways was convicted at Oxford Magistrates Court of fraud by misrepresentation contrary to the Fraud Act 2006 following a guilty plea.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. On 6 December 2022 at Oxfordshire Magistrates' Court you were convicted of fraud by false representation contrary to the Fraud Act 2006.**

The panel considered the statement of agreed facts, signed by Mr Samways on 12 March 2025, in which he admitted allegation 1.

Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

The panel noted page 8 of the Teacher Misconduct: The Prohibition of Teachers ('the Advice') which states that, where there has been a conviction at any time of a criminal offence, the panel will accept the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction, unless exceptional circumstances apply. The panel did not find that any exceptional circumstances applied in this case.

The panel was provided with a copy of the certificate of conviction from Oxford Magistrates' Court which detailed that on 6 December 2022 Mr Samways was convicted of fraud by false representation.

The panel noted that Mr Samways pleaded guilty to the offence.

In respect of the conviction above, Mr Samways was ordered to pay a £600 fine, a £60 surcharge and £85 in costs.

Following examination of the documents before the panel and the admissions in the statement of agreed facts and the notice of referral form, the panel found allegation 1 proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

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

In doing so, the panel had regard to the Advice.

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Samways 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:
 - 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 Mr Samways' actions were relevant to teaching, working with children and/or working in an education setting. The offence impacted Mr Samways' role and position of trust as a teacher. The offence involved fraud by Mr Samways misrepresenting the contents of a letter sent to him by the School [REDACTED].

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils and/or members of the public. The panel noted in particular that Mr Samways' fraudulent actions in changing the contents of the letter from the School was done with the intent to continue working with children at [REDACTED] at a time when Mr Samways knew that [REDACTED]. The panel considered that Mr Samways therefore placed children at potential risk of harm. The panel noted that Mr Samways admitted in his statement of agreed facts that the offence he was convicted of would be likely to have an impact on the safety or security of pupils or members of the public.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Samways' 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 Mr Samways' behaviour did not lead to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative that the offence was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum.

The panel also considered the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

This was a case concerning an offence involving fraud or serious dishonesty, 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 Mr Samways' 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.

The panel therefore determined that the facts of the proved allegation amounted to a conviction of 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 and the protection of other members of the public;
- the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Samways, which involved a conviction for fraud by false representation, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public.

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

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Samways in the profession. Mr Samways did not provide any evidence to attest to his ability as an educator. The panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Samways in the profession, since his behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he sought to exploit his position of trust.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times.

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Samways.

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;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- 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);
- actions or behaviours that undermine fundamental British values of the rule of law;
- dishonesty, including the deliberate concealment of their actions, especially where these behaviours had serious consequences.

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

There was no evidence that Mr Samways' actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Samways was acting under extreme duress.

There was no evidence before the panel that Mr Samways demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. There was no evidence before the panel to indicate that the incident was out of character.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Mr Samways 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 Mr Samways. The serious nature of the offence of fraud and the fact that it was directly connected to his teaching and risked exposing children to harm [REDACTED] was a significant factor in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 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.

None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The Advice also indicates that there are certain other types of cases where it is likely that the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of a longer period before a review is considered appropriate.

One of these includes:

- fraud or serious dishonesty.

The panel considered that this case involves fraud or serious dishonesty given Mr Samways was convicted of fraud by false representation contrary to the Fraud Act 2006. The panel also noted that Mr Samways admitted in his statement of agreed facts that the offence involved dishonesty. In light of this, the panel considered that this factor was engaged and weighed in favour of a longer review period.

The panel considered whether there were any mitigating circumstances. The panel noted the contents of the references for Mr Samways but was unable to rely on these as they were dated 2017 and were prepared years before the conviction of Mr Samways' offence of fraud. The panel noted Mr Samways' written statement to the TRA in which he stated *"It was wrong of me to alter the letter from OLA and then pass onto [REDACTED]. I never meant to deceive [REDACTED], I just didn't want to let them down. I had worked for them for a long time and was under enormous pressure and made a wrong judgment. I now know this was wrong and it was a stupid naïve mistake. I have learnt my lesson from this and feel very ashamed for doing so."* The panel considered that there was very little evidence of remorse expressed by Mr Samways and concluded that naivety was an insufficient excuse to explain his actions at a time when he should have known that doctoring a letter from the School was wrong.

The panel considered that there was no evidence of insight shown by Mr Samways around the impact that his actions could have had on others, including children. The panel noted that Mr Samways attempted to deflect and/or blame others for his actions, for example by stating in his written statement that he never received any teacher training. The panel was not convinced by this and noted that Mr Samways admitted that he was “*fully aware of the safeguarding policies within the school environment*” and the panel had evidence that Mr Samways had completed mandatory child protection and safeguarding training in 2020. The panel considered that there was a risk of repetition in the future, given Mr Samways’ lack of insight and responsibility accepted for his actions. However, the panel noted that Mr Samways was 23 at the time of the events in February 2022 which happened in quick succession and considered it would be proportionate to provide Mr Samways with an opportunity to improve and take steps to demonstrate acceptable levels of insight into his actions, to avoid the risk of future repetition.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period which the panel submits should be five years.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of both sanction and review period.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found 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 Mr James Samways should be the subject of a prohibition order with a review period of 5 years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Samways 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:
 - 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 Mr Samways 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 relevant conviction for fraud by false representation.

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 Mr Samways, 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:

“The panel noted that the behaviour involved in committing the offence could have had an impact on the safety and/or security of pupils and/or members of the public. The panel noted in particular that Mr Samways’ fraudulent actions in changing the contents of the letter from the School was done with the intent to continue working with children at [REDACTED] at a time when Mr Samways knew that [REDACTED]. The panel considered that Mr Samways therefore placed children at potential risk of harm. The panel noted that Mr Samways admitted in his statement of agreed facts that the offence he was convicted of would be likely to have an impact on the safety or security of pupils or members of the public.”

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 considered that there was very little evidence of remorse expressed by Mr Samways and concluded that naivety was an insufficient excuse to explain his

actions at a time when he should have known that doctoring a letter from the School was wrong.

The panel considered that there was no evidence of insight shown by Mr Samways around the impact that his actions could have had on others, including children.”

In my judgement, the lack of evidence of insight and remorse 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 considerable 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 Mr Samways was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a conviction for fraud by false misrepresentation that put at risk the safety and security of pupils 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 Mr Samways himself. The panel has commented:

“There was no evidence before the panel that Mr Samways demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector. There was no evidence before the panel to indicate that the incident was out of character.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Samways 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 serious nature of the offence of which Mr Samways was convicted misconduct and its potential impact on the safeguarding of pupils. The panel has said:

“The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Samways. The serious nature of the offence of fraud and the fact that it was directly connected to his teaching and risked exposing children to harm [REDACTED] was a significant factor in forming that opinion.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel's findings concerning the lack of evidence of insight and remorse.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Samways has made to the profession. In my view, it is necessary to impose a prohibition order in order to maintain public confidence in the profession. A published decision, in light of the circumstances in this case, that is not backed up by evidence of insight and remorse, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a 5-year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments:

“The panel considered that this case involves fraud or serious dishonesty given Mr Samways was convicted of fraud by false representation contrary to the Fraud Act 2006. The panel also noted that Mr Samways admitted in his statement of agreed facts that the offence involved dishonesty. In light of this, the panel considered that this factor was engaged and weighed in favour of a longer review period.”

“The panel considered that there was a risk of repetition in the future, given Mr Samways' lack of insight and responsibility accepted for his actions. However, the panel noted that Mr Samways was 23 at the time of the events in February 2022 which happened in quick succession and considered it would be proportionate to provide Mr Samways with an opportunity to improve and take steps to demonstrate acceptable levels of insight into his actions, to avoid the risk of future repetition.”

I have considered whether a 5-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a shorter 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 Mr Samways was convicted, the lack of evidence of insight and remorse, and the risk of repetition.

I consider therefore that a 5-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr James Samways is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 8 January 2031, 5 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Samways remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 4 December 2025

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