



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Ms Sylvia Sams: 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:	Ms Sylvia Sams
Teacher ref number:	2457914
Teacher date of birth:	19 April 1963
TRA reference:	25097
Date of determination:	19 March 2026
Former employer:	The Lambs Christian School/ The Lambs Christian Day Nursery/ The Lambs Tuition Centre, Birmingham

Introduction

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

The panel members were Mr Terry Hyde (former teacher panellist – in the chair), Ms Amanda Godfrey (teacher panellist) and Mrs Shabana Robertson (lay panellist).

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

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

Ms Sams was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of hearing dated 15 December 2025.

It was alleged that Ms Sams was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

1. On or around 26 September 2024, she was convicted at Birmingham Magistrates' Court of the offence of Conducting an Unregistered Independent Educational Institution between 31/08/2023 and 22/02/2024 at the Lambs (Christian) Tuition Centre, contrary to Section 96(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008

In the absence of Ms Sams and no formal response admitting the allegation, the allegation is not admitted.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Notice of hearing and response – pages 4 to 10

Section 2: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 12 91

Section 3: Teacher documents – pages 93 to 96

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle.

In addition, the panel also had before it and read the proceeding in absence bundle, bundle on jurisdiction and it confirmed that it had viewed three videos that were provided in addition to the bundle.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020 (the "Procedures").

Witnesses

The panel did not hear oral evidence from any witnesses.

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 Sams was employed as a Business Manager at the Lambs Christian School (“the School”), which had been a registered independent school since 22 January 2003, of which Individual A was the proprietor.

On 27 March 2023, the Department for Education received an email from Ms Sams enclosing a letter from Individual A stating that the School would “cease to exist” at the end of the Spring 2023 term and would remain open only as a pre-school and extend into early years provision.

On 26 June 2023, the Department for Education wrote to Individual A informing her that the School had been deleted from the register of independent schools, and that in order to continue under-5s provision an application would be required to Ofsted Early Years.

There was subsequent correspondence from Ms Sams and Individual A seeking for the School to remain on the register until 28 July 2023, but this was not possible.

The School building was later converted into the Lambs Christian Day Nursery, and the Lambs Tuition Centre was established at the Destiny International Christian Assembly.

On 21 February 2024, Ofsted carried out an inspection at the Lambs Tuition Centre. Over twenty children were identified on the premises and were observed to be engaged in learning across a broad curriculum of subjects while wearing the School’s uniforms.

The matter was investigated and prosecution was commenced by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Ms Sams, along with Individual A, pleaded guilty to an offence contrary to Section 96(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 at Birmingham Magistrates’ Court on 26 September 2024.

The matter was referred to the TRA by Ofsted on 21 January 2024.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. On or around 26 September 2024, you were convicted at Birmingham Magistrates’ Court of the offence of Conducting an Unregistered Independent Educational Institution between 31/08/2023 and 22/02/2024 at the Lambs (Christian) Tuition Centre, contrary to Section 96(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008**

The panel considered the certificate of conviction confirming Ms Sams' conviction of the alleged offence. The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction.

The certificate of conviction showed that Ms Sams pleaded guilty at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 26 September 2024 and was therefore, convicted of the following offence:

“Between 31/08/2023 and 22/02/2024 at THE LAMBS (CHRISTIAN) TUITION CENTRE, SYLVIA SAMS TOGETHER WITH INDIVIDUAL A AND INDIVIDUAL B CONDUCTED AN UNREGISTERED INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION. CONTRARY TO SECTION 96(1) AND (2) OF THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACT 2008.”

Birmingham Magistrates' Court sentenced Ms Sams to a 12-month Community Order with an unpaid work requirement of 60 hours, together with a victim surcharge of £114 and she was ordered to pay £200 towards the prosecution costs.

The panel also noted that, in a handwritten letter dated 15 June 2025 sent by Ms Sams to the TRA, she confirmed that she had pleaded guilty in Court.

The panel therefore find the allegation proven.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

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

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Ms Sams 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
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that Ms Sams' actions were relevant to teaching, working with children, and working in an education setting.

As the panel found that pupils were being taught in an unregistered school, it noted the importance of the regulatory regime governing independent schools. The panel noted the

observations of Individual C that independent schools are regulated by the Secretary of State for Education, whereas unregistered schools are unregulated and therefore pose risks to the welfare, health and safety of pupils attending them. The regulatory framework exists to ensure that all children are safeguarded from potential harm and receive a safe education that meets the standards required of independent schools.

Registered schools are subject to regular inspections to ensure that those standards are met. The panel noted that the School had undergone 4 inspections between 2007 and 2019, and on each occasion met the relevant standards.

However, at the inspection carried out by Ofsted on 21 February 2024, a number of documents requested by the inspectors were not available, including fire risk assessments, safeguarding training evidence, insurance documentation and certificates. Some of this material was later provided by email. It was also confirmed that fire evacuation drills had not been completed.

The panel, therefore, noted that the behaviour underlying the offence could have had an impact on the safety and security of pupils and members of the public.

The panel also took account of the public perception of the teaching profession. It considered that Ms Sams' behaviour in committing the offence was capable of undermining public confidence in the profession, given the influence teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel noted that while Ms Sams' behaviour did not lead to a sentence of imprisonment, it did result in the imposition of a Community Order, and the panel considered the offending to be serious.

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

The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and that there may be other offences which panels consider to be a relevant offence. The panel found that this was a relevant offence, as it was contrary to the Teachers' Standards, it was relevant to teaching, working with children and working in an education setting, it was likely to have an impact on the safety or security of pupils and/or members of the public, and it was likely to affect public confidence in the teaching profession.

The panel further noted that although Ms Sams pleaded guilty to the offence, in her handwritten letter to the TRA dated 15 June 2025 she stated: "we were instructed to plead guilty or face intense questioning on the stand. [Redacted]" The panel took this into account but found that there was a lack of mitigation relevant to Ms Sams' ability as a teacher, in her letter she stated: "In my 62 years, I have never desired, trained or applied for a teaching position. I have no experience or qualification in the field."

The panel therefore noted that there was no evidence of an exemplary record as a teacher or evidence demonstrating Ms Sams' ongoing suitability to teach, or any desire to teach.

The panel consequently found that, given the seriousness of the offending, the absence of meaningful mitigation, and the need to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession, this conviction was a relevant offence for the purposes of reaffirming clear standards of conduct.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of a conviction of a relevant offence, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, 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 Sams, which involved conviction of a relevant offence of conducting an unregistered independent educational institution. There was a strong public interest consideration in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils, given that unregistered schools are unregulated and therefore pose risks to the pupils attending them and schools should be properly regulated.

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

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Ms Sams 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 Sams in the profession. In her own representations, sent by email to the TRA on 25 January 2026, Ms Sams stated:

“I have tried to explain time and again that I am not a teacher, I have never trained as a teacher, I have no qualifications to teach, I have no desire to be a teacher; my background is in administration. I fail to understand what it is I am supposed to be defending myself against. What will happen if the verdict is guilty ... will I be prevented from doing something I have no desire to do? It's like the definition of madness!”.

The panel therefore found that there were no public interest considerations in retaining Ms Sams in the profession.

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 Sams.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- the commission of a serious criminal offence, including those that resulted in a conviction or caution, paying particular attention to offences that are 'relevant matters' for the purposes of the Police Act 1997 and criminal record disclosures;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk;
- abuse of position or trust (particularly involving pupils);

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

There was no evidence that Ms Sams actions were not deliberate.

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

There was no evidence presented to the panel that Ms Sams demonstrated exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct or having contributed significantly to the education sector.

The panel found that the offending took place over a number of months, so could not be described as a momentary lapse of behaviour or out of character.

The panel was not provided with any character statements or references. It did, however, note a letter dated 2 June 2023 from a parent of a pupil attending the Lambs Tuition Centre, which contained positive comments written in support of the Tuition Centre remaining open. However, the panel found that this was not directly relevant to Ms Sams' role.

The panel also noted Ms Sams' handwritten letter to the TRA dated 15 June 2025, in which she stated that she had "always tried to abide by the law" and that she "felt disillusioned and saddened by the whole situation".

The panel further found that there was a lack of remorse and a lack of insight. Although Ms Sams had pleaded guilty to the offence, in her handwritten letter she stated: "we were instructed to plead guilty or face intense questioning on the stand. [Redacted]" The panel considered that this did not demonstrate genuine remorse or insight. No other evidence of remorse or insight was presented.

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 Sams 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 Sams, as Ms Sams herself indicated she had no desire to teach and the prolonged nature of the offending 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 found no evidence of remediation, remorse or insight. However, given the nature and seriousness of the offending, the panel considered that Ms Sams has the capacity to reflect on her actions and, should she wish to teach in the future, a 3 year review period would provide an opportunity for her to demonstrate progress in reducing the risk of repetition.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period of 3 years.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

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

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

In this case, the panel has found the allegation proven and found that this amounts to a relevant conviction.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Ms Sylvia Sams should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of 3 years.

In particular, the panel has found that Ms Sams 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
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law
- 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 Sams was relevant to teaching, working with children, and working in an education setting.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of running an unregistered school and that "...unregistered schools are unregulated and therefore pose risks to the welfare, health and safety of pupils attending them. The regulatory framework exists to ensure that all children are safeguarded from potential harm and receive a safe education that meets the standards required of independent schools".

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of a relevant conviction, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Ms Sams, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, "...that the behaviour underlying the offence could have had an impact on the safety and security of pupils and members of the public". A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, "The panel further found that there was a lack of remorse and a lack of insight. Although Ms Sams had pleaded guilty to the offence, in her handwritten letter she stated: "we were instructed to plead guilty or face intense questioning on the stand. [Redacted]." The panel considered that this did not demonstrate genuine remorse or insight. No other evidence of remorse or insight was presented".

In my judgement, the lack 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, "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 Sams was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated".

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a

failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of a relevant conviction, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Ms Sams herself. The panel comment “...Ms Sams herself indicated she had no desire to teach” and “The panel therefore found that there were no public interest considerations in retaining Ms Sams in the profession”.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse. The panel has said, “The panel found no evidence of remediation, remorse or insight.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that Ms Sams’ conviction was in relation to conducting an unregistered independent school.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Ms Sams 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.

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 3 year review period.

I have considered the panel’s comments “However, given the nature and seriousness of the offending, the panel considered that Ms Sams has the capacity to reflect on her actions and, should she wish to teach in the future, a 3 year review period would provide an opportunity for her to demonstrate progress in reducing the risk of repetition”.

I have considered whether a 3 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 considering the factors in this case, I agree that a 3 year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession. These factors are the seriousness of the conduct and the lack of evidence of insight and remorse. I have carefully weighed this against the panel’s comments that Ms Sams has the capacity to reflect on her actions.

This means that Ms Sylvia Sams 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 27 March 2029, three 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 Sams remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

Ms Sams 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 cursive script that reads "S. Blomfield".

Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 20 March 2026

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