



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Mr Jeremy Payne: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**April 2026**

## Contents

Introduction	3
Allegations	4
Summary of evidence	4
Documents	4
Witnesses	5
Decision and reasons	5
Findings of fact	5
Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence	6
Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State	8
Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State	15

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

**Teacher:** Mr Jeremy Payne

**TRA reference:** 24958

**Date of determination:** 16 April 2026

**Former employer:** Federation of Fryern Infant and Junior Schools, Hampshire

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 15 and 16 April 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Jeremy Payne.

The panel members were Ms Jackie Hutchings (teacher panellist – in the chair), Mr Ben Greene (teacher panellist) and Miss Yilshane Ali (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Charlotte Belcher of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Mr Wen Yeap of Browne Jacobson solicitors.

Mr Payne was present and was represented by Mr Colin Henderson of The Reflective Practice.

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

## **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegation set out in the notice of proceedings dated 15 January 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Payne was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:

1. He was convicted at Poole Magistrates Court on 03 July 2024 for the offence of Driving a Motor Vehicle with Excess Alcohol on 25 April 2024 contrary to s5(1)(a) Road Traffic Act 1988 for which he was sentenced to disqualification from driving for 12 months and ordered to pay a fine of £440.00, a victim surcharge of £176.00 and costs of £85.00.

The panel received a signed statement of agreed facts dated 3 March 2026. Mr Payne admitted that he was convicted of the above offence in a British criminal court and that his actions in committing this offence were contrary to the standards of personal and professional conduct expected of a teacher under the Teacher's Standards and that they risked the safety of members of the public.

Mr Payne has not admitted that he has been convicted of a relevant offence.

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 4 to 14

Section 2: Chronology – pages 15 to 16

Section 3: Statement of Agreed Facts – pages 17 to 19

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 20 to 60

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 61 to 140

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

Sentencing Guideline for Excess Alcohol (drive/attempt to drive) (Revised 2017) – pages 141 to 144

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

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 TRA did not call any witnesses to give oral evidence to the panel.

Mr Payne gave oral evidence to the panel at the first and second stage of the hearing. He also called the following witness in the second stage of the hearing:

Witness A – [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.

Mr Payne was employed by the Federation of Fryern Infant and Junior Schools (“the School”) from 1 January 2024 to 11 December 2024 as the Executive Headteacher. On 25 April 2024 Mr Payne was arrested after leaving a pub and was subsequently charged with driving with excess alcohol. He was subsequently suspended by the School. Mr Payne was dismissed on 11 December 2024. On 19 December 2024 a referral was made to the TRA by the School’s Board of Governors.

## 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:

**You are guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence, in that:**

**1. You were convicted at Poole Magistrates Court on 03 July 2024 for the offence of Driving a Motor Vehicle with Excess Alcohol on 25 April 2024 contrary to s5(1)(a) Road Traffic Act 1988 for which you were sentenced to disqualification from driving for 12 months and ordered to pay a fine of £440.00, a victim surcharge of £176.00 and costs of £85.00.**

In the signed statement of agreed facts dated 3 March 2026, Mr Payne admitted that he was convicted of the above offence and that it is a conviction in a British criminal court.

The panel was provided with the certificate of conviction confirming that Mr Payne was convicted on 3 July 2024 at Poole Magistrates Court of the Offence to “drive motor

*vehicle when alcohol level above limit [sic]*". It was further confirmed in Mr Payne's custody record that this was contrary to section 5(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The certificate confirms the offence took place on 25 April 2024 and that Mr Payne was sentenced to:

- Disqualification from holding or obtaining a driving licence for 12 months. This would be reduced by three months if Mr Payne satisfactorily completed a course approved by the Secretary of State by 2 February 2025.
- A fine of £440.00.
- A victim surcharge of £176.00
- Costs to the Crown Prosecution Service of £85.00.

Given this was a conviction of a summary offence, the panel was not provided with sentencing remarks.

The circumstances of the offence were set out in the signed agreed statement of facts dated 3 March 2026, which stated:

*"On 25 April 2024, Mr Payne was at the school until approximately 7:25pm having attended a school disco event. On his way home from the school, Mr Payne attended the Gateway pub in Eastleigh and consumed alcohol.*

*At around 8:10pm Mr Payne left the pub to drive home. At around 8:40pm he was pulled over by the police and breathalysed but failed the test. Mr Payne was then arrested for being under the influence of alcohol whilst driving. He was taken to Bournemouth police station where he was detained and breathalysed again and gave a reading of 49mg of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath against a legal limit of 35mg. He was then charged and bailed at 12.30am to attend court."*

The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of the conviction and the facts necessarily implied by the conviction.

## **Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence**

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

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 Mr Payne, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Payne was in breach of the following standard:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - not undermining fundamental British values, including... the rule of law.

The panel noted that Mr Payne's actions were not relevant to teaching, working with children and/or working in an education setting, because it took place within Mr Payne's private time after school and outside of the school setting. The offence did not involve children.

The panel noted that the behaviour involved in driving with excess alcohol could have had an impact on the safety of members of the public and Mr Payne accepted this within his oral evidence to the panel. The panel noted from Mr Payne's witness statement that two pints of lager were consumed within approximately 45 minutes, before driving home at 61 miles per hour using cruise control. The panel noted that this posed a danger to members of the public and that it was fortunate that an accident did not occur.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel noted that a member of the public would be concerned if they were aware that a teacher had a conviction for driving with excess alcohol. The panel considered that Mr Payne's behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.

The panel further noted that Mr Payne's behaviour did not lead to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative that the offence was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum, and that the sentence given to Mr Payne was the lowest sentence possible for this offence.

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

The panel considered that this was a serious driving offence which involved alcohol, which the Advice states is likely to be considered a relevant offence. The panel considered this was a serious driving offence because it was an offence which resulted in a disqualification from driving and a fine, rather than points added to a driving licence, and it involved the use of alcohol.

The panel considered the gravity and nature of the offence and the mitigating circumstances presented by Mr Payne. In terms of the gravity and nature of the offence, the panel noted in particular that driving with excess alcohol was a serious offence which could have had a significant effect on others - in particular the panel noted Mr Payne drove at a speed of 61 miles per hour on cruise control. Mr Payne's actions posed a risk to others. The panel considered that there had been no concern in respect of Mr Payne's driving and that he had been subject to a routine stop by the police. Further the panel noted that the sentence imposed was at the minimum level available.

In terms of mitigating circumstances, the panel noted that Mr Payne had previously been of good character, with an unblemished career history, having been presented with written evidence of this. The panel accepted that this was his first offence within 32 years of driving.

The panel considered Mr Payne's explanation that he had not eaten breakfast or lunch on the day of the offence, which, it is inferred, impacted his alcohol level. However, the panel considered that Mr Payne was responsible for his actions, being aware that he had not eaten that day and that he had admitted in his oral evidence that he was aware that there was a legal limit for drinking alcohol and driving.

The panel also took into consideration Mr Payne's account, both orally and in writing, of the difficulties he was suffering at the relevant time [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Mr Payne had contacted the Chair of Governors on the weekend following the incident on Thursday evening and he had not attempted to hide the incident. Mr Payne had admitted the facts of the offence, and had done so throughout, and although he denied that his actions amounted to a relevant offence, the panel drew no inference given his right to defend himself. The panel noted that Mr Payne had shown insight into his actions and showed considerable remorse. He had attended a course for Drink-Drive offenders, of which the panel had seen a certificate of completion, and he described the lessons that he had learned from this course, and as a result of this incident, during his oral evidence. Mr Payne confirmed both orally and in writing that he no longer drives if he is going to drink alcohol and he makes alternative arrangements for transport.

Although the panel found that the evidence of the mitigating circumstances in this case provided by Mr Payne's was of note, the panel also found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Payne's ongoing suitability to teach. The panel considered that a finding that this conviction was for a relevant offence was necessary to reaffirm clear standards of conduct so as to maintain public confidence in the teaching profession.

## **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 protection of other members of the public, the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

There was a public interest consideration in the protection of other members of the public, given the risk that he posed by driving under the influence of excess alcohol.

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

A public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct was also present as the conduct found against Mr Payne was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Payne in the profession. The panel decided that there was a strong public interest in retaining Mr Payne in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and the panel had evidence indicating that he made valuable contributions to the profession. They had no reason to doubt that these contributions would continue.

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. As noted above, the panel considered that the offence was a serious driving offence involving excess alcohol and that this amounted to a relevant offence. The behaviour leading to this conviction was serious, however, as noted above, the panel also accepted that there were no concerns in relation to Mr Payne's driving on the night of the offence and he was subject to a routine stop by police. There were no aggravating factors in the offence such as driving over the speed limit. The level of alcohol was 49mg in 100ml of breath against a legal limit of 35mg and the custody record seen by the panel suggested under health and wellbeing, when brought to the police station, he was "*poss very slight intox [sic]*". It was his first driving offence in 32 years of driving and the sentence imposed was at the minimum level for this offence. In view of this evidence, the panel considered that, whilst it was a serious driving offence involving alcohol and a relevant offence for the reasons set out above, it was at the lower end of the spectrum of seriousness.

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

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:

- a 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; and
- actions or behaviours that... undermine fundamental British values of... the rule of law.

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.

The panel considered that Mr Payne's actions were deliberate, even though he was under the influence of alcohol at the time he committed the offence. It had been his decision to drink alcohol when he must have known that he would need to drive home from the pub.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Payne was acting under extreme duress, for example, a physical threat or significant intimidation. The panel noted that he had described [REDACTED] he was experiencing at the time during his evidence, but the panel did not consider that this amounted to duress.

Mr Payne did have a previously good history, having demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct and having contributed significantly to the education sector over his long career in teaching.

In particular, the panel considered the following points within the evidence before it:

- The panel had been provided with two Ofsted reports from schools at which Mr Payne had worked, and which had been rated as "Good" following his appointment.
- Mr Payne had championed inclusion within the schools he has worked.
- Mr Payne had worked in a number of challenging schools across his career and had made significant contribution to them.
- Mr Payne launched a curricular project called the "Plastic Bottle Boat Challenge" designed around learning about recycling, plastic pollution and circular economy,

which achieved a Guinness World Record. The project involved more than 60 schools and over 13,000 learners.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character and it had received evidence that this did not form part of a pattern of behaviour. The panel accepted that there were a unique set of circumstances which led to Mr Payne's decision to drive whilst under the influence of excess alcohol on that day, of which Mr Payne had given evidence, [REDACTED].

The panel had not seen any evidence that Mr Payne had previously been subject to disciplinary proceedings or warnings.

The panel had seen written character references from eight witnesses, one of which (Witness A) attended to give oral evidence to the panel. Seven of the witnesses could attest to his abilities as a teacher and/or school leader and the panel noted that they were all consistent in their description of Mr Payne, despite being from a broad range of schools. The panel noted that all of the witnesses were aware of the TRA proceedings, the allegation, and the nature of the conviction, and they had been signed with a statement of truth.

In particular, the panel drew out the following key examples across all of the character references:

- "Within all meetings Jeremy conducts himself with professionalism and demonstrates exceptional interpersonal skills. His contributions to the Governing board, as well as his role on the Executive Headteacher Appraisal committee, are very much valued."
- "He inherited a team that had been through a period of instability, he listened to them compassionately and then created a plan to support them to have confidence delivering the goals of the Early Help commission. His integrity and reliability at this time enabled the team to succeed and this was recognised during contract reviews, internally and externally. Jeremy's attributes have been recognised by other members of the [REDACTED] senior leadership team, and he is now a valued staff member who upholds the ethos of the association."
- "I have not worked with Jeremy in his capacity as a teacher/headteacher, however, our shared prior experience as teachers and headteachers has resulted in many discussions about the role and education more generally and his passion and enthusiasm for the profession is clear. Jeremy has shown that he has kept abreast of issues and events both locally and nationally. Jeremy still has a lot to offer the teaching profession. Evidence suggests that Jeremy's conviction was a one-time error of judgement and not a pattern of behaviour." The panel noted this witness also gave evidence orally (Witness A) and confirmed she was a

[REDACTED] and was aware of Mr Payne's leadership of the School by virtue of her role in the community. She described Mr Payne's leadership as passionate and dynamic.

- “We catered for some of the most challenging children across the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Authority who had not been successful in other mainstream Secondary or Primary schools. The school catered for a much higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, had a very limited budget, and very high staff vacancies... There was high staff turnover and variable parental support, but Jeremy demonstrated the values and principles we all believed in and was willing to fight for them. Where other head teachers would have resorted to suspension and exclusion Jeremy stood firm in the face of staff objection and created an inclusion centre to focus on the needs of those pupils causing the most disruption. He removed barriers for pupils to be in school and learning.”
- “He was extremely committed and demonstrated this daily. Professionally, he has made a significant contribution, and I hope that his wider conduct, impact on others, and longevity of dedicated service can be taken into account.”
- “Jeremy is an excellent teacher and a highly valued colleague. His innovative, thoughtful approach consistently supports pupils' learning, and his ability to explain concepts clearly makes a noticeable difference to their confidence and progress.”
- “His steady professionalism and reflective mindset create an environment where colleagues feel supported to grow, making him a strong contributor to the ongoing development of teaching across the school.”
- “I believe that Jeremy should be retained in the teaching profession because he consistently exemplifies the high standards, professionalism, and reflective practice expected of an effective educator.”
- “As an educational leader, Jeremy has consistently made a clear and positive difference to the schools he has worked in creating a vision to inspire both staff and pupils.”
- “His influence spans generations of pupils, including myself and continues through the leadership and inspiration he provides to others.”
- “I worked most closely with Jeremy during his time at [REDACTED]. The Peer Review programme was a significant contributing factor in [REDACTED] rapid improvement at that time, both in terms of attainment standards and the quality of teaching and learning. [REDACTED] was subsequently judged to be Good in all

areas in February 2022. Jeremy's leadership within the programme was both constructive and supportive. The collaboration between our schools was highly effective, with colleagues working together on areas such as curriculum design, teacher modelling and whole-class reading."

- "It is my view that Jeremy should be retained within the teaching profession. He is a creative, principled and committed educator who still has much to contribute to education."
- "In my opinion, Jeremy is an inspirational teacher and colleague who demonstrates a strong commitment to both the academic success and the wellbeing of the students in his care."
- "He brings professionalism, fairness and a strong sense of responsibility to his role and he consistently strives to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. His dedication to both students and colleagues reflects the qualities that are valued in the teaching profession."
- "Jeremy is an inspirational teacher and leader and has worked successfully at different schools. He cares deeply about children and education and has had some huge success. Teaching is a stressful and challenging career, but he has never been afraid of working in the most challenging schools and helping young people and their families."
- "He has been hugely affected by what happened and he has had to dig deep and take the full consequences."

The panel also took into consideration the following mitigating factors:

- The panel had received evidence from Mr Payne both orally and in writing in respect of his reflection on his behaviour and the steps he had taken to address this. Mr Payne stated that following his dismissal from the School "*I also had to come to terms with the magnitude of the consequences that had flowed from my decision to drive after drinking.*"
- Mr Payne had not attempted to hide his actions or the conviction and he had taken full responsibility for it. He had not sought to blame anybody else. He had been transparent about the conviction when applying for other roles following his dismissal and Witness A confirmed in her oral evidence that Mr Payne had been honest throughout the recruitment process for his current role. The organisation had undertaken safer recruitment checks and verified Mr Payne's account of the events leading to the conviction, including obtaining a number of additional references from schools at which he had worked.

- The panel considered Mr Payne was a credible and honest witness, who showed full insight and remorse in relation to the negative and harmful impact of his behaviour on others, including on the pupils, staff, governing body and leadership team at the School. The panel accepted that Mr Payne had fully analysed the reasons underlying his behaviour and decision to drive under the influence of excess alcohol, he had processed this fully and he had learned from the experience. The panel considered he had a deep understanding and insight into his actions.
- In terms of rehabilitation, Mr Payne had completed the course for Drink-Drive offenders, of which the panel had seen a certificate of completion. Mr Payne was able to describe to the panel in some detail the lessons that he had learned from this course, and as a result of this incident, during his oral evidence, including that he now follows the “3 C’s” of caution, consideration and control. Mr Payne confirmed both orally and in writing that he no longer drives if he is going to drink alcohol and instead he makes alternative arrangements for transport.

[REDACTED].

- The panel noted that Mr Payne had also attended a course to become a Mental Health First Aider, of which the panel had seen a certificate, which gave him insight into the impact of mental health on behaviour.
- In light of the level of insight, remorse and the rehabilitation steps taken, the panel considered that the risk of repetition of this behaviour was very low. The panel accepted Mr Payne’s evidence that he had developed coping strategies for stress which did not involve the consumption of alcohol, and this was supported by oral evidence from Witness A, his [REDACTED], who confirmed that despite the challenges of Mr Payne’s current role, he took the challenges “*in his stride*” and did not show signs of stress.
- There was substantial evidence before the panel that Mr Payne made significant contributions to education and that it would be a loss to the profession if he were prohibited from returning to teaching.
- Mr Payne had continued to contribute to education and children’s services outside of the school setting as a governor at a large specialist school serving children and young people with a wide range of additional needs. Further he serves as a member of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Mr Payne also confirmed to the panel he had kept up to date on issues which were relevant to education such as reading the Government’s White Paper “Every Child Achieving and Thriving”.

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 noted that the publication of the findings would have an impact on Mr Payne's reputation.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response, which would strike the right balance. Whilst this was conviction of a serious driving offence involving alcohol, given that the severity of the behaviour was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the substantial mitigating factors that were present in this case and the level of insight and remorse shown by Mr Payne, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case.

The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to Mr Payne as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

## **Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State**

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

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

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

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the findings of a relevant conviction in respect of Mr Jeremy Payne should be published, and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Payne 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
  - not undermining fundamental British values, including... the rule of law.

The panel has found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Payne's ongoing suitability to teach.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding “...*that the behaviour involved in driving with excess alcohol could have had an impact on the safety of members of the public.*”

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of a relevant conviction, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Payne, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect others. The panel has observed, “...*driving with excess alcohol was a serious offence which could have had a significant effect on others - in particular the panel noted Mr Payne drove at a speed of 61 miles per hour on cruise control. Mr Payne’s actions posed a risk to others.*” 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 noted that Mr Payne had shown insight into his actions and showed considerable remorse. He had attended a course for Drink-Drive offenders, of which the panel had seen a certificate of completion, and he described the lessons that he had learned from this course, and as a result of this incident, during his oral evidence. Mr Payne confirmed both orally and in writing that he no longer drives if he is going to drink alcohol and he makes alternative arrangements for transport.*”

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 considered that Mr Payne’s behaviour in committing the offence could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community.*”

I am particularly mindful of the finding “...*that the offence was a serious driving offence involving excess alcohol...*” in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to

consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

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

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Payne himself. The panel comment *“Mr Payne did have a previously good history, having demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct and having contributed significantly to the education sector over his long career in teaching.”*

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning insight, remorse and rehabilitation. The panel has said,

*“The panel considered Mr Payne was a credible and honest witness, who showed full insight and remorse in relation to the negative and harmful impact of his behaviour on others, including on the pupils, staff, governing body and leadership team at the School. The panel accepted that Mr Payne had fully analysed the reasons underlying his behaviour and decision to drive under the influence of excess alcohol, he had processed this fully and he had learned from the experience. The panel considered he had a deep understanding and insight into his actions.*

*In terms of rehabilitation, Mr Payne had completed the course for Drink-Drive offenders, of which the panel had seen a certificate of completion. Mr Payne was able to describe to the panel in some detail the lessons that he had learned from this course, and as a result of this incident, during his oral evidence, including that he now follows the “3 C’s” of caution, consideration and control. Mr Payne confirmed both orally and in writing that he no longer drives if he is going to drink alcohol and instead he makes alternative arrangements for transport.”*

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that *“In light of the level of insight, remorse and the rehabilitation steps taken, the panel considered that the risk of repetition of this behaviour was very low. The panel accepted Mr Payne’s evidence that he had developed coping strategies for stress which did not involve the consumption of alcohol, and this was supported by oral evidence from Witness A...”*

When considering sanction, I have also placed weight on the contribution that Mr Payne has made to the profession, and in particular, the panel’s comment that *“There was*

*substantial evidence before the panel that Mr Payne made significant contributions to education and that it would be a loss to the profession if he were prohibited from returning to teaching.”*

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Blomfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield**

**Date: 20 April 2026**

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