



Mr Urvish Patel - Professional conduct panel outcome

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

May 2026

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

Teacher: Mr Urvish Patel
TRA reference: 24672
Date of determination: 20 May 2026
Former employer: Corby Business Academy, Corby, NN17 5EB

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 18-20 May 2026, by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Urvish Patel.

The panel members were Ms Charlotte Kelly (lay panellist – in the chair), Mr Patrick Berry (teacher panellist), and Ms Clare Shortt (teacher panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Mr John Lucarotti of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Jessica Bass of Capsticks solicitors.

Mr Patel was not present and was not represented.

The hearing took place in public and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 13 February 2026.

It was alleged that Mr Patel was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, while employed as a teacher at Corby Business Academy (“the School”) between 30 April 2020 and 23 October 2024:

1. On or around 22 July 2024 he:
 - a. Brought and/or stored alcohol on the School premises when he was not permitted to do so;
 - b. Consumed alcohol and/or was under the influence of alcohol on the School premises when he was not permitted to do so.

Mr Patel responded to the notice of proceedings on 5 March 2026 and indicated that he admitted the allegations. Mr Patel further admitted that he was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

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

Section 1: Chronology and list of key people – pages 3 to 4

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 5 to 36

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 37 to 149

Section 4: Teacher documents – pages 150 to 157

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

- Service Bundle (84 pages)
- Unredacted version of page 74 of the bundle.

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

Witnesses

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

Witness A – [REDACTED]

Witness B – [REDACTED]

Witness C – [REDACTED]

Witness D – [REDACTED]

Witness E – [REDACTED]

Decision and reasons

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

The relevant background was as follows:

Mr Patel was employed at the School, which is a secondary school, between April 2020 and October 2024 as the Head of Maths.

The School's sports day was held on the afternoon of 22 July 2024. This took place on a sports ground in close proximity to the main school building. During the afternoon, groups of pupils periodically returned to the school building for the purpose of toilet breaks and obtaining drinks. These groups were accompanied by teachers, one of which was Mr Patel.

It was noted by Witness A [REDACTED] that on each occasion that Mr Patel brought a group of pupils into the school building, rather than waiting with the pupils whilst they went to the toilet, he instead went in the direction of the Maths Department. He then returned after a few minutes and exited the school building with the pupils. On the second or third occasion that this happened, Witness A recalls smelling alcohol emanating from Mr Patel when he passed her on his way out of the building.

Witness A reported this to a senior staff member and then a search was conducted that afternoon of a Maths Department classroom cupboard used by Mr Patel. This search yielded a vodka bottle, with approximately 15% of its original contents still inside. The bottle had been stored in a plastic bag wrapped in a suit jacket that belonged to Mr Patel.

The School commenced a disciplinary investigation into Mr Patel's conduct. He was interviewed on 10 September 2024 and then attended a disciplinary hearing on 23

October 2024. He left the employ of the School shortly afterwards and a referral was made to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The panel reminded itself that in order to find an allegation proved, the TRA had to discharge the burden of proof, and the panel needed to be satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that an event set out in the allegation had occurred.

The panel noted that allegations 1(a) and (b) were both drafted with 'and/or' in respect of events on or around 22 July 2024 and that it was required to consider each element set out in the allegations. It noted that this meant that if it found either part of each allegation proved this would be sufficient to find each sub-particular proved.

Having reviewed the documentation before it, the panel considered that it was unclear as to what Mr Patel had admitted and when.

The panel noted that in July 2025, Mr Patel's position had been that he admitted allegation 1(a) but not allegation 1(b). This appeared consistent with Mr Patel's recorded position in the disciplinary hearing of 23 October 2024, in that he admitted storing the vodka bottle at the School but that he did not either accept consuming alcohol at the School or being under the influence of alcohol at the School on 22 July 2024.

The panel further noted that Mr Patel had returned a notice of proceedings form to the TRA on 5 March 2026 and that in respect of question 4 ('do you admit the allegations set out in the Notice of Proceedings dated 13/02/2026?') he had circled the answer 'yes'. In this form it was not possible (as it had been in the previous July 2025 form) to circle 'yes' and 'no' to separate sub-particulars of allegations, and thus the panel considered that it was not clear as to whether Mr Patel was now accepting allegation 1(b), or simply restating his previous acceptance of allegation 1(a).

In light of this lack of clarity, the panel decided not to place any reliance on the 'admission' from Mr Patel in relation to allegation 1(b) and instead focused its attention on the other evidence advanced by the TRA in support of this allegation.

The panel also took care to ensure that it only considered the allegations against Mr Patel which had been advanced by the TRA, and to disregard any other matters which had the potential to influence its decision-making in respect of those allegations. In that respect, the panel only relied upon of the evidence of Witness C, who had chaired a previous disciplinary investigation into Mr Patel's storage of empty alcohol bottles at the School, insofar as it was relevant to the question of what Mr Patel knew about the School's policy in respect of alcohol on school premises.

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

1. On or around 22 July 2024 you:

a. Brought and/or stored alcohol on the School premises when you were not permitted to do so

The panel noted that this allegation had been admitted by Mr Patel throughout these proceedings and that this admission was consistent with his account in the disciplinary hearing in October 2024, which was that:

- he had stored a bottle of vodka on the school premises to avoid it being seen by his family,
- he had brought the bottle into the school prior to 22 July 2024.

The panel reviewed Mr Patel's admission alongside the evidence before it, including the account of Witness B, who was present at the search of the cupboard when the bottle wrapped in the bag and Mr Patel's jacket was found. The panel considered Mr Patel's admission to be consistent with that evidence.

The panel further noted that paragraph 9.1 of the School's Code of Professional and Safe Conduct stated that the School: "will not tolerate the presence or misuse of illegal drugs, drugs with no accepted medicinal purpose, alcohol or other prohibited substances (together referred to as "drugs" in this policy) on its property, on off-site school trips or events in which students are being supervised." The panel noted that the policy made it clear that alcohol on School property was not permitted.

This policy had been in force since September 2022. The panel heard evidence from various witnesses that staff members would review and sign all School policies on a yearly basis and that there was no reason to think that Mr Patel had not done so or was unaware of this particular policy. The panel noted that, in any event, Mr Patel had recently (17 July 2024) been the subject of a separate investigation into his storage of empty alcohol bottles at the School, and thus the unacceptability of storing alcohol on the School premises would have been particularly evident to him.

Accordingly, the panel found that the allegation that Mr Patel had stored alcohol on the School premises when he was not permitted to do so was proved.

The panel went on to consider whether there was sufficient evidence before it to find, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Patel had brought the alcohol in question onto the School premises on or about 22 July 2024, as opposed to simply storing it there on that day. It concluded that there was not.

Whilst the panel noted the evidence of Witness B to the effect that she had viewed video footage of Mr Patel leaving the school on the morning of 22 July 2024 and then subsequently returning some minutes later with his jacket off, the panel was of the view that this was not cogent evidence of Mr Patel bringing alcohol onto the School premises on that day. The panel further noted that there was no other evidence in support of this particular allegation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the panel acknowledged that Mr Patel had undoubtedly brought the alcohol in question onto School premises at some point prior to 22 July 2024 and that this was not permitted, but it was not satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that this had occurred on or about 22 July 2024.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you not proved, for these reasons:

1. On or around 22 July 2024 you:

b. Consumed alcohol and/or were under the influence of alcohol on the School premises when you were not permitted to do so.

The panel noted that the TRA accepted that its case in respect of the second half of this allegation rested on the first part of the allegation. That is to say, the TRA accepted that if it was unable to prove that Mr Patel had consumed alcohol on the School premises, it would not be able to prove that he was under the influence of alcohol, given that the evidence from all witnesses was that there was nothing in his demeanour or behaviour which indicated that he had been drinking alcohol. The suggestion from the TRA was that if he had consumed approximately 85% of a bottle of vodka then this would mean that he would be under the influence of alcohol, regardless of how he might have appeared to others.

The panel noted that the key evidence in respect of this allegation came from Witness A, in that she was the sole person who had smelled alcohol on Mr Patel and that she had seen him chewing gum and this may have been an attempt to conceal the alcohol consumption. The panel noted that the only other evidence advanced by the TRA in support came from Witness B who had viewed video footage of Mr Patel entering and leaving the classroom on multiple occasions during the afternoon of 22 July. The panel noted that this video footage did not appear to include anything which directly supported the contention that Mr Patel had been consuming alcohol, simply that he had been entering a room where alcohol was later found.

The panel considered whether Witness A's account of Mr Patel smelling of alcohol meant that it could be satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Patel had consumed alcohol on School premises. In deciding that it could not be so satisfied, the panel took account of the following factors:

- Witness A did not say that she had smelled alcohol on Mr Patel's breath, simply that she had smelled alcohol in his vicinity,
- There were other possible explanations for Mr Patel smelling of alcohol other than him having consumed it on the School premises,
- There was no evidence that Mr Patel had been behaving in a manner which suggested he had consumed alcohol.

Accordingly, the panel did not find that this allegation was proven.

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

Having found one of the allegations proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of that proved allegation amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel noted that, although Mr Patel had made admissions to both of these matters in his response to the notice of proceedings, it was required to consider this matter itself and exercise its own judgement in doing so.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document *Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers* ("the Advice").

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

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

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

The panel noted that Mr Patel's actions in storing a bottle of alcohol on school property were clearly in breach of relevant policies and practices of the School, and thus this part of the Teachers' Standards had been breached.

The panel also considered whether Mr Patel's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel considered that whilst the breaching of school policies in relation to the storage of alcohol in a classroom was undoubtedly a matter of some concern, it was not satisfied that Mr Patel's conduct of itself amounted to misconduct of a sufficiently serious nature to mean that it had fallen significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The panel noted that whilst it appeared that there had been previous concerns raised with Mr Patel about his storage of items on school property, these matters had not been the subject of TRA allegations, and they related to empty bottles that no longer contained alcohol. As a result, the panel viewed Mr Patel's behaviour as a single example of him breaching a school policy in a limited way and not something which on its own met the high threshold for unacceptable professional conduct.

Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Patel was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Patel's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Patel's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice.

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Patel was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel noted that the advice is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other behaviours that panels consider to be "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute".

The panel considered that Mr Patel's actions in storing an open bottle containing alcohol in an unlocked classroom cupboard which could be accessed by pupils would be likely to alarm members of the public and therefore had the potential to damage the reputation of the teacher and the teaching profession as a whole.

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

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

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

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. The panel noted that 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 a 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.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Patel which involved him breaching the policy of the School in that he stored an opened alcohol bottle in an unlocked classroom cupboard, there was potentially a strong public interest consideration in upholding standards in terms of teachers abiding by school policies in respect of storage of alcohol on-site.

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

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 Patel in the profession.

The panel noted that there was potentially a public interest consideration in retaining Mr Patel in the profession, since the evidence from witnesses was that he was an excellent teacher and able to make a valuable contribution to 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 Mr Patel.

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, the one that was potentially relevant in this case was:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;

In ultimately deciding that this was not a serious departure from the relevant Teachers' Standards, the panel relied upon the same reasoning it had deployed when concluding that Mr Patel's behaviour did not amount to unacceptable professional conduct, namely that this was one breach of the School policy which was limited to the storage of one item concealed in a cupboard.

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order could potentially 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. In this regard, the panel noted the following:

- There was evidence that Mr Patel's actions were deliberate.
- There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Patel was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation.
- Mr Patel had no previous regulatory history and appeared to be respected as an excellent teacher by colleagues, but the panel had no specific evidence (whether these be references or representations from Mr Patel himself) before it that he had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.
- Mr Patel had not attended the hearing, so the panel had not had the opportunity to assess his insight directly, however the panel noted that he had been described as 'contrite' by Witness C in respect of his response to a previous investigation.

The panel considered whether there was a risk of repetition of the behaviour and if so whether this factor meant that a prohibition order was necessary. The panel recognised that there was no evidence before it in respect of Mr Patel's present circumstances or any other information which would assist in understanding his current relationship with alcohol. The panel also took into account Mr Patel's previously stated reasons (in the disciplinary hearing) for having stored the bottle of alcohol at the School, namely that he did not wish his family to see it.

The panel decided that whilst it could not conclude on the evidence before it that there was a low risk of repetition of this behaviour, the risk as it was, appeared tolerable in light of the wider background to this matter, given that it related to one breach of a school policy.

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, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response. Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, 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 the teacher 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.

In deciding to make no recommendation as to prohibition, the panel relied upon the following factors in particular:

- The behaviour which had potentially brought the profession into disrepute related to one breach of a school policy in a limited timeframe;
- The evidence of the various witnesses that Mr Patel was an excellent teacher and that there was a clear public interest in retaining an experienced teacher in the profession;
- Publication, was, in the view of the panel in all of the circumstances, the proportionate outcome.

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 one of the allegations proven and found that those proven facts amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In this case, the panel has found that the allegation which it found proven does not amount to unacceptable professional conduct and has found one of the allegations not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that Mr Urvish Patel should not be the subject of a prohibition order. The panel has recommended that the

findings of conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Patel is in breach of the following standards:

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

The panel has found that the conduct of Mr Patel fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

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 conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Patel, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would protect children and safeguard pupils. The panel does not mention having considered any evidence that Mr Patel's behaviour placed the safety and wellbeing of his pupils in jeopardy. However, the panel has observed:

"In the light of the panel's findings against Mr Patel which involved him breaching the policy of the School in that he stored an opened alcohol bottle in an unlocked classroom cupboard, there was potentially a strong public interest consideration in upholding standards in terms of teachers abiding by school policies in respect of storage of alcohol on-site."

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel has set out as follows:

"Mr Patel had not attended the hearing, so the panel had not had the opportunity to assess his insight directly, however the panel noted that he had been described as 'contrite' by Witness C in respect of his response to a previous investigation."

I have also noted the panel's comment:

"The panel decided that whilst it could not conclude on the evidence before it that there was a low risk of repetition of this behaviour, the risk as it was, appeared

tolerable in light of the wider background to this matter, given that it related to one breach of a school policy.”

I have therefore given this element some weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel has observed:

“The panel considered that Mr Patel’s actions in storing an open bottle containing alcohol in an unlocked classroom cupboard which could be accessed by pupils would be likely to alarm members of the public and therefore had the potential to damage the reputation of the teacher and the teaching profession as a whole.”

I am particularly mindful of 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 conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Patel himself. The panel has commented:

“Mr Patel had no previous regulatory history and appeared to be respected as an excellent teacher by colleagues, but the panel had no specific evidence (whether these be references or representations from Mr Patel himself) before it that he had demonstrated exceptionally high standards in both his personal and professional conduct or had contributed significantly to the education sector.”

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Patel 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 conclusion of the panel that “Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case.”

In doing so, I have noted the panel's findings that there was evidence that Mr Patel's actions were deliberate and that there was no evidence that Mr Patel was acting under extreme duress. I have also noted that the panel did not have the opportunity to assess Mr Patel's insight and that it considered there was a risk of repetition albeit this was tolerable.

However, I have placed greater weight on the panel's findings on other mitigating factors including that the misconduct related to one breach of school policy in a limited timeframe, that there was evidence from various witnesses that Mr Patel was an excellent teacher and that there was a clear public interest in retaining him in the profession.

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 'D Oatley', written in a cursive style.

Decision maker: David Oatley

Date: 26 May 2026

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