



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mrs Karen Horler: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**March 2026**

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

**Teacher:** Mrs Karen Horler  
**Teacher ref number:** 3339581  
**Teacher date of birth:** 11 September 1968  
**TRA reference:** 23686  
**Date of determination:** 6 March 2026  
**Former employer:** The Co-Operative Academy, Leeds

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 2 to 6 March 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mrs Horler.

The panel members were Mrs Beverley Montgomery (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Gamel Byles (teacher panellist) and Mrs Diane Underwood (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Samantha Cass of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Mark Millin of Kingsley Napley LLP solicitors.

Mrs Horler was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 9 December 2025, as amended by the panel during the hearing.

It was alleged that Mrs Horler was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as the Director of Personalised Provision and Sendco at the Co-Op Academy (the “Academy”):

1. On or around 8 September 2023, she:
  - a. did not observe a Special Educational Needs (‘SEN’) teaching assistant candidate’s lesson;
  - b. provided a false verbal account of a lesson observation to other members of the panel in relation to a SEN teaching assistant candidate, in that she was not present.
2. On or around 14 September 2023, she:
  - a. provided a false written account via email of a lesson observation to other members of the panel in relation to a SEN teaching assistant candidate, in that she was not present.
3. Between around January 2023 to September 2023, she
  - a. did not conduct regular visits to Pupil A’s home during her extended period of absence from the Academy.
4. Between around January 2023 to July 2023, she:
  - a. did not keep up to date records on the Academy’s safeguarding system regarding the home visits to Pupil A.
5. On or around 22 May 2023 and/or 3 July 2023, she:
  - a. completed Colleague A’s formal induction review forms for him by writing comments on his behalf and/or electronically signing his name, without his knowledge or consent.
6. Her conduct at 1 (b), 2 (a) and/or 5 (a) was:
  - a. Misleading; and/or
  - b. Dishonest.

Mrs Horler made no admissions in relation to allegation 4(a) and denied allegations 1(a), 1(b), 2, 3, 5(a), 6(a) and 6(b).

## 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 5 to 7

Section 2: Notice of hearing and response – pages 8 to 13

Section 3: TRA witness statements – pages 14 to 38

Section 4: TRA exhibits – pages 39 to 611

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 612 to 671

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- 34-page service bundle – 672 to 706

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the 2020 Procedures.

### Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B - [REDACTED]

Witness C - [REDACTED]

Witness D - [REDACTED]

Witness E - [REDACTED]

## Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In September 2014, Mrs Horler commenced employment at the Academy as the Director of Personalised Provision and Senco.

On 15 March 2023, Mrs Horler, had a meeting with Pupil A's mother, Witness D and the Deputy Headteacher where it was allegedly agreed that Mrs Horler would take on sole responsibility of conducting weekly home visits to Pupil A.

On 8 September 2023, the Academy held interviews for the position of a SEN teaching assistant ("TA") role. This process included an in-class observation. Following a complaint from one of the candidates to the Academy, it subsequently came to light that Mrs Horler allegedly did not observe the in-class recruitment exercise for one of the candidates.

Between 8 and 11 September 2023, concerns about Mrs Horler's conduct were brought to the attention of Witness C by the stepfather of Pupil A. It came to light that Mrs Horler had allegedly failed to adequately safeguard Pupil A in that she had not conducted regular home visits. It subsequently came to light that Mrs Horler failed to conduct the weekly home visits for Pupil A during an extended period of absence between January 2023 and September 2023, and that Mrs Horler allegedly failed to keep updated records on the Academy's safeguarding system regarding the home visits to Pupil A.

On 14 September 2023, Mrs Horler allegedly provided a false verbal account of a lesson observation to other members of the interview panel for a SEN TA candidate on 8 September 2023 and a false written account of the same observation by email for safer recruitment records.

On 25 September 2023, the Academy conducted an internal investigation into the allegations concerning Mrs Horler. It subsequently came to light that when Witness A was successfully appointed as a High-Level Teaching Assistant ("HLTA") at the Academy, Mrs Horler had allegedly completed and signed induction documents which recorded the induction tasks that Mrs Horler had completed with him on behalf of Witness A without his knowledge or consent.

On 31 December 2023, Mrs Horler left employment at the Academy.

On 8 May 2024, the matter was referred to the TRA.

## Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows.

The panel considered that there was evidence in the bundle which was hearsay evidence and therefore considered the appropriate amount of weight to attach to such evidence, in each case, during the professional conduct panel meeting.

**You are guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as the Director of Personalised Provision and Senco at the Co-Op Academy ('the Academy'):**

1. **On or around 8 September 2023, you:**
  - a. **did not observe a Special Educational Needs ('SEN') teaching assistant candidate's lesson;**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 1(a).

The panel considered the written and oral evidence of Witness C who explained that on 8 September 2023, the Academy had undertaken a recruitment process for a TA position.

The panel then considered the written and oral evidence of Witness E who stated that Mrs Horler was responsible for carrying out the observations of the in-class tasks for both candidates for the TA position.

The panel went on to consider the written and oral evidence of Witness B who explained that he was the teacher of the lesson that the candidates undertook their in-class exercise for the TA role. Witness B further stated that Mrs Horler did not explicitly tell him that he was responsible for the observations. Witness B also submitted that his role was to teach the maths lesson to the pupils and not to observe.

In his evidence, Witness B stated that Mrs Horler had the observation papers with her on the day of the recruitment process and explained that the papers were used for jotting down notes for the candidates. Witness B said in his evidence that Mrs Horler had told him that the first candidate had arrived 20 to 30 minutes late, was "*dressed inappropriately*"; and that Mrs Horler was unhappy about this. Witness B then stated that Mrs Horler left the room after five minutes of observing the first candidate and did not return.

Witness B stated, in his evidence, that Mrs Horler did not observe the in-class task for the second candidate. Witness B stated that Mrs Horler "*dropped [the second candidate] off*" in his classroom and then left. Witness B stated that after the in-class task, Mrs Horler verbally asked him how the in-class task for the second candidate went and he responded that the second candidate was "*really good*".

The panel considered the email chain between Witness B, Mrs Horler and Witness E. In the email chain recorded on 13 September 2023, Witness E had asked Mrs Horler and Witness B to send the observation notes on the in-class task of the second candidate. The panel then considered the email dated 13 September 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler asking Witness B to provide her with the feedback for the candidate in Witness B's lesson and that she would then forward to Witness E. The panel also had sight of a text message dated 14 September 2023 at 06:40 from Mrs Horler asking Witness B for the feedback.

The email chain recorded Witness B sending an email to Mrs Horler and Witness E on 14 September 2023 at 08:28 which recorded Witness B stating that he was teaching at the time and was unable to observe the candidate. In his email, Witness B had stated that the candidate *"worked well with Quedos with a mini whiteboard"*; that she *"helped explain some questions to Pupil B"* and that she *"worked on the [pupils] level and moved around the room well between both [pupils]"*.

The panel then considered the subsequent email sent by Mrs Horler dated 14 September 2023 at 08:36 which recorded her stating that the candidate *"introduced herself to [Mrs Horler and Witness B]"*, that she *"moved around to support where it was needed"*; that *"she had a whiteboard and pen already and she was clear and concise to staff and [pupils]"*; and that *"she had a happy disposition and [the] feedback from the pupils was positive."* The panel noted the similarities and differences between the feedback provided by Mrs Horler and Witness B.

The panel then considered the text message from Mrs Horler to Witness B dated 14 September 2023 at 07:59 which recorded Mrs Horler saying *"[REDACTED]- I asked you to send to me so I could add my bits but you've sent it directly to [REDACTED]?"*. The texts recorded Witness B saying that he replied to the email Mrs Horler sent and she had responded *"In the email I asked you to return it to me lol, it's fine I've just added my bit"*. Witness B then responded, *"I must of replied all, sorry really busy today"*.

The panel considered Witness C's evidence which stated that Mrs Horler had signed a document declaring that she had observed the candidate during the lesson. Witness C stated that Mrs Horler had told her and the Deputy Headteacher that the candidate was *"really good"* and was liked by the children.

The panel considered the written and oral evidence of Witness C who stated that she viewed CCTV footage of the class observation. Witness C stated that the CCTV footage recorded Mrs Horler walking the second candidate down to the corridor and the candidate walks into the room whilst Mrs Horler is in the corridor. Witness C, in her evidence, explained that the room was where the lesson observation was due to take place. Witness C stated that the CCTV footage showed Mrs Horler then walking the other candidate off the corridor and down to the main reception where the candidate leaves the Academy's site and Mrs Horler exits the view of the footage. Witness C stated that the

footage showed approximately 25 minutes later, Mrs Horler appeared in the corridor and went into her office. Witness C stated that Mrs Horler then collected the candidate from the classroom, who came out of the classroom. Witness C stated that Mrs Horler then walked the candidate to her formal interview. Witness C stated that the CCTV footage showed that Mrs Horler did not enter the classroom whilst the second candidate is undertaking the in-class task. The panel noted that Witness C could not produce a copy of the footage.

The panel also considered the notes taken of the Academy's investigation interview with Witness C dated 11 October 2023, which recorded Witness C stating that the unsuccessful candidate sent an email to Witness C. Witness C had stated that the unsuccessful candidate had said that she was unhappy that she was sent home and that the feedback had been shared with another member of staff. Witness C had stated that the only two members of staff who knew that the candidate was unsuccessful were Mrs Horler and Witness B. Witness C had stated that in a fact-finding interview, Witness B had told her that Mrs Horler did not observe the unsuccessful candidate. The panel noted that Witness C's evidence appeared consistent with the statement she made in her interview on 11 October 2023.

Witness C had also stated in her evidence that Mrs Horler had told her she had observed both candidates.

The panel went on to consider the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that she had asked Witness B to conduct the observations and that Witness B accepted to do so. Mrs Horler stated that this was something that he was requested to undertake on several occasions and that the Senior Leadership Team ("SLT") and the Headteacher were aware of this. Mrs Horler explained that this was because Witness B was very experienced with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ("SEND"). Mrs Horler stated that she was unable to carry out the observations due to other demands.

The panel considered that there was consistent and credible evidence to show that Mrs Horler did not observe the SEN TA candidate's lesson on or around 8 September 2023. Witness B had given clear evidence that Mrs Horler had left the classroom shortly after the start of the observation and did not return for the entirety of the observation period. Witness B's evidence did not waiver under questioning and was supported by contemporaneous statements made during the Academy's investigation. The panel also noted that Mrs Horler's own written representations indirectly acknowledged her absence during the observation. Mrs Horler stated that she relied upon the class teacher for feedback and had effectively delegated this responsibility. The panel considered that this implicitly conceded that Mrs Horler had not been present to observe the candidate.

The panel considered that it was clear to Mrs Horler that it was her responsibility to observe this candidate and that she had not fulfilled this responsibility.

In addition to the above, the panel also considered that Witness C and [REDACTED] corroborated the evidence of Witness B which was that Mrs Horler was not in the classroom for the candidate's observation. Witness C had reviewed the CCTV footage and [REDACTED] had stated that she encountered the candidate alone in the classroom and subsequently escorted her away, albeit that [REDACTED] evidence was hearsay evidence and was therefore given appropriate weight.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 1(a) proven on the balance of probabilities.

**b. provided a false verbal account of a lesson observation to other members of the panel in relation to a SEN teaching assistant candidate, in that you were not present.**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 1(b).

The panel reminded itself of the facts it found proven at allegation 1(a) in that Mrs Horler had not observed the in-class lesson of a SEN TA candidate.

The panel again considered the written and oral evidence of Witness C who stated that Mrs Horler had told her she had observed both candidates.

The panel again considered the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that she had asked Witness B to conduct the observations and that Witness B accepted to do so. In her evidence, Mrs Horler also stated that she was unable to carry out the observations due to other demands and that she gave an account of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate that was given to her by Witness B. Mrs Horler further submitted that she did not pretend that she had observed the candidates.

The panel considered the clear and consistent evidence from Witness B who stated that Mrs Horler had not returned for the entirety of the observation session. Witness B had stated that he was left alone with the candidate and was unable to observe properly as he was teaching a class of six to eight SEN pupils at the time. The panel noted that Witness C corroborated this evidence and confirmed that she had reviewed CCTV footage along with [REDACTED] evidence that the candidate was alone before [REDACTED] escorted her from the classroom. The panel noted that, following this, Mrs Horler had given a verbal account to Witness C implying that she had observed the candidate herself. The panel noted that Witness C stated that Mrs Horler had told her that she had observed both candidates and provided positive verbal feedback on the successful candidate's performance. The panel noted that Witness C was clear that Mrs Horler had conveyed this as her own observation which turned out not to be true. The panel considered Witness C's version of events which was that Mrs Horler had not, at any time, presented this as feedback attributable to the class teacher, Witness B, or to

any other source and that she had instead presented an account which implied that she had personally observed the candidate.

Further, the panel considered that Mrs Horler had stated in her own account that she relied on the feedback from others and that she had not made it clear that the account was second-hand. The panel considered that the account Mrs Horler gave had contained details which Witness B had not provided and could not have been established by Mrs Horler from the limited interaction which she had with the candidate.

The panel considered that Mrs Horler had provided a false verbal account of a lesson observation to other members of the interview panel in relation to a SEN TA candidate and that she was not present for such observation.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 1(b) proven on the balance of probabilities.

**2. On or around 14 September 2023, you:**

- a. provided a false written account via email of a lesson observation to other members of the panel in relation to a SEN teaching assistant candidate, in that you were not present.**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 2.

The panel reminded itself of the facts it found proven at allegation 1(a) in that Mrs Horler had not observed the in-class exercise of a SEN TA candidate on 8 September 2023.

The panel again considered the email chain between Witness B, Mrs Horler and Witness E. The email chain recorded Witness B sending an email to Mrs Horler and Witness E on 14 September 2023 at 08:28 which recorded Witness B stating that he was teaching at the time and was unable to observe the candidate. In his email, Witness B had stated that the candidate *“worked well with Quedos with a mini whiteboard”*; that she *“helped explain some questions to Pupil B”* and that she *“worked on the [pupils] level and moved around the room well between both [pupils]”*.

The panel again considered the email sent by Mrs Horler dated 14 September 2023 at 08:36 to Witness B and Witness E which recorded her stating that the candidate *“introduced herself to [Mrs Horler and Witness B]”*, that she *“moved around to support where it was needed”*; that *“she had a whiteboard and pen already and she was clear and concise to staff and students”*; and that *“she had a happy disposition and [the] feedback from the students was positive.”*

The panel again considered the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that she gave an account of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate that was given to her by

Witness B. Mrs Horler also submitted that she did not pretend that she had observed the candidates in her email dated 14 September 2023.

The panel found that Mrs Horler had failed to observe the candidate's lesson at any point on 8 September 2023. The panel considered that Witness B had stated that Mrs Horler was absent for the entire observation period and that Witness C had viewed CCTV showing that Mrs Horler had not been present at this time. The panel then considered that, despite Mrs Horler having been found as not present for this observation, she had submitted a detailed written observation. This included descriptive statements about the feedback from students, the fact that the candidate had a whiteboard and pen ready and asked where to place herself and then moved around the room between students. The panel noted that Witness B was clear and consistent in stating that he had not provided this level of detail and that he was unable to fully observe the candidate because he was occupied teaching a small SEN class. The panel considered that, on the balance of probabilities, Mrs Horler had provided a false written account via email of a lesson observation to other members of the panel because she could not have provided such a detailed account from her limited interactions with the candidate.

The panel considered the fact that Mrs Horler had requested the comments from Witness B after Witness C had requested the observation record and that this strongly indicated that Mrs Horler was seeking information to complete a document that she was not in a position to complete herself. The panel was not provided with any evidence that Mrs Horler attributed the observation record comments to Witness B or indeed any other person. The panel considered therefore that it was more likely than not that Mrs Horler had provided a false written account via email of a lesson observation for which she had not been present.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 2 proven on the balance of probabilities.

**3. Between around January 2023 to September 2023, you**

- a. did not conduct regular visits to Pupil A's home during her extended period of absence from the Academy.**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 3.

The panel considered the notes of the Academy's investigation interview of Pupil A's mother held on 8 November 2023 which recorded Pupil A's mother stating that contact with Mrs Horler felt "*very one way*" and that she was "*chasing [Mrs Horler] all the time*". Pupil A's mother stated that Mrs Horler "*kept saying that she would come to visit [them] and she would never arrive*". Pupil A's mother had stated that Mrs Horler had attended twice, and on one of those occasions, Mrs Horler conducted a home visit unannounced.

The panel considered the Child Protection Online Monitoring Systems (“CPOMs”) log recorded by Mrs Horler dated 13 March 2023 which stated that Pupil A’s mother said that [REDACTED]. The log had also stated that Mrs Horler gave Pupil A “*ample work*”.

The panel considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 15 March 2023 which stated: “*Pupil A is to be visited once a week, Karen Horler to go next week*” and that Mrs Horler would organise a work folder for Pupil A.

The panel then considered the written and oral evidence of Witness D who explained that on 15 March 2023, she had a meeting with Mrs Horler, the Deputy Headteacher and Pupil A’s mother. Witness D stated that in this meeting, it was verbally agreed that Mrs Horler would carry out home visits to Pupil A’s house every week and that she would be solely responsible for Pupil A’s home visits.

The panel considered the handwritten notes of [REDACTED] dated 15 March 2023 in which he wrote “*discussed folder of work (KHO coordinate). Next week*” and “*discussed weekly home visits between SEND and Attendance. Starts with SEND next week*”.

The panel then considered the written and oral evidence of Witness D who explained in that following the meeting of the 15 March 2023, Mrs Horler was to ensure that the home visits were carried out by herself or by someone else.

Witness D further stated in her evidence that Mrs Horler often gave her verbal confirmation that she was going to visit Pupil A. Witness D stated that there were no records of Mrs Horler’s visits to Pupil A’s home following her verbal confirmation. Witness D stated that she asked Mrs Horler to carry out the home visits on numerous occasions and Mrs Horler would respond to Witness D “*I have seen your email - I am going to do that now on my way home from work*”.

The panel considered the notes of the Academy’s investigation interview of Pupil A’s mother which recorded Pupil A’s mother stating that during a meeting a week after 15 March 2023, it was agreed that Mrs Horler would conduct weekly home visits. Pupil A’s mother had also stated that “*it was a clear point at which [Mrs Horler] took over for SEN support, likely in February 2023*”. The panel noted that the interview notes then recorded that Mrs Horler then met with Pupil A’s mother in July 2023. The interview notes also recorded that Pupil A’s mother had said that Pupil A said that she was “*angry and felt let down by the Academy*” and “*the constant empty promises for months and months made her feel let down*”.

The panel then considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 24 March 2023 which stated that on 23 March 2023, Mrs Horler attempted to call Pupil A’s mother several times and that there was no answer, so she left a message. The log further recorded that Mrs Horler called on Pupil A’s mother on 24 March 2023 and that Pupil A’s mother had said that she had a “*bad day*” and did not want Mrs Horler to visit that day.

The log recorded that Mrs Horler had suggested Monday and that Pupil A's mother had tried to defer the visit. The log also recorded that Mrs Horler had reminded Pupil A's mother that Pupil A needed to be seen once a week and that the work folder was ready to be given. The log recorded that Witness D and Mrs Horler agreed to visit Pupil A unannounced on 27 March 2023.

The panel considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 30 March 2023 which stated, "*Karen Horler was not in work Monday 27th or Tuesday 28th so home visit could not be conducted*". The panel noted that the written and oral evidence of Witness D stated that the CPOMs log set out above was dated 15 March 2023. The CPOMs log dated 30 March 2023 further stated that Mrs Horler called Pupil A's mother 29 March 2023 and Pupil A's mother had said that she would not be home for the rest of the week and gave no further details.

The panel considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 27 April 2023 which stated that Witness D attempted a home visit and that it was unsuccessful. The panel considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 16 May 2023 which stated Witness D recorded a log which stated, "*Karen Horler to visit 17.05.2023*" and that a home visit was subsequently carried out by [REDACTED] on 17 May 2023, but the visit was unsuccessful. The panel then considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 5 June 2023 which stated that Pupil A's location was unknown and that it was unclear whether the Pupil A's family had moved.

In her evidence, Mrs Horler stated that on 23 March 2023, Mrs Horler had a meeting with [REDACTED] and Witness D where it was agreed that Mrs Horler would assemble work for Pupil A to do at home and that the attendance officers would take the work to the pupil.

The panel also considered the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that her role did not require her to conduct regular visits to a pupil's home and that this responsibility fell on the Attendance Officer. Mrs Horler further stated that she had not been asked to perform home visits for other pupils who were "*serial non-attenders*". Mrs Horler, in her evidence, also stated that there were weekly meetings between Mrs Horler, Witness D and [REDACTED] to discuss the pupils, including Pupil A. Mrs Horler stated that the attendance team rang Pupil A's mother daily. Mrs Horler stated that there was considerable evidence in CPOMs entries which demonstrated her attempts to support Pupil A.

The panel went on to consider the CPOMs log dated 3 and 5 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler ringing Pupil A's mother. The panel considered another CPOMs log dated 3 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler visiting Pupil A's home because Pupil A's home had been put on the market. The panel considered the CPOMs log dated 5 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler uploading photographs of Pupil A's house and stated that the house looked "*sparse and look[ed] nothing like [her] previous visit*". The panel considered the

CPOMs log dated 10 July 2023 which stated that Mrs Horler visited Pupil A's home and saw Pupil A's mother but did not see Pupil A.

The panel then considered the CPOMs log dated 16 July 2023 which recorded an entry logged by Mrs Horler containing an email she received on 14 July 2023 from Pupil A's mother which stated that Pupil A had been out of Academy since October 2022 and had not received any tuition since her absence. The email recorded Pupil A's mother stating that she recalled a meeting where it was suggested that Pupil A had one-to-one tuition and phone calls and further stated that this did not occur. Pupil A's mother had further stated: *"I appreciated [Mrs Horler's] visit on Monday but it would have been good if we had arranged it so I knew you were coming and you had been able to see Pupil A."* Pupil A's mother had further stated that she had visited the Academy twice to collect a work folder for Pupil A and that *"contact with Academy has been minimal"*. Pupil A's mother had further stated that she had had only two conversations with the safeguarding lead in the last couple of months.

The panel considered the CPOMs log dated 17 July 2023 which stated, *"mum came into Academy and was very upset, mum opened up and said that she didn't write the letter, in fact she said she wrote a lovely letter but her husband said 'being nice gets you nowhere'"*. The panel had sight of the CPOMs logs from Mrs Horler and [REDACTED] dated between 11 and 19 July 2023 which recorded the personal difficulties that Pupil A and Pupil A's mother had faced. The panel considered Mrs Horler's evidence, which stated that the CPOMs log set out above was recorded on 17 March 2023.

The panel took into account the written and oral evidence of Witness D who explained that the CPOMs log showed the date that the CPOMs entry was made.

The panel considered [REDACTED] handwritten contemporaneous notes, which stated that the responsibility for home visits was shared between the SEND team and the attendance team jointly and was not allocated solely to Mrs Horler.

The panel considered the evidence and noted that more than one member of staff could undertake these home visits and had undertaken these in the past, Witness D's evidence was that home-visiting duties were routinely shared across the safeguarding and attendance teams depending on capacity and appropriateness and that visits were often redistributed where needed. Further, the panel noted that there was evidence of Mrs Horler having conducted home visits and/or attempted to conduct home visits which were recorded on CPOMs, including the documented visit on 10 July 2023. In addition, the panel noted that there were entries showing that Mrs Horler contacted Pupil A's mother, attempted visits and logged follow up information demonstrating that some visits were in fact carried out.

The panel also considered that there was no clear policy defining regular visits or specifying the required frequency during the relevant period and, although Witness C and

Witness D gave evidence as to the expected practice and “*the rule of thumb*”, there was no specific policy regarding what constitutes regular visits. The panel also noted that Witness D had been asked on occasion to visit Pupil A which supported the position that it was not solely Mrs Horler’s responsibility.

Although the panel acknowledged that there were some gaps in respect of record keeping, there was insufficient evidence to show that Mrs Horler had not conducted regular visits to Pupil A’s home during her extended period of absence from the Academy.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 3 not proven on the balance of probabilities.

**4) Between around January 2023 to July 2023, you:**

**a. did not keep up to date records on the Academy’s safeguarding system regarding the home visits to Pupil A.**

Mrs Horler made no admissions in relation to allegation 4(a).

The panel reminded itself of the CPOMs records it considered at allegation 3 (a).

The panel again considered the written and oral evidence of Witness D who explained that the CPOMs log showed the date that the CPOMs entry was made.

The panel again considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 15 March 2023 which stated: “*Pupil A is to be visited once a week, Karen Horler to go next week*” and that Mrs Horler would organise a work folder for Pupil A.

The panel again considered the written and oral evidence of Witness D who explained that on 15 March 2023, it was verbally agreed in a meeting that Mrs Horler would carry out home visits to Pupil A’s house every week and be solely responsible for Pupil A’s home visits.

The panel again considered the handwritten notes of [REDACTED] dated 15 March 2023 in which he wrote “*discussed weekly home visits between SEND and Attendance. Starts with SEND next week*” and Witness D’s evidence in which she stated that there were no records of Mrs Horler’s visits to Pupil A’s home following her verbal confirmation. Witness D also stated in her evidence that she asked Mrs Horler to carry out the home visits on numerous occasions and Mrs Horler would respond to Witness D “*I have seen your email - I am going to do that now on my way home from work*”.

The panel again considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 24 March 2023 which stated that on 23 March 2023, Mrs Horler attempted to call Pupil A’s mother several times and that there was no answer, so she left a message. The log further recorded that Mrs Horler called on Pupil A’s mother on 24 March 2023 and that Pupil A’s

mother had said that she had a “*bad day*” and did not want Mrs Horler to visit that day. The log recorded that Mrs Horler had suggested Monday and that Pupil A’s mother had tried to defer the visit and that Mrs Horler had reminded Pupil A’s mother that Pupil A needed to be seen once a week and that the work folder was ready to be given.

The panel again considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 30 March 2023 which stated, “*Karen Horler was not in work Monday 27th or Tuesday 28th so home visit could not be conducted*”. The log had also that Mrs Horler called Pupil A’s mother 29 March 2023 and Pupil A’s mother had said that she would not be home for the rest of the week and gave no further details.

The panel again considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 27 April 2023 which stated that Witness D attempted home visit and that it was unsuccessful. The panel considered the CPOMs log recorded by Witness D dated 16 May 2023 which stated Witness D recorded a log which stated, “*Karen Horler to visit 17.05.2023*” and that a home visit was subsequently carried out by [REDACTED] on 17 May 2023, but the visit was unsuccessful.

The panel again considered the evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that she recorded CPOMs log dated 3 March 2023 which stated, “*mum said she believed Academy had done everything possible and had gone above and beyond but simply couldn’t meet Pupil A’s medical needs.*” The panel noted that it did not have sight of such log.

The panel considered the CPOMs log dated 3 and 5 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler ringing Pupil A’s mother. The panel considered another CPOMs log dated 3 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler visiting Pupil A’s home because Pupil A’s [REDACTED]. The panel considered the CPOMs log dated 5 July 2023 which recorded Mrs Horler uploading photographs of Pupil A’s house and stated that the house looked “*sparse and look[ed] nothing like [her] previous visit*”. The panel considered the CPOMs log dated 10 July 2023 which stated that Mrs Horler visited Pupil A’s home and saw Pupil A’s mother but did not see Pupil A.

The panel again considered the CPOMs log dated 16 July 2023 which recorded an entry logged by Mrs Horler containing an email she received on 14 July 2023 from Pupil A’s mother which stated that Pupil A had been out of Academy since October 2022 and had not received any tuition since her absence. The email recorded Pupil A’s mother stating that she recalled a meeting where it was suggested that Pupil A had one-to-one tuition and phone calls and further stated that this did not occur. Pupil A’s mother had further stated: “*I appreciated [Mrs Horler’s] visit on Monday but it would have been good if we had arranged it so I knew you were coming and you had been able to see Pupil A.*” Pupil A’s mother had further stated that she had visited the Academy twice to collect a work folder for Pupil A and that “*contact with Academy has been minimal*”. Pupil A’s mother had further stated that she had had only two conversations with the safeguarding lead in the last couple of months.

The panel went on to consider the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that there was only one occasion where she remembered that she may not have updated the CPOMs recorded as she may have been expected to do so. Mrs Horler stated that on one occasion after a meeting, Mrs Horler and another staff member were passing by Pupil A's home and asked the staff member to take a photo of the bins because her phone was flat. Mrs Horler stated that the staff member took the photo and said that he would update CPOMs. Mrs Horler submitted that she believed she updated CPOMs on all other occasions.

The panel considered that Mrs Horler had made safeguarding entries regarding Pupil A and did update CPOMs during the relevant period including entries regarding home visit attempts, telephone calls and actual visits and logged communications with Pupil A's mother. The panel also noted that there was no clear policy at the time in respect of what was meant by "*up to date*" and that any best practice was a "*rule of thumb*" rather than a policy. The panel also considered Witness D's oral evidence which was that it was not unusual for entries to be added the following day and that late logging of entries was not prohibited. Although the panel acknowledged that there were some gaps in respect of record keeping, there was insufficient evidence to show that Mrs Horler had failed to keep up to date records on the Academy's safeguarding system regarding home visits to Pupil A.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 4(a) not proven on the balance of probabilities.

**5) On or around 22 May 2023 and/or 3 July 2023, you:**

**a. completed Colleague A's formal induction review forms for him by writing comments on his behalf and/or electronically signing his name, without his knowledge or consent.**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 5(a).

The panel had sight of, and considered, the "*New Start Induction Checklist*" (The "Checklist") which had "[REDACTED]" typed at the "*Full Name*" entry line; "[REDACTED]" typed at the "*Signature*" entry and "*22/03/2023*" typed at the "*Date*" entry line. The Checklist contained a list of tasks to be carried out by a member of staff. The panel noted that the Checklist recorded a date of when every task on the Checklist was carried out and that all of the tasks had been confirmed as carried out by "*KHO*".

The panel went on to consider the declaration signed by Witness A dated 12 October 2023 which stated that the induction paperwork shown to Witness A on 29 September 2023 was not signed by him and that he had never seen the documents prior to 29 September 2023.

The panel then considered the written and oral evidence of Witness A who made statements that were consistent with his signed declaration dated 12 October 2023. In his evidence, Witness A stated that when he was told he was successful in his application to be a HLTA, he completed a HLTA course and received a certificate. Witness A stated that he had also signed policies he received via email from HR. Witness A stated that he did not undertake any of the tasks signed on the induction checklist.

In his evidence, Witness A stated that on 12 October 2023, he had a meeting with Witness C who showed him the “*New Starter Induction*” documents with an electronic signature. Witness A stated that he had not seen or signed these documents and that there was no induction meetings held prior to 12 October 2023.

The panel then considered the written evidence of Mrs Horler who stated that it was [REDACTED] responsibility as the SEND department’s administrative assistant to complete the documents.

The panel considered that Witness A had given clear and consistent evidence that the induction records had not been completed by him and that he had not written the comments recorded in the induction review documents and/or had not signed his name on the forms. The panel found Witness A to be credible and compelling in stating that his signature was very different from the signature on the forms and that he had never seen the induction review before the investigation and had not agreed to the contents let alone signed the same. Further, the panel noted that Witness A had identified that some of the comments on the forms were factually inaccurate including the attendance figure and other reflective statements. The panel noted that there was no alternative explanation or corroborating evidence to rebut Witness A’s testimony.

The panel took particular account of the fact that Mrs Horler had signed the Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”) document on Witness A’s behalf and considered that this amounted to serious misconduct due to the importance of safeguarding in the education setting.

Having considered the evidence before it, the panel found allegation 5(a) proven on the balance of probabilities.

**6) Your conduct at 1 (b), 2 (a) and/or 5 (a) was:**

**a. Misleading; and/or**

**b. Dishonest**

Mrs Horler denied allegation 6(a) and 6(b).

Having found allegations 1(b), 2(a) and 5(a) proven, the panel went on to consider whether Mrs Horler’s conduct was misleading and/or dishonest.

The panel reminded itself of the facts found proven at allegations 1(b), 2(a) and 5(a).

The panel considered, in respect of allegation 1(b), that Mrs Horler had provided a false verbal account of a lesson observation in relation to a SEN candidate and completed a colleague's formal induction reviews for them including signing on their behalf without their knowledge or consent. The panel considered that Mrs Horler had appeared to be filling in a gap in information rather than intentionally seeking to deceive for any personal gain albeit Mrs Horler was not present to provide evidence and/or an explanation as to her actions. The panel considered that Mrs Horler's actions were more likely than not to have been to solve a problem or progress the recruitment process rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive with the information given. Therefore, the panel considered this to be misleading but did not necessarily meet the threshold for dishonesty.

The panel considered, in respect of allegation 2(a), that Mrs Horler had knowingly provided a false written account of an observation that she was not present in and that this also therefore amounted to dishonesty.

The panel considered, in respect of allegation 5(a), that Mrs Horler had knowingly completed the forms and applied Witness A's signature without his knowledge. The panel considered Witness A's clear and consistent evidence that he had not seen the documents or authorised anyone to sign them on his behalf. The panel considered that Mrs Horler had therefore acted in both a misleading and dishonest way in respect of allegation 5(a).

The panel concluded, on the balance of probabilities, that Mrs Horler had intended to mislead in relation to her conduct at allegations 1(b), 2(a) and 5(a).

When considering the issue of Mrs Horler's dishonesty, the panel had regard to the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) Ltd t/a Crockford*.

The panel firstly sought to ascertain the actual state of Mrs Horler's knowledge or belief as to the facts. On the evidence, the panel concluded that, in respect of allegations 2(a) and 5(a) Mrs Horler had knowingly provided false information.

The panel then went on to consider whether Mrs Horler's conduct was dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people. In the panel's view, in respect of allegations 2(a) and 5(a) ordinary decent people would consider Mrs Horler's conduct to be dishonest.

The panel therefore concluded that Mrs Horler's conduct, as found proven at allegations 1(b), 2(a) and 5(a) was misleading and/or dishonest.

The panel found allegations 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 5(a), 6(a) and 6(b) proven and allegations 3(a) and 4(a) not proven.

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

Having found a number of the allegations proved (allegations 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 5(a), 6(a) and 6(b)), the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to unacceptable professional conduct.

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 Mrs Horler, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mrs Horler was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the School in which they teach, and maintain high standards...

The panel also considered whether Mrs Horler’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 the offence of fraud or serious dishonesty was relevant to the behaviour proved because the panel found that Mrs Horler had acted dishonestly. In light of its finding on allegation 6, which amounted to serious misconduct, the panel considered that this behaviour was relevant. For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Horler which was found proven amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Horler was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mrs Horler’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 Mrs Horler'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 Mrs Horler was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that the offence of fraud and serious dishonesty was relevant.

The panel considered that Mrs Horler's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mrs Horler's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

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

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

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

In light of the panel's findings against Mrs Horler, which involved providing a false verbal and written account of a lesson observation and signing induction documents on a colleague's behalf without that colleague's consent or knowledge, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding of the pupils and upholding proper standards of conduct.

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

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 Mrs Horler was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel considered whether there was a public interest in retaining Mrs Horler in the profession. The panel noted that Mrs Horler was not present to give evidence as to her ability as an educator and that none of the authors of Mrs Horler's character references attended to give evidence. However, the panel noted from the witnesses who attended the hearing that Mrs Horler was reported to have had a positive impact on dealing with vulnerable students.

The panel did not have any evidence that Mrs Horler had exceptional ability as an educator, but the panel also did not have any evidence (other than the allegations found proven) to question Mrs Horler's ability as an educator.

Whilst there is evidence that Mrs Horler had the ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mrs Horler in the profession, since her behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher.

The panel considered the seriousness of the behaviour carefully, 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 Mrs Horler.

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; and

dishonesty..., including the deliberate concealment of their actions...especially where these behaviours have been repeated or 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 any relevant mitigating factors. Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

There was no evidence that Mrs Horler's actions were not deliberate.

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

The panel considered the written and oral evidence of Witness C, who stated that between January and September 2023, Mrs Horler had said that she had “*pinch points*” and that she was busy a number of times. Witness C explained that Mrs Horler was under pressure for applying for local authority funding and wanted to expand staff numbers at the Academy.

The panel also considered the written evidence of Mrs Horler, who stated that she had a “*heavy and unmanageable workload*” at the Academy.

The panel considered that Mrs Horler had a good previous history, although she was not present to provide oral evidence of her character.

Mrs Horler submitted 13-character references to attest to her ability as a teacher. The panel noted that the character references received did not necessarily relate to the content of the allegations found proven and that there was no evidence to suggest that the authors of those statements were aware of the allegations against Mrs Horler.

Nevertheless, the panel noted the following comments in particular from the character references:

- “*Karen always demonstrated a commitment to the students and their families that I have rarely seen before... she would often go over and above to support students and their families.*”

[REDACTED]

- “*I have found Karen to be enthusiastic, committed to anything she takes on, meticulous to details and an extremely dedicated to the people she care about – family, friends, colleagues, charities she advocates for and all the students she worked with... I view Karen as an ultimate professional.*”

[REDACTED]

- “*I... along with many other staff hold [Mrs Horler] in very high esteem. With both staff and students she would go above and beyond. Students from all over the Academy, not just SEN individuals, would constantly be at her door as their go to teacher*”

[REDACTED]

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 Mrs Horler 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 Mrs Horler. The severity of the incident relating to falsifying a key KCSIE safeguarding document 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 two years.

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of cases 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. However, the panel did note that the allegations found proven related to dishonesty and for this reason, the panel found that publication was not sufficient but that prohibition with the option for a review period was appropriate in the circumstances. In reaching its decision, the panel considered that Mrs Horler had, not only knowingly manipulated another teacher's induction records to show that he had completed tasks which he had not completed, but that one of the induction documents which Mrs Horler had signed on behalf of another teacher was the KCSIE safeguarding document. The panel considered that this document was of vital importance to the teaching profession, and Mrs Horler's actions in signing to confirm that this document had been read and understood by another teacher without consultation were a serious matter.

The panel was disappointed that Mrs Horler was not present to provide any evidence as to her level of insight and/or remorse, and the panel was therefore unable to properly assess the future risk of any 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 provision for a two-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 some of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In this case, the panel has found some of the allegations not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mrs Karen Horler should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of two years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mrs Horler is in breach of the following standard:

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the School in which they teach, and maintain high standards...

The panel finds that the conduct of Mrs Horler fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of dishonesty on the part of a teacher. The panel comment on the severity of the incident as it relates to falsifying a key KCSIE safeguarding document.

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 Mrs Horler, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed,

*“In light of the panel’s findings against Mrs Horler, which involved providing a false verbal and written account of a lesson observation and signing induction documents on a colleague’s behalf without that colleague’s consent or knowledge, there was a strong public interest consideration in the safeguarding of the pupils and upholding proper standards of conduct”.*

A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, *“The panel was disappointed that Mrs Horler was not present to provide any evidence as to her level of insight and/or remorse, and the panel was therefore unable to properly assess the future risk of any repetition.”*

In my judgement, the lack of evidence of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour and this puts at risk the future wellbeing of pupils. I have therefore given this element 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 observe, *“...that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Horler was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession”*. I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty 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 also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mrs Horler herself. The panel comment,

*“The panel noted that Mrs Horler was not present to give evidence as to her ability as an educator and that none of the authors of Mrs Horler’s character references attended to give evidence. However, the panel noted from the witnesses who attended the hearing that Mrs Horler was reported to have had a positive impact on dealing with vulnerable students.*

*The panel did not have any evidence that Mrs Horler had exceptional ability as an educator, but the panel also did not have any evidence (other than the allegations found proven) to question Mrs Horler’s ability as an educator”.*

A prohibition order would prevent Mrs Horler 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 lack of insight or remorse.

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel *“...that Mrs Horler had, not only knowingly manipulated another teacher’s induction records to show that he had completed tasks which he had not completed, but that one of the induction documents which Mrs Horler had signed on behalf of another teacher was the KCSIE safeguarding document. The panel considered that this document was of vital importance to the teaching profession, and Mrs Horler’s actions in signing to confirm that this document had been read and understood by another teacher without consultation were a serious matter”.*

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mrs Horler 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 remorse or 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 two year review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments *“...the panel found that publication was not sufficient but that prohibition with the option for a review period was appropriate in the*

*circumstances*” The panel has also said that a two year review period would be proportionate.

I have considered whether a two 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, the factors mean that allowing a review period of two years is, in my view sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, these elements are the dishonesty found, the lack of evidence of either insight or remorse, weighed against the panel’s finding that Mrs Horler has had a positive impact on dealing with vulnerable students.

**This means that Mrs Karen Horler 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 12 March 2028, two 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, Mrs Horler remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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



**Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield**

**Date: 12 March 2026**

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