



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Julia Leith: Professional conduct panel hearing outcome

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

January 2026

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

Teacher:	Ms Julia Leith
Teacher ref number:	8848483
Teacher date of birth:	3 September 1965
TRA reference:	17106
Date of determination:	23 January 2026
Former employer:	Judgemeadow Community College, Leicester (the “College”) and Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough (the “School”)

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 19 to 23 January 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Ms Leith.

The panel members were Mr Alan Wells (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Mrs Julie Wells (teacher panellist) and Mrs Nicola Fernandes (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Elizabeth Gilbert of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Matilda Heselton of Browne Jacobson LLP solicitors.

Ms Leith was present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public, save that portions of the hearing were heard in private, and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the Notice of Proceedings dated 5 November 2025

It was alleged that Ms Leith was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, in that:

1. She acted in an inappropriate and/or unprofessional manner, specifically;
 - a) Whilst employed at the Judgemeanow Community College between June 2017 and December 2017, on or around 21st September 2017, she:
 - (i) was present at the College after consuming alcohol and/or smelling of alcohol;
 - (ii) her conduct at allegation 1(b)(i) above affected her behaviour and/or ability to undertake her duties to the College;
 - b) Whilst employed at the Robert Smyth Academy between August and December 2018, on or around 7th December 2018, she;
 - i) was present at the School after consuming alcohol and/or smelling of alcohol;
 - ii) her conduct at allegation 1(c)(i) above affected her behaviour and/or ability to undertake her duties to the School

Ms Leith denied the facts of the allegations and that her conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or 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 – page 7

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 9 to 36

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 38 to 45

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 47 to 79

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 81 to 265

The panel also received the following documents:

- Case management hearing decisions;
- Application for hearing to be in private;
- Application for hearsay evidence to be admitted;
- Application to amend the allegations; and
- [REDACTED]

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

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document 'Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession' 2018 (the "Procedures").

Witnesses

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

- Witness A; and
- Witness B.

Ms Leith also gave oral evidence.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Ms Leith was employed by the College between June 2017 and December 2017.

Ms Leith was employed as a teacher by an agency, Now Education, and worked as a supply teacher at the School between 28 August 2018 and 7 December 2018.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

1. You acted in an inappropriate and/or unprofessional manner, specifically;

a) Whilst employed at the Judgemeanow Community College between June 2017 and December 2017, on or around 21st September 2017, you:

- (i) were present at the College after consuming alcohol and/or smelling of alcohol;**
- (ii) your conduct at allegation 1(a)(i) above affected your behaviour and/or ability to undertake your duties to the College;**

Ms Leith denied allegations 1(a)(i) and 1(a)(ii).

Witness A stated in his written statement that:

- At around 6:30pm/6:45pm during an open evening in September 2017, Person A, a member of staff at the College, approached him with “concerns over the behaviour and mannerisms of Ms Leith” as she had been witnessed as “disorientated and slurring her speech”.
- Following the concerns, he went to Ms Leith’s classroom to see “if she was ok”. Throughout their conversation which was “approximately 1 hour long”, Ms Leith spoke and acted in an “intoxicated manner and smelt of alcohol”, was “erratic, irrational, emotional and confused” and her speech was “slurred”.
- When Witness A asked Ms Leith whether she had consumed alcohol, Ms Leith stated that “she had after school” and “made reference to [REDACTED] staff (another school)”. As a result, Witness A considered that Ms Leith “was drunk and therefore could not engage with the open evening”.
- Person B “kept coming in and out of the classroom” to support Witness A as he had been informed of Ms Leith’s condition. [REDACTED] when efforts were made to arrange transport, and she was “unable to tell” Witness A where her bag was and could only provide her own mobile number as a contact number. As such, Person B tried to contact Ms Leith’s next of kin.
- Subsequently, “two members of staff arrived” to take Ms Leith home and a vehicle was arranged to collect Ms Leith from the back of the College so that Ms Leith “did not have to pass through the open evening events”.
- Witness A stated in his oral evidence that, during his conversation with Ms Leith in her classroom on 21 September 2017, Ms Leith gave multiple reasons for being upset, including [REDACTED] that she had “consumed alcohol after school”. Witness A was asked if Ms Leith had referred to [REDACTED], as this was an explanation Ms Leith has subsequently given for her behaviour. Witness A confirmed that [REDACTED]

Following a preliminary application from the presenting officer, the panel admitted the hearsay evidence of three staff members present on 21 September 2017, each having provided written statements to the College dated 23 September 2017:

- Person A stated that Ms Leith “seemed wobbly” at around 7:45am on 21 September 2017 and was “not walking well” and did “not speak as usual”. Person A further stated that she knew Ms Leith was “stressed about her observation period 2 that day” and that Ms Leith “[REDACTED]” but Person A was “concerned” that Ms Leith’s “walking and speech were not her usual way” and she “wondered about drink at that stage”. However, Person A stated that Ms Leith “seemed better” after the observation and “less erratic”.
- Person A stated that Ms Leith left the College after school to go home and “collect materials” and she did not return until “about 5:15” when they had students ready to “help set up” for an open evening. Person A stated that Ms Leith’s “speech was slurred”, that she could not “make eye contact” and she was “very unsteady on her feet”. Person A stated that she “was concerned about a possible smell of alcohol” and it was her belief that Ms Leith “had been drinking” [REDACTED]
- Person B stated that he went to see Ms Leith, alongside Witness A, when concerns were raised by Person A about Ms Leith being “unwell”. Person B stated that it “quickly became apparent” that Ms Leith was unwell and did not know “why or who” they were and was “showing signs of her been [sic] drinking” as she found it “very difficult to talk” without “slurring or repeating what she had just said”.
- Person B stated that he and Witness A decided to contact Ms Leith’s home, but Ms Leith provided her own number without realising and explained [REDACTED]. Person B further stated that he arranged with another member of staff to drive her home and that his personal opinion was that Ms Leith “had been drinking which had caused her to become unwell”.
- Person C stated that he saw Ms Leith “coming from the corridor” and he “noticed that she was not walking straight”.

The panel placed weight on the hearsay evidence, as each of the statements were consistent with each other and with Witness A’s evidence regarding the sequence of events and Ms Leith’s behaviour on 21 September 2017.

Ms Leith provided a written witness statement of Person K, who stated in his written statement dated 29 July 2024 that whenever Ms Leith [REDACTED].

The panel considered a letter dated 16 July 2018, which was sent from Ms Leith to the presenting officer, in response to the TRA’s investigation into the allegations against her. Ms Leith stated the following:

- On 21 September 2017, she “came to work as normal” at the College but was “anxious” because she had an observation with an extremely disruptive class and had “stayed up until 3am checking everything through”;
- [REDACTED]
- Ms Leith helped set up for an open evening but went home to collect “flags, tablecloths and other bits and bobs”.
- [REDACTED]
- Additionally, whilst at home, Ms Leith [REDACTED] “made a small gin and tonic for [REDACTED]” and asked if she wanted one, to which she replied “okay” and had a “couple of sips”;
- When Ms Leith returned to the College for the open evening, she felt “dizzy”, “anxious, faint, panicky and sleepy”;
- [REDACTED]

In a witness statement dated 29 July 2024, Ms Leith stated the following:

- [REDACTED]
- She also “had a little bit of gin and tonic” that [REDACTED] had made her. Following which, she returned to the College for the parent’s evening where she felt “really unwell, dizzy and anxious”.
- [REDACTED]

Despite her earlier written statements, Ms Leith stated in oral evidence that she had not consumed alcohol on 21 September 2017 as she was “tee total” at the time and would “never drink alcohol in a school”. Additionally, Ms Leith stated that any smell of alcohol on 21 September 2017 could have been as a result of the alcohol based hand gel that was used at the College or from her use of mouth wash. [REDACTED]

In her subsequent closing argument to the panel, Ms Leith stated that she was “drinking in the evenings” between 2016 and 2018 and the “units would have been over what a female should have had” [REDACTED].

The panel considered a copy of an occupational health report dated 12 October 2017, in respect of a referral made by the College regarding the events of 21 September 2017. The panel noted that, during her assessment, Ms Leith stated that she “behaved erratically at school” [REDACTED]. Additionally, it was noted that a discussion took place regarding Ms Leith’s alcohol intake, to which Ms Leith confirmed “she did drink alcohol

previously, but she had not touched any since the incident at work” and that she accepted she “took a little gin and tonic prior to getting into the parent’s evening” but she “regrets doing this as she feels it is not her nature”. The panel further noted that the doctor recorded in the report that “it is possible that the alcohol [REDACTED] combination may have affected her behaviour at work”.

The panel determined, on the balance of probabilities, that Ms Leith had consumed alcohol when she returned home on 21 September 2017, prior to attending the College's open evening. The panel placed no weight on Ms Leith's oral evidence denying alcohol consumption during, as this was inconsistent with her prior written statements (dated 16 July 2018 and 29 July 2024), the occupational health report which confirmed she had drunk a gin and tonic prior to attending the open evening and Witness A's evidence that Ms Leith confirmed she had consumed alcohol after school.

The panel acknowledged the absence of forensic evidence, such as breath test results, and noted that no alcohol was found in Ms Leith's possession on the College's premises. However, the totality of the evidence satisfied the panel on the balance of probabilities that consumption of alcohol had occurred.

The panel did not place weight on Ms Leith's explanation that any alcohol smell could have been from hand gel or mouthwash, finding this neither reasonable nor plausible, because staff would have recognised the smell of the College's hand gel, particularly when hand gel was routinely present at the College, according to Ms Leith's own evidence. Witness A also confirmed in oral evidence that he was familiar with the smell of alcohol. Combined with the finding that Ms Leith had consumed alcohol prior to attending the College, the panel was satisfied that Ms Leith also smelt of alcohol when present at the College on 21 September 2017.

The panel was further satisfied that Ms Leith's consumption of alcohol affected her behaviour and ability to undertake her duties to the College. The evidence from Witness A and the three hearsay statements from staff were all consistent in describing Ms Leith's behaviour as unusual and noting that the College was required to send Ms Leith home from the open evening as a result.

Whilst the panel accepted that Ms Leith had [REDACTED], and that this may have contributed to her presentation, this did not provide a complete explanation for the totality of the observed behaviour, particularly given Ms Leith's alcohol consumption and the smell of alcohol reported. As such, the panel was not satisfied that this [REDACTED] was the sole reason for her behaviour on 21 September 2017. The panel concluded that alcohol consumption was a contributing factor to Ms Leith's adverse behaviour and inability to undertake her teaching duties. This was supported by the occupational health report that recorded that it was "possible that the alcohol [REDACTED] combination may have affected her behaviour at work".

The panel also placed no weight on Ms Leith's explanation that her inability to walk steadily or appearing wobbly was solely due to [REDACTED], noting that Witness A could not remember Ms Leith [REDACTED] and this was not referenced in any of the hearsay statements. Even if Ms Leith had been [REDACTED] the panel considered that this would not explain the slurred speech, smell of alcohol, disorientation, emotional volatility, or the perception that she was under the influence of alcohol.

The panel determined that Ms Leith's conduct was inappropriate and unprofessional, as she was present on the College premises having consumed alcohol. The professional judgement of Ms Leith's colleagues present at the time concluded that she should not be present at the College and needed to be kept away from pupils and parents, necessitating her removal from the premises. As such, Ms Leith was unable to fulfil her teaching responsibilities at the College during an open evening.

The panel therefore found allegations 1(a)(i) and 1(a)(ii) proven.

b) Whilst working at the Robert Smyth Academy between August and December 2018, on or around 7th December 2018, you;

- i) were present at the School after consuming alcohol and/or smelling of alcohol;**
- ii) your conduct at allegation 1(b)(i) above affected your behaviour and/or ability to undertake your duties to the School**

Ms Leith denied allegations 1(b)(i) and 1(b)(ii).

Witness B stated in his written statement that, during a conversation with Person D and Person E after the school day on 7 December 2018, he became aware of concerns regarding Ms Leith being "under the influence of alcohol" that day and she was "vulnerable to injury due to her state of inebriation".

In oral evidence, Witness B confirmed he could not remember Ms Leith [REDACTED].

Following a preliminary application by the presenting officer, the panel decided to admit the hearsay evidence from seven staff members who were present at the School on 7 December 2019, each having provided written statements to the School which were exhibited to Witness B's statement.

Person D stated in her written statement that:

- Person F came to her office on 7 December 2018 at approximately 1:30pm and informed her that he suspected Ms Leith to be under the influence and that they need to get her off the premises as soon as possible.

- Person F and Person D found Person E and went to locate Ms Leith. As they approached the corridor, Ms Leith was swaying from side to side as she was walking.
- Person D escorted Ms Leith away from students and Ms Leith was asked to phone her partner to collect her, but she was “struggling” to do this, so Person D phoned her partner instead.
- Ms Leith was very “up and down”, “emotional”, “slurring”, was unaware what was happening and had a distinct smell about her, which Person D “suspected” was alcohol.
- Ms Leith [REDACTED] arrived to take her from the school premises. On the way out, Ms Leith opened an office door, saw Person J and started to hug her.

Person E stated in her written statement that:

- Person D and Person F came to ask for her help to escort someone from the premises. Person E then witnessed Ms Leith “unstable on her feet” and she was “staggering”. Ms Leith seemed “unaware of actions and confused”.
- Person E, Person D and Person F were in a room with Ms Leith and she was emotional and her mood changed rapidly, becoming very “verbally aggressive”.
- [REDACTED]
- Person E stated, “there was a distinct smell about her”.
- When Person E mentioned being unstable on her feet, Ms Leith stated it was due to her wearing heels but Person E reminded her that she was wearing flat shoes.
- Ms Leith [REDACTED] came to collect her and on the way out she saw Person J who was on the phone.

Person F stated in his written statement that:

- At approximately 1:30pm, Ms Leith came to his office appearing “unsteady” saying that none of her students had turned up for class. However, she was not teaching until 2:15pm.
- Person F could smell what “appeared to be alcohol on her”.
- Person F escorted Ms Leith away from his office, and Person E explained that Ms Leith needed to be taken safely off site as she appeared to be “under the influence of alcohol”.

Person G stated in her written statement that:

- She was teaching at approximately 1:20pm, and went into the corridor due to pupils being present. Person G noticed Ms Leith “unsteady on her feet”, swaying to the point where she had to “lean up against the wall”.
- Ms Leith spoke to Person G in a slurred and “almost incoherent voice”.

Person H stated in her written statement that:

- At approximately 1:35pm, she was in the corridor speaking to a pupil. Ms Leith came out of her classroom and was “swaying”. Ms Leith was “stumbling and slurring her words” and looked like she “could not keep her eyes fully open”.

Person I stated in her written statement that:

- Ms Leith seemed very “disoriented and quite agitated”.
- During lesson five, she could hear Ms Leith go into the SEN office and spoke “loudly about why she was being sent home”.

Person J stated in her written statement that:

- She was taking a phone call in the SEN office at 2:30pm when Ms Leith came in and tried to hug her, with a “strong smell of alcohol” saying that she was being escorted from the premises.

The panel placed weight on the hearsay evidence, as each of the statements were consistent with each other and with Witness A’s evidence of the matters reported to him. The panel noted that each member of staff gave their statements independently, yet their descriptions of Ms Leith’s behaviour on 7 December 2018 were very consistent. The panel considered there was no reason for the staff to fabricate their evidence.

Person K stated in his written statement dated 29 July 2024 that he picked Ms Leith up from the School in December 2018 and that [REDACTED].

Ms Leith stated in her witness statement dated 29 July 2024 that:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- She felt “dizzy, sluggish and light-headed [REDACTED]” and it went “downhill” from there.
- [REDACTED]
- At the time she kept mouthwash at work and used it regularly to avoid “coffee breath”.

- Between 2015 and 2019, she was suffering from [REDACTED] She was drinking wine in the evening and it went from a glass or two to drinking probably double that.
- [REDACTED], Ms Leith stated that “perhaps there might have been a knock-on effect” if she had drunk wine the night before. However, at no time did she ever drink in the mornings before school, or at school.
- Ms Leith stated that [REDACTED] may have made her less stable.

The panel considered the events at the School on 7 December 2018 to be very similar in nature to those at the College on 21 September 2017, as found proven at allegation 1(a). The panel took into account:

- Ms Leith's admission of long-term difficulties with alcohol consumption;
- Her acknowledgement that between 2015 and 2019 her drinking had increased to problematic levels;
- Her acknowledgement in written statements that the combination of alcohol consumed the previous evening [REDACTED] might have had a "knock-on effect"; and
- The very similar nature of the allegations from that found proven at allegation 1(a) and the consistent witness evidence describing behaviour consistent with alcohol consumption.

The panel also found Ms Leith’s explanation regarding her [REDACTED] implausible given that no witnesses mentioned Ms Leith [REDACTED] on this occasion. In particular, Person E’s statement made specific reference to Ms Leith claiming instability was due to wearing heels, when Ms Leith was reminded that she was actually wearing flat shoes. Witness B confirmed in oral evidence that he did not remember Ms Leith [REDACTED]. Even if Ms Leith had been [REDACTED], the panel considered that this would not explain the slurred speech, smell of alcohol, confusion, disorientation, emotional volatility, or the perception that she was under the influence.

On the balance of probabilities, taking into account the above, the panel found it more likely than not that Ms Leith had consumed alcohol prior to attending the School on 7 December 2018.

The panel noted that multiple witnesses independently reported smelling alcohol on Ms Leith, including Person D, Person F and Person J. As with allegation 1(a), the panel placed no weight on Ms Leith's explanation that the smell could be attributed to mouthwash, finding this neither reasonable nor plausible given the consistency of witness evidence and the fact that none of her colleagues had referred to the possibility of the

smell being mouthwash. The panel was therefore satisfied that Ms Leith smelt of alcohol when present at the School on 7 December 2018.

The panel was also satisfied that Ms Leith's conduct affected her behaviour and ability to undertake her duties to the School. Multiple members of staff at the School described Ms Leith as swaying or unsteady on her feet, having slurred speech, being unaware of her actions and emotional with rapid mood changes. Person D, Person E and Person F made the professional judgement that Ms Leith should not be present at the School and needed to be kept away from pupils, meaning that Ms Leith was sent home. The panel considered that their response demonstrated the seriousness of the concerns and the clear inability of Ms Leith to fulfil her duties.

Whilst the panel accepted that Ms Leith had [REDACTED], and that this may have contributed to her presentation, this did not provide a complete explanation for the totality of the observed behaviour, particularly given the smell of alcohol reported, Ms Leith's own admission of problematic alcohol consumption during this period and the similarity to the previous incident at the College, found proven at allegation 1(a) where alcohol was found to be consumed.

The panel noted the similarity between allegations 1(a) and 1(b), as both incidents involved Ms Leith presenting as unsteady, swaying, with slurred speech, both involved a smell of alcohol and both involved Ms Leith offering similar explanations regarding [REDACTED] and mouthwash. This pattern strengthened the panel's conclusion that, on the balance of probabilities, alcohol consumption was a contributing factor to Ms Leith's behaviour on 7 December 2018.

The panel determined that Ms Leith's conduct was inappropriate and unprofessional. It was clear that she was not able to fulfil her duties to the School on 7 December 2018. The professional judgement of multiple colleagues present at the time concluded that she should not be present at the School and needed to be kept away from pupils and parents, necessitating her removal from the premises.

The panel therefore found allegations 1(b)(i) and 1(b)(ii) proven.

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

Having found all 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".

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Leith 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 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 not satisfied that the conduct of Ms Leith, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education ("KCSIE"). Ms Leith only came into contact with pupils briefly at the time of the incidents and was in the presence of other staff who were dealing with her behaviour. The panel considered the risk of harm to pupils to be very low in the circumstances.

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Ms Leith, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel also considered whether Ms Leith's 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. The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be "unacceptable professional conduct".

The panel considered that Ms Leith was expected to fulfil her teaching responsibilities whilst at the School and the College, which included teaching a lesson to pupils and contributing to an open evening. However, Ms Leith attended the School and the College after consuming alcohol which contributed to a number of concerning behaviours including being unsteady on her feet, being unaware of her surroundings and consistently changing her mood. As a result, Ms Leith was required to leave the premises and could no longer fulfil her teaching responsibilities, which also required her colleagues to divert their attention away from their teaching responsibilities. The panel considered that Ms Leith's conduct raised concerns regarding her own welfare as well as the welfare of other staff and pupils at the School and the College.

The panel took into account the legal advice it received in respect of the case of *Bar Standards Board v Howd* [2017]. In the circumstances of that case, the court stated that an individual's behaviour was not reprehensible, morally culpable or disgraceful where it was caused by factors beyond the individual's control and therefore did not reach the threshold for serious professional misconduct. The panel did not consider that, in the circumstances of Ms Leith's case, her decision to consume alcohol and attend the School and College was caused by factors beyond her control. The panel considered that Ms Leith could have decided not to attend the School or the College in circumstances where alcohol was a contributing factor to her behaviour changing, but she did not do so. This was particularly the case where Ms Leith's behaviour as found proven on 21 September 2017 was repeated in very similar circumstances on 7 December 2018. Ms Leith stated in her oral evidence that she should have taken the day off.

As such, the panel was satisfied that Ms Leith's conduct at allegations 1(a) and 1(b) amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Ms Leith was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Ms Leith'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.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Ms Leith's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Ms Leith was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant. The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute".

The panel considered that the findings of misconduct were serious, and the conduct found proven would likely have a negative impact on Ms Leith's status as a teacher. The panel considered that the public would view a teacher attending a school after consuming alcohol to be extremely concerning, especially in circumstances where the teacher is expected to be responsible for the welfare of pupils in a class. As such, the panel found that Ms Leith's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found that Ms Leith's actions at allegation 1(a) and 1(b) 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 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 the light of the panel's findings against Ms Leith, which involved the consumption of alcohol prior to undertaking teaching responsibilities, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and the protection of other members of the public given the potential for harm to be caused.

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

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

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Ms Leith 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 previous abilities as an educator.

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 Ms Leith.

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 education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk; and
- a deep-seated attitude that leads to harmful behaviour.

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.

[REDACTED]

On the evidence available to the panel, the panel considered that Ms Leith's actions were deliberate and that she was not acting under extreme duress. The panel considered that Ms Leith chose to attend the School and the College following the consumption of alcohol.

The panel saw no evidence that showed Ms Leith was previously subject to professional disciplinary proceedings or warnings. [REDACTED]

Ms Leith stated in her written response that [REDACTED] and that this pre-dated the circumstances described by Ms Leith in relation to the period of 2016 to 2019.

The panel considered that Ms Leith was previously a good teacher. The panel relied on the following evidence in that regard:

- On 31 August 2018, Witness A provided feedback to Ms Leith via email and stated the following:

"I just wanted to email to let you know that when I asked students at lunchtime about their best lessons this week lots of students said they were loving your lessons. The overwhelming positive was that "she really makes its interesting and we love the enthusiasm"

- On 5 December 2017, Person L [REDACTED] Ms Leith, provided a reference for Ms Leith stating that she was “very polite, engaged and thoroughly professional” and that she was a “valued member” of his team.
- On 19 December 2011, Person M [REDACTED] Ms Leith, stated in a reference that he was impressed by Ms Leith’s “enthusiasm” and “commitment”.
- Ms Leith provided evidence of multiple qualifications that she had obtained as part of her professional development.

Notwithstanding the above, the panel did not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Ms Leith showed exceptionally high standards in both her personal and professional conduct, or having contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel considered that Ms Leith had experienced a number of difficult circumstances between 2016 and 2019. In particular:

[REDACTED]

The panel noted that, in her oral and written evidence, Ms Leith referred to the above personal circumstances when explaining her problematic alcohol consumption during the evenings between 2016 and 2019. Whilst the panel were sympathetic to the difficulties Ms Leith experienced during this time, the panel considered that there was evidence, [REDACTED] which demonstrated that Ms Leith’s behaviour in relation to alcohol consumption was not unique to this period. As such, the panel did not consider that Ms Leith’s personal circumstances between 2016 and 2019 had sufficiently mitigated her behaviour in relation to alcohol consumption.

The panel acknowledged that Ms Leith had shown some remorse and was apologetic, as she stated she was “sorry” and that she was “wrong” in oral evidence. However, the panel noted that her remorse and apology was in respect of her position that [REDACTED], rather than in respect of her having consumed alcohol prior to attending the School and the College. As such, the panel considered that Ms Leith’s apology did not extend to her conduct relating to the consumption of alcohol, as found proven.

The panel considered that Ms Leith did not demonstrate insight into her conduct, and relied on the following factors in this regard:

- The panel considered that Ms Leith did not appreciate the impact of her conduct on others, including her colleagues and the reputation of the School and the College.
- Ms Leith accepted in oral evidence that consuming alcohol as a teacher on school premises was a safeguarding risk. However, Ms Leith did not accept that this safeguarding risk was relevant to her own conduct.

- The panel considered that Ms Leith's oral evidence was erratic and inconsistent, as she stated in her oral evidence that she did not drink any alcohol on 21 September 2017, which was contradicted by her earlier written statements, an occupational health report, and Ms Leith's subsequent closing submissions.
- Ms Leith displayed a complete disregard for the disciplinary procedure, by consistently interrupting the panellists and the presenting officer throughout the hearing, despite being asked to wait for her opportunity to speak on numerous occasions. The panel considered that Ms Leith did not fully appreciate the seriousness of the proceedings.
- Ms Leith's conduct was not a single isolated incident. Ms Leith's conduct at the College on 21 September 2017 was repeated in very similar circumstances at the School on 7 December 2018 and she did not learn from her earlier mistakes.

The panel considered that there was an extremely high risk of Ms Leith repeating her behaviour, as she did not display any insight into her conduct and there was evidence, [REDACTED], which demonstrated her problematic behaviour relating to alcohol consumption was a long standing issue. The panel noted that Ms Leith attended a detox in relation to alcohol consumption in 2019, but the panel were not provided with sufficient evidence to confirm the impact that this had on Ms Leith.

Whilst there was no evidence that Ms Leith's conduct caused harm to pupils, the panel was mindful of the potential harm that could have been caused, had Ms Leith's colleagues not intervened and sent her home. The panel considered that a teacher under the influence of alcohol whilst on school property was a significant safeguarding concern. As such, the panel found the high risk of repetition paired with the potential risk of harm, to be aggravating factors in Ms Leith's case.

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

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, it would not be a proportionate and appropriate response to recommend no prohibition order. Recommending that the publication of adverse findings would be sufficient would unacceptably compromise the public interest considerations present in this case, despite the severity of the consequences for Ms Leith of prohibition.

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Ms Leith. The high risk of Ms Leith repeating her conduct, and the potential harm that could be caused as a result, 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. None of the listed characteristics were engaged by the panel's findings.

The panel noted there was evidence to support that Ms Leith was a good teacher. Whilst the panel considered that Ms Leith had not shown insight into her conduct at this time and there was a high risk of repetition, the panel was mindful that Ms Leith had the potential to learn from her conduct in the future and to take steps to address her previous alcohol consumption issues.

As Ms Leith's proven conduct was at the less serious end of the spectrum of misconduct, and she had the potential to make a positive contribution to the teaching profession (after taking appropriate steps to learn from her mistakes), the panel considered that these factors weighed in favour of a shorter period before a review is considered appropriate.

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 2 year review period.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations 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 Ms Julia Leith should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of 2 years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Leith 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 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 finds that the conduct of Ms Leith fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of attending school after consuming alcohol.

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 Ms Leith, 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:

“In the light of the panel’s findings against Ms Leith, which involved the consumption of alcohol prior to undertaking teaching responsibilities, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils

and the protection of other members of the public given the potential for harm to be caused.”

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 acknowledged that Ms Leith had shown some remorse and was apologetic, as she stated she was “sorry” and that she was “wrong” in oral evidence. However, the panel noted that her remorse and apology was in respect of her position that [REDACTED], rather than in respect of her having consumed alcohol prior to attending the School and the College. As such, the panel considered that Ms Leith’s apology did not extend to her conduct relating to the consumption of alcohol, as found proven.”

“The panel considered that there was an extremely high risk of Ms Leith repeating her behaviour, as she did not display any insight into her conduct and there was evidence, [REDACTED], which demonstrated her problematic behaviour relating to alcohol consumption was a long standing issue. The panel noted that Ms Leith attended a detox in relation to alcohol consumption in 2019, but the panel were not provided with sufficient evidence to confirm the impact that this had on Ms Leith.”

In my judgement, the lack of insight and the limited remorse shown by Ms Leith 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:

“The panel considered that the findings of misconduct were serious, and the conduct found proven would likely have a negative impact on Ms Leith’s status as a teacher. The panel considered that the public would view a teacher attending a school after consuming alcohol to be extremely concerning, especially in circumstances where the teacher is expected to be responsible for the welfare of pupils in a class. As such, the panel found that Ms Leith’s conduct could potentially damage the public’s perception of a teacher.”

I am particularly mindful of the finding of a teacher attending school after consuming alcohol 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 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 considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Leith herself. The panel has commented that “Ms Leith was previously a good teacher” and has cited written evidence from former colleagues that attested positively to her behaviour as a teacher. However, the panel found that it “did not have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Ms Leith showed exceptionally high standards in both her personal and professional conduct, or having contributed significantly to the education sector.”

I have also noted the panel’s comments that “Ms Leith had experienced a number of difficult circumstances between 2016 and 2019” but that, while sympathetic to these, the panel did not consider that they “had sufficiently mitigated her behaviour in relation to alcohol consumption.”

A prohibition order would prevent Ms Leith from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of her contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the potential harm that could have been caused by Ms Leith’s behaviour and the high risk of repetition. The panel has said:

“Whilst there was no evidence that Ms Leith’s conduct caused harm to pupils, the panel was mindful of the potential harm that could have been caused, had Ms Leith’s colleagues not intervened and sent her home. The panel considered that a teacher under the influence of alcohol whilst on school property was a significant safeguarding concern. As such, the panel found the high risk of repetition paired with the potential risk of harm, to be aggravating factors in Ms Leith’s case.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that there was a lack of insight on the part of Ms Leith. The panel has noted:

“Ms Leith’s conduct was not a single isolated incident. Ms Leith’s conduct at the College on 21 September 2017 was repeated in very similar circumstances at the School on 7 December 2018 and she did not learn from her earlier mistakes.”

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Ms Leith 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, which is not backed up by insight, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

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

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a 2-year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments:

“The panel noted there was evidence to support that Ms Leith was a good teacher. Whilst the panel considered that Ms Leith had not shown insight into her conduct at this time and there was a high risk of repetition, the panel was mindful that Ms Leith had the potential to learn from her conduct in the future and to take steps to address her previous alcohol consumption issues.

As Ms Leith's proven conduct was at the less serious end of the spectrum of misconduct, and she had the potential to make a positive contribution to the teaching profession (after taking appropriate steps to learn from her mistakes), the panel considered that these factors weighed in favour of a shorter period before a review is considered appropriate.”

I have considered whether a 2-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 I agree with the panel that allowing a 2-year review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are serious nature of the misconduct found as well as the lack of insight and the risk this creates of repetition.

I consider therefore that a 2-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Ms Julia Leith is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 2028, 2 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Ms Leith remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Oatley', written in a cursive style.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 26 January 2026

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