



Teaching
Regulation
Agency

Mr Neil Metcalf: Professional conduct panel meeting outcome

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

March 2026

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Allegations | 4 |
| Summary of evidence | 4 |
| Documents | 4 |
| Statement of agreed facts | 5 |
| Decision and reasons | 5 |
| Findings of fact | 6 |
| Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State | 9 |
| 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 Neil Metcalf

Teacher ref number: 9553762

Teacher date of birth: 2 June 1973

TRA reference: 23106

Date of determination: 21 April 2026

Former employer: Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School, Liverpool

Introduction

A professional conduct panel ("the panel") of the Teaching Regulation Agency ("the TRA") convened on 21 April 2026 by way of a virtual meeting, to consider the case of Mr Neil Metcalf.

The panel members were Mrs Shabana Robertson (lay panellist – in the chair), Mrs Bernie Whittle (teacher panellist) and Dr Andrew Harries (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mrs Luisa Gibbons of Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP Solicitors.

In advance of the meeting, after taking into consideration the public interest and the interests of justice, the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Metcalf that the allegations be considered without a hearing. Mr Metcalf provided a signed statement of agreed facts and admitted conviction of a relevant offence. The panel considered the case at a meeting without the attendance of the presenting officer, Ms Jessica Etherington of Kingsley Napley LLP, or Mr Metcalf.

The meeting took place in private and was not recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of meeting dated 17 December 2025.

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

1. Between 9 September 2017 to 24 May 2022 at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School, Sands Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK, L18 8BD, he committed fraud in that while occupying a position, namely Headmaster, in which he was expected to safeguard, or not to act against, the financial interests of St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School, Sands Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK L18 8BD, he dishonestly abused that position intending thereby to make a gain, namely £10,800 for himself; and/or
2. Between 1 September 2022 to 23 November 2023 at Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School, Green Lane, Mossley Hill, Merseyside, UK L18 2EP, he committed fraud in that while occupying a position, namely Headmaster, in which he was expected to safeguard, or not to act against the financial interests of Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School, Green Lane, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK L18 2EP, he dishonestly abused that position intending thereby to make a gain, namely £4,690 for himself.

Mr Metcalf admitted the allegations and admitted that he was guilty of having been convicted of a relevant offence.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 5 to 6

Section 2: Notice of referral and response – pages 7 to 24

Section 3: Statement of agreed facts – pages 25 to 28

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 29 to 275

Section 5: Teacher's representations – pages 276 - 290

Section 6: Notice of meeting – page 291 to 292

The panel also received a letter confirming to Mr Metcalf that the professional conduct panel meeting had been re-arranged for 21 April 2026.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the meeting.

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

Statement of agreed facts

The panel considered a statement of agreed facts which was signed by Mr Metcalf on 14 October 2025.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In advance of the meeting the TRA agreed to a request from Mr Metcalf for the allegations to be considered without a hearing. The panel had the ability to direct that the case be considered at a hearing if required in the interests of justice or in the public interest. The panel did not determine that such a direction was necessary or appropriate in this case.

From 1 January 2016 to 31 August 2022, Mr Metcalf was employed as the headmaster of St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School.

On 1 September 2022, Mr Metcalf commenced the role of headteacher at Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School ("the School").

On 24 November 2023, Mr Metcalf was suspended from the School, and an internal investigation was commenced into financial discrepancies which were subsequently reported to the police.

On 28 March 2024, Mr Metcalf attended an interview as part of the School's investigation.

On 10 June 2024, Mr Metcalf attended a disciplinary hearing, and he resigned from his role at the School.

On 3 July 2024, Mr Metcalf was referred to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

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

- 1. Between 9 September 2017 to 24 May 2022 at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School, Sands Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK, L18 8BD, he committed fraud in that while occupying a position, namely Headmaster, in which he was expected to safeguard, or not to act against, the financial interests of St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School, Sands Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK L18 8BD, he dishonestly abused that position intending thereby to make a gain, namely £10,800 for himself; and/or**
- 2. Between 1 September 2022 to 23 November 2023 at Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School, Green Lane, Mossley Hill, Merseyside, UK L18 2EP, he committed fraud in that while occupying a position, namely Headmaster, in which he was expected to safeguard, or not to act against the financial interests of Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic Primary School, Green Lane, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, Merseyside, UK L18 2EP, he dishonestly abused that position intending thereby to make a gain, namely £4,690 for himself.**

The panel noted that Mr Metcalf admitted to having been convicted of the above offences in a statement of agreed facts.

The panel was provided with a certificate of conviction which confirmed that Mr Metcalf had been convicted at Liverpool Crown Court of the above offences on 18 July 2024 following a guilty plea. The panel noted that there was a minor discrepancy in that the certificate of conviction referred to the period in which Mr Metcalf committed fraud at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School as being between 7 September 2017 and 24 May 2022. However, the panel did not consider that this discrepancy was material to the nature of the offence. The panel accepted the certificate of conviction as conclusive proof of both the conviction and the necessary facts implied by the conviction.

The panel noted that Mr Metcalf was sentenced on 29 November 2024 to 15 months' imprisonment.

The Judge's sentencing remarks provided the following information. After Mr Metcalf commenced his position as headteacher at the School, an invoice was presented for payment in the sum of £2280 payable to [REDACTED] at SchoolFit. The invoice had been unusual as it had been presented via Mr Metcalf, rather than being submitted directly to the School. A query was raised with Mr Metcalf as to what the invoice was for; he said that it referred to health and safety and the invoice was paid. It was later found

that SchoolFit did not exist and requests were made for further information from Mr Metcalf which were not satisfied. Other invoices were reviewed and an earlier invoice for SchoolFit in the sum of £2,160 and one for [REDACTED] in the sum of £250 were identified as of concern since the VAT numbers on the invoices were invalid.

The police contacted St Anthony of Padua School. Several other invoices at that school were identified as suspicious including 6 payments made to SchoolFit in the name of [REDACTED].

The Judge stated that it was a serious aggravating factor that Mr Metcalf had implicated [REDACTED], because he, at Mr Metcalf's request, cashed the cheques and sent Mr Metcalf the money, without realising the circumstances in which he was doing so.

In Mr Metcalf's police interview he confirmed that [REDACTED] was his [REDACTED] and maintained that SchoolFit had come into the School to do risk assessments. The judge stated that, as far as he could tell, Mr Metcalf had maintained that the [REDACTED] referred to on the invoices had nothing to do with Mr Metcalf's [REDACTED]. Mr Metcalf subsequently pleaded guilty to both counts.

The Judge stated that the combined loss of both schools totalled £15,490 which was a significant sum, particularly so given the financial constraints upon those schools. At the School, matters were compounded because they had to employ 2 headteachers for a period of 2 terms or thereabouts, whilst Mr Metcalf was suspended. Consequently, there was an additional cost of £33,500.

Findings as to conviction of a relevant offence

Having found all of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of those proved allegations amounted to convictions 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 Metcalf, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Metcalf breached the obligation in the preamble of Teachers' Standards requiring teachers to act with honesty and integrity.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Metcalf 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

- not undermining fundamental British values, including ... the rule of law...
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel noted that the individual's actions were relevant to teaching, working with children, and/or working in an education setting. Mr Metcalf's actions had a direct impact on the resources available for the education of pupils. Furthermore, Mr Metcalf was expected to act as a role model, and committing acts of fraud did not set an appropriate example to pupils. His actions undermined the trust placed in him in his role.

The panel did not consider that Mr Metcalf's actions had a potential impact on the safety or security of pupils or members of the public.

The panel also took account of the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. The panel considered that Mr Metcalf's behaviour in committing the offences could affect public confidence in the teaching profession, given the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents, and others in the community.

The panel noted that Mr Metcalf's behaviour ultimately led to a sentence of imprisonment, which was indicative of the seriousness of the offences committed.

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

This was a case concerning offences involving fraud or serious dishonesty which the Advice states are likely to be considered relevant offences.

The panel took into account Mr Metcalf's written representations that, at the time, he was struggling with spiralling debt due to loans and credit cards that he had taken out. He stated that he did not share his problems with anyone including [REDACTED], which led him to make decisions that he was "deeply ashamed of." He explained that taking out "unwise loans" led him to the position of committing fraud in an attempt to "keep his head above water" with the fear of losing his house [REDACTED]. However, the panel noted that Mr Metcalf had committed these offences at 2 schools over a significant period of time. This was a sophisticated fraud planned by Mr Metcalf to avoid detection. He would have had many opportunities over that time to make better choices. Whilst many people struggle with financial issues, it is not an answer to resort to fraud.

The panel also took account of references attesting to Mr Metcalf's record as a teacher.

Although the panel found that the evidence of Mr Metcalf's teaching proficiency was of note, the panel also found that the seriousness of the offending behaviour that led to the conviction was relevant to Mr Metcalf's ongoing suitability to teach. The financial impact

on the schools impacted the resources available for pupils. The panel considered that a finding that these convictions were for relevant offences 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 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 maintenance of public confidence in the profession, and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

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

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Metcalf 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 Metcalf in the profession. Whilst there was evidence that Mr Metcalf had ability as an educator, the panel considered that the adverse public interest considerations above outweighed any interest in retaining Mr Metcalf in the profession. His behaviour fundamentally breached the standard of conduct expected of a teacher, and he abused his position of trust, as was confirmed in the description of the offences for which Mr Metcalf was convicted.

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. The panel noted that a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a

possible threat to the public interest. As referred to above, the panel noted that the offences committed by Mr Metcalf involved dishonestly abusing his position.

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 Metcalf.

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;
- abuse of position or trust...;
- actions or behaviours that ...undermine fundamental British values of ...the rule of law...
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions or purposeful destruction of evidence, especially where these behaviours have been repeated or had serious consequences, or involved the coercion of another person to act in a way contrary to their own interests; and
- collusion or concealment including:
 - ...concealing inappropriate actions;
 - encouraging others to break rules; and
 - lying to prevent the identification of wrongdoing;

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 evidence that Mr Metcalf's actions were deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Metcalf was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. However, the panel noted that Mr Metcalf stated in his written representations that he was, at the time, struggling with spiralling debt, and was concerned that his [REDACTED] was in jeopardy. [REDACTED]

The panel was not provided with any evidence that Mr Metcalf demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector. Mr Metcalf referred to voluntary roles he had undertaken, but the panel did not see any evidence that indicated Mr Metcalf had demonstrated a contribution over and above that which would be quite commonplace for a headteacher. There was no evidence of innovative practices or contribution on a national level to teaching practice.

Mr Metcalf provided 10 references, including some from former pupils. Some, if not all, of the references appeared to be those that Mr Metcalf had obtained for the purpose of the criminal court proceedings, as some referred to their awareness of Mr Metcalf having been charged with fraud.

The references consisted of the following:

- An [REDACTED] who had known Mr Metcalf since 2022 referred to Mr Metcalf's involvement with the children at various athletics' events. He stated that Mr Metcalf was at the core of various associations to develop athletics for primary school children, saying that there were over 2000 people benefitting from Mr Metcalf's work at 20 events every year.
- A former colleague referred to Mr Metcalf having led an initiative and seeking outside funding for year 6 students to undertake a residential trip and his introduction of inter-school competitions. This referee stated that Mr Metcalf always put the needs of children first and never made decisions based on what was best for him, but always on what was best for their school community. The referee stated that "for Neil to make any decision that prioritised his needs above those of his school community would be totally out of character."
- A former pupil stated that he had known Mr Metcalf for 22 years and that, throughout that time, Mr Metcalf had "demonstrated integrity, honesty and a strong ethical compass". He too stated that the allegations seemed "completely out of character for someone who has always upheld such high moral standards." He referred to the positive impact Mr Metcalf had had on his life, and reflected on the lessons he imparted of resilience, kindness, and the importance of lifelong learning.
- Another former colleague at St Anthony of Padua School stated that without Mr Metcalf's care, support, and encouragement he would have left the teaching profession. He stated that his "dedication and commitment to children was never in doubt – he always put the children first and went above and beyond to provide them with opportunities they might not otherwise have had."

- Another former pupil also referred to the allegations being “completely out of character,” stating that they believed that Mr Metcalf had played a key role in her education and getting her to where she is today. She stated that “he is kind, compassionate and hardworking which is why he made an excellent teacher.”
- A friend [REDACTED] stated that teaching was not just a job to Mr Metcalf “it meant everything to him and took up most of his spare time as well as his working hours. He was always involved with the ‘school community’ where he worked, coaching the football, athletics, and cross-country teams, being part of the PTA and organising events for children across the city.” She referred to knowing that Mr Metcalf “deeply regrets what he has done” and that it was his intention that all monies were repaid.
- A parent of pupils who knew Mr Metcalf through [REDACTED] stated that it had been noticeable how supportive Mr Metcalf was and that he was a very visible member of the local community through the school. He referred to Mr Metcalf teaching [REDACTED] final year of primary school and that Mr Metcalf “brought the best out” of [REDACTED]. He also referred to Mr Metcalf teaching [REDACTED] who “blossomed” under Mr Metcalf’s tutelage.
- A [REDACTED] stated that Mr Metcalf was a distant relative who he had known for around 20 years. He stated that he knew Mr Metcalf to be a genuinely honest and decent man, and that his conduct was “totally out of character.” He stated that he had always regarded Mr Metcalf as a role model for his family, those close to him and the children he had taught.
- A [REDACTED] stated that he had previously provided Mr Metcalf with job references describing him as “honest, trustworthy, reliable with personal integrity and principle” and said that he stood by those assessments.
- A [REDACTED] referred to having gotten to know Mr Metcalf when Mr Metcalf was trying to expand the sports curriculum at St Anthony of Padua’s School, initiating a sports morning programme with the “focus on the cognitive learning of children doing sport before they start class.” He referred to this having continued with the School having become part of the same morning club once Mr Metcalf became headteacher there. He referred to “so many children from both schools pursuing extra curriculum events outside of school” which the children “wouldn’t have had the opportunity to do if it was not for Neil’s foresight to put the children first.”

The panel was also provided with references given to the School when he applied for the post of headteacher in 2022. These included a reference from a school improvement partner who had worked with Mr Metcalf for approximately 6 years. She stated that she had no hesitation in recommending Mr Metcalf for the post. The [REDACTED] confirmed

she would be willing to re-employ Mr Metcalf and rated Mr Metcalf "outstanding" in respect of his relationships with colleagues / students / parents; his reliability and dependability; his honesty and integrity; his punctuality and his personal initiative. A faith reference was also provided which confirmed that Mr Metcalf was recommended without reservation for the post of headteacher at the School.

The panel placed less weight on the testimonial statements attesting to Mr Metcalf's character, in light of his convictions for fraud. His conviction for fraud indicated his duplicitous nature and the panel considered that, in those circumstances, it was not surprising that others would speak highly of him. The panel noted that none of the testimonials appeared to have been provided for the purpose of these TRA misconduct proceedings, after his convictions for fraud. Those convictions clearly demonstrated that, contrary to many of the references, he was not, in fact, putting the needs of the pupils first.

In Mr Metcalf's undated written representations for these proceedings, he explained that he was in no way meaning to justify his actions, which he stated he was deeply ashamed of and regretted.

The panel took into account that Mr Metcalf pleaded guilty in the criminal proceedings. He has admitted the allegations in these TRA proceedings and agreed to the allegations being determined at a professional conduct panel meeting, saving the cost and resources of a hearing being convened.

Mr Metcalf referred to the shame and hurt his conviction had brought to [REDACTED], particularly by having been "broadcast over the local press." He asked that it be considered that he and [REDACTED] had paid the price for his actions, and that any further sanction "would not be necessary." He stated that he knew he would "never be a headteacher again" and "this is of great distress" to him. He stated that he has attempted to move on by starting a career in the rail industry.

Mr Metcalf stated that he was devastated that his own actions have stopped him from continuing to create opportunities for children, and that he hopes that one day he may be able to assist in arranging extra-curricular events for children. He stated that he had tried to "be so much more than simply a teacher or headteacher throughout [his] career and believed in giving the opportunities to try many new things and excel in different areas." He stated that in addition to his role as headteacher, he has also taken on many voluntary roles to provide opportunities for children not only his school but also across Liverpool and Merseyside. As referred to above, the panel did not consider those roles were anything over and above those which would be commonly undertaken by headteachers.

Mr Metcalf confirmed that both schools had been fully recompensed for the losses caused as a result of his actions. The panel saw no evidence to confirm that this was the

case. Mr Metcalf's simple reliance on this demonstrated a lack of understanding of the wider implications of his actions upon the standing of the schools concerned in the community.

The panel did not consider that Mr Metcalf had demonstrated that he has insight into the financial impact on the schools and the resources available for pupils, on the reputation of those schools in the local community and on the profession. The panel considered that Mr Metcalf's representations demonstrated chagrin at the personal consequences of his actions rather than an empathetic identification with the perspective of others.

Mr Metcalf stated that he recognised that, had he shared his problems with others, he would not have taken the actions that he had. There was no evidence, however, of any steps that Mr Metcalf had taken to obtain professional support to understand why he acted in this manner over a significant period of time and to equip him with strategies to reduce the risk of repetition. There was no evidence before the panel to give it confidence that trust could be placed in Mr Metcalf in the future.

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

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

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mr Metcalf. His persistent dishonesty undermined the trust that could be placed in him, and he failed to show the necessary degree of insight into his behaviour for the panel to have any assurance regarding the risk of repetition. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

The panel went on to consider whether or not it would be appropriate for it to decide to recommend a review period of the order. The panel was mindful that the Advice states that a prohibition order applies for life, but there may be circumstances, in any given case, that may make it appropriate to allow a teacher to apply to have the prohibition order reviewed after a specified period of time that may not be less than 2 years.

The Advice indicates that there are certain types of case where, if relevant, the public interest will have greater relevance and weigh in favour of not offering a review period.

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

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

In this case, the panel considered that there had been a very serious abuse of trust for which he received a significant sentence of imprisonment. Mr Metcalf played a pivotal role in the community and was willing to breach the trust placed in him. That abuse of trust undermines the panel's confidence that he is sufficiently trustworthy to work as a teacher.

There was no indication that Mr Metcalf had taken any steps to demonstrate that he would be capable of being trusted in the future, or that he sufficiently appreciated the consequences of his actions such that it would act as a future deterrent. The panel noted, however, that he had previously shown ability as a teacher, and that he may be able to make a contribution to the education of pupils in the future, if he had sufficient time to demonstrate that he was trustworthy and that the risk of repetition was low.

The panel therefore considered that this was a situation which indicated a longer time before a review period could be considered appropriate.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provisions for a review period after 6 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 all of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to a relevant conviction.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Neil Metcalf should be the subject of a prohibition order, with a review period of 6 years.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Metcalf 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...
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The findings of misconduct are particularly serious as they include a finding of a conviction for the relevant offence of dishonestly abusing his position as headteacher for financial gain. The conviction resulted in a custodial sentence.

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 Metcalf, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel has observed that whilst "Mr Metcalf's actions had a direct impact on the resources available for the education of pupils", it did not consider that his "actions had a potential impact on the safety or security of pupils or members of the public."

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse. The panel has noted that, in his written representations, Mr Metcalf had "stated he was deeply ashamed of and regretted" his actions. However, the panel stated that it "did not consider that Mr Metcalf had demonstrated that he has insight into the financial impact on the schools and the resources available for pupils, on the reputation of those schools in the local community and on the profession." The panel also stated that it "considered that Mr Metcalf's representations demonstrated chagrin at the personal consequences of his actions rather than an empathetic identification with the perspective of others." In my judgement, the lack of insight means that there is some risk of the repetition of this behaviour. I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed that “public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Metcalf was not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.” I am particularly mindful of the finding of a headteacher abusing his position for personal financial gain 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 Metcalf himself. The panel has commented that it “was not provided with any evidence that Mr Metcalf demonstrated exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

The panel has noted that it was provided with 10 references, some or all of which Mr Metcalf appeared to have obtained for the purpose of the court proceedings. The panel was also provided with references from when Mr Metcalf applied for the post of headteacher in 2022. The panel has stated that it “placed less weight on the testimonial statements attesting to Mr Metcalf’s character, in light of his convictions for fraud. His conviction for fraud indicated his duplicitous nature and the panel considered that, in those circumstances, it was not surprising that others would speak highly of him. The panel noted that none of the testimonials appeared to have been provided for the purpose of these TRA misconduct proceedings, after his convictions for fraud. Those convictions clearly demonstrated that, contrary to many of the references, he was not, in fact, putting the needs of the pupils first.”

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the seriousness of the offences for which Mr Metcalf was convicted and received a custodial sentence. The panel has said that his “persistent dishonesty undermined the trust that could be placed in him, and he failed to show the necessary degree of insight into his behaviour for the panel to have any assurance regarding the risk of repetition.”

I have also placed considerable weight on the panel's comment that "a teacher's behaviour that seeks to exploit their position of trust should be viewed very seriously in terms of its potential influence on pupils and be seen as a possible threat to the public interest."

I have also noted the panel's findings that there was evidence that Mr Metcalf's actions were deliberate and that there was no evidence to suggest that he was acting under extreme duress, although the panel has noted that "Mr Metcalf stated in his written representations that he was, at the time, struggling with spiralling debt, and was concerned that his [REDACTED] was in jeopardy.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore to the contribution that Mr Metcalf 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 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 6-year review period.

I have considered the panel's comments:

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

In this case, the panel considered that there had been a very serious abuse of trust for which he received a significant sentence of imprisonment. Mr Metcalf played a pivotal role in the community and was willing to breach the trust placed in him. That abuse of trust undermines the panel's confidence that he is sufficiently trustworthy to work as a teacher.

There was no indication that Mr Metcalf had taken any steps to demonstrate that he would be capable of being trusted in the future, or that he sufficiently appreciated the consequences of his actions such that it would act as a future deterrent. The panel noted, however, that he had previously shown ability as a teacher, and that he may be able to make a contribution to the education of pupils in the future, if he had sufficient time to demonstrate that he was trustworthy and that the risk of repetition was low.

The panel therefore considered that this was a situation which indicated a longer time before a review period could be considered appropriate.”

I have considered whether a 6-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that allowing a shorter review period is not sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the serious nature of the offences of which Mr Metcalf was convicted, the lack of insight and the risk of repetition.

I consider therefore that a 6-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession.

This means that Mr Neil Metcalf is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children’s home in England. He may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 29 April 2032, 6 years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If he does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mr Metcalf remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

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

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 22 April 2026

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