



Teaching  
Regulation  
Agency

# **Ms Joy Ballard: Professional conduct panel outcome**

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

**June 2026**

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

**Teacher:** Ms Joy Ballard

**Teacher ref number:** 0732258

**Teacher date of birth:** 13 October 1966

**TRA reference:** 24401

**Date of determination:** 3 June 2026

**Former employer:** Ryde Academy, Isle of Wight Council, Isle of Wight

### Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 27 February 2026 to 9 March 2026, 21 April 2026 and 2 June 2026 to 3 June 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Joy Ballard.

The panel members were Mr Richard Young (lay panellist – in the chair), Ms Rosemary Joyce (teacher panellist) and Mrs Yvonne Weston (teacher 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 Jim Olphert, Counsel of Mountford Chambers instructed by Jessica Etherington of Kingsley Napley solicitors.

Mrs Ballard was not present at the fact finding stage of the hearing but was represented by Mr Simon Pettet, representative from NASWUT for the initial stages of the hearing only, including for consideration of preliminary applications. Mrs Ballard and Mr Pettet attended the hearing on 2 to 3 June 2026 to hear the decision in relation to findings of fact and unacceptable professional conduct and conduct which may bring the profession into disrepute, and attend the mitigation stage of the hearing.

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

## Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 16 December 2025.

It was alleged that Mrs Ballard was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, whilst working as a headteacher at Ryde Academy (“the School”):

1. In or around July 2022, she used School funds to purchase a car, which she used, without permission, for:
  - a) Personal trip(s);
  - b) Commute to work;
  - c) A personal trip to France on or around Easter 2024.
2. In or around August and / or September 2023, she changed school term dates to accommodate your personal holiday arrangements, namely:
  - a) She changed the date(s) for the end of Autumn term 2023;
  - b) She changed the date(s) for the start of Spring term 2024.
3. She did not attend school for the full day due to personal and/or holiday arrangements on:
  - a) 3 January 2024;
  - b) 10 February 2023.
4. Between April 2021 and October 2022, she used School funds to purchase the following which had limited use to the School:
  - a) Camping equipment;
  - b) Karaoke machine;
  - c) One or more television(s).
5. Between September 2022 and June 2024, she did not follow appropriate procedures for the collection and/or banking of cash.
6. Her conduct at paragraph(s) 1 – 5 was:
  - a) Dishonest;

b) Lacking integrity.

At the outset of the hearing, based on the hearing bundle, it was not clear to the panel whether Mrs Ballard had made admissions in relation to the facts, unacceptable professional conduct or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel considered an application for amendment of these allegations from the TRA, an application for the panel to admit late documents including a further signed statement of agreed facts from Mrs Ballard, and the panel subsequently amended a further allegation in this case, further details of which are set out below.

Following receipt of the amended signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026 from Mrs Ballard, the panel noted that Mrs Ballard admitted the allegations and admitted that she 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 key person list – pages 6 to 7

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 8 to 12

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 13 to 57

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 58 to 755

Section 5: Teacher documents – page 756 (with further documents being admitted in accordance with the below).

In addition, the panel agreed to accept the following:

Signed statement of agreed facts dated 25 January 2026, pages 757 to 759

The mitigation statement of Mrs Ballard, pages 760 to 772

Subject Access Request documents, pages 773 to 776

Television and a screenshot relating to 'activity days' at the School, pages 777 to 780

Large bundle of documents disclosed by Mrs Ballard in support of her case and in mitigation, pages 780 to 912

Signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, pages 913 to 917

On 6 March 2026, the panel also received a 32 page bundle of messages from Mr Pettet, which were clearer, legible copies of the messages/ character references admitted by the panel at the outset of the hearing.

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

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

## **Witnesses**

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by the presenting officer. The job descriptions are those at the time of these allegations:

Witness A –[REDACTED];

Witness B – [REDACTED];

Witness C –[REDACTED];

Witness D –[REDACTED];

Witness E – [REDACTED]; and

Witness F – [REDACTED]

Mrs Ballard also gave oral evidence at the mitigation stage of the hearing.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

Mrs Ballard was employed at the Ryde Academy (“the School”), part of Lift Schools (“the Trust”) as a headteacher from 1 September 2015. Concerns were raised on 24 March 2024 and an investigation was commenced on 14 May 2024. Mrs Ballard retired from the School on 31 August 2024. On 16 September 2024 a referral was made 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 July 2022 and June 2024 you used a Peugeot 5008 [REDACTED] which was purchased by the school as a vehicle to be used for school purposes, without express permission, for:**

**a) Regular and/or routine personal trips.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full. The panel noted this was consistent with her mitigation statement and her responses within her unsigned investigation record.

The panel noted that it had documentary and witness evidence confirming that the car was purchased in around July 2022, including the witness statement of Witness F. The panel also had substantial documentary evidence indicating that the school car was a Peugeot 5008 with [REDACTED], including witness statements from Witness F, Witness B, Witness E and Witness A, and the investigation report of Witness F.

The panel considered the evidence before it in relation to whether the vehicle was purchased by the school as a vehicle to be used for school purposes. The panel heard evidence from Witness C that a business case had been submitted in relation to the purchase of the school car and it was purchased in order to reduce the taxi costs associated with transporting children to alternative provision on the Isle of Wight *“because it was costing a fortune”*. This evidence was consistent with the evidence gathered by Witness F during his investigation.

The panel noted that the Trust’s Ethical and Professional Standards Policy, which was to be read in conjunction with the Trust’s summary Code of Conduct, stated that *“all employees and volunteers are expected to safeguard both the tangible and intangible assets of AET, and to use them efficiently and appropriately in the interests of the Trust and all of its stakeholders”*. In respect of tangible assets, including vehicles, it stated *“some personal administrative use of assets (such as internet and communication systems) may be inevitable, but such personal use should be kept to a very minimum, and must in no event be in pursuit of personal opportunities or commercial gain.”*

The panel had evidence from Witness F that Mrs Ballard would have been expected to comply with this policy with respect of the use of the school car. Witness F confirmed in his witness statement that *“all staff sign a declaration annually to show that they have read and understood the above documents”*, which included the Ethical and Professional Standards Policy. In his oral evidence, Witness A confirmed that this annual declaration was *“non-negotiable”* and it was logged. He confirmed that if the declaration was not completed then a teacher would be required to complete it. On the balance of probabilities, the panel considered that the car was purchased by the school to be used for school purposes rather than for personal use.

The panel carefully considered whether Mrs Ballard had express permission to use the car in the manner described within the allegation. The panel noted that Mrs Ballard emailed Witness C in April 2024 to confirm whether there was a benefit in kind in driving the car to her home in Ryde overnight, due to the alarm of the car being sensitive such that it may go off overnight. In the email, Mrs Ballard noted that she could not see anything in the policy in relation to this and that she had *“no issue paying a mileage use”*. Witness C responded and confirmed in her email *“no problem with taking the car home for a while. Better than you being called out in the middle of the night and incurring overtime and a fuel claim. Seems sensible to me and certainly not a benefit in kind as [REDACTED]”*. This was the only evidence before the panel that Mrs Ballard had sought permission to use the car at any point. In her oral evidence, Witness C confirmed that she expected that the car would be left in the school car park once the issue with the alarm had been resolved, but it made sense whilst there was an alarm issue. Witness C was clear in her evidence that it was *“absolutely not”* acceptable for the car to be used for personal trips or a daily commute. Further, the Trust’s Ethical and Professional Standards Policy did not suggest that teachers would have permission to use the car for personal opportunities or gain.

The panel then went on to consider the evidence in relation to Mrs Ballard’s use of the car. The panel noted it had numerous witness accounts confirming that they had seen the School’s car on Mrs Ballard’s drive and in the car park of public houses, including evidence from Witness E and Witness B, [REDACTED] to Mrs Ballard. In his oral evidence, Witness E confirmed that he [REDACTED] and he would *“very often”* see her driving the car on that road driving during *“weekends, evenings and breaks”*. The witnesses gave cogent and consistent evidence on this. The panel also received photographic evidence of the car being parked on Mrs Ballard’s drive and in the car park of a public house. The panel had received witness evidence that this use began after the car was purchased and the car was used throughout the period until the concerns were raised with the School.

Furthermore, the panel noted that there was evidence before it that the mileage on the car when it was returned to the School by Mrs Ballard was 22,000 miles. The evidence before the panel suggested that the car was around a year old at the time of purchase. It was accepted by the panel that 22,000 miles was a significant amount, in light of the size of the island and the proposed use of the car being for school purposes. The panel was assisted by a table collated during the School’s investigation which set out the alternative provision use at the School in 2021/2022, including the number of miles for each trip.

The panel heard evidence that the staff at the School described the car as *“Joy’s car”* and that she had indicated to staff that *“AET made me have it.”*

Mrs Ballard stated in her mitigation statement that *“I have admitted to personal use of the school vehicle. There is no AET policy regarding permission to use for [sic] vehicles for personal use. I believed it was allowed and that I was the permission giver.”* The

panel did not consider this to be a credible explanation, as it had seen the Trust policy in relation to tangible assets, and received cogent evidence from multiple witnesses in respect of the annual declaration confirming teachers had read the policies.

Given the substantial evidence it had seen, alongside the evidence provided by Mrs Ballard, the panel considered it was more probable than not that Mrs Ballard had used the School car regularly for personal trips during that time period, without permission, and that the car should have been used for school purposes. The panel noted that it did not have sufficient evidence to conclude that it was “routinely” used for personal trips, but given the formulation of the allegation, this did not defeat it.

The panel found this allegation proven.

**b) Regular and/or routinely commuting to work.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full. In her interview record from the School’s investigation, she stated “*I use it to commute to work – ever since we have had it (I have emails to Witness C [sic] about this*”.

In respect of this allegation, the panel was satisfied that the aforementioned evidence in respect of the type of car, its registration index and that it was purchased by the School as a vehicle for school purposes was relevant to this allegation.

The panel also considered the same evidence as set out above in respect of obtaining express permission to use the car for commuting. There was one email with Witness C in relation to driving the car home in April 2024. Witness C indicated that it would not have been acceptable to use the car for commuting to work regularly, and she anticipated the car would only be kept at Mrs Ballard’s home until the alarm was fixed. The panel did not have any other evidence that Mrs Ballard had asked for, or been given, permission to use the car for commuting.

The panel was satisfied that the Trust’s Ethical and Professional Standards Policy, referred to above, did not permit personal gain from Trust’s assets, and that commuting to work in the car conferred personal gain to Mrs Ballard, even if it was to go to her place of work.

In respect of the evidence of Mrs Ballard using the car to commute to work regularly and/or routinely, the panel noted it had witness evidence from Witness E and Witness B, [REDACTED] Mrs Ballard, that the car was “*always*” parked on her drive. In her oral evidence, Witness B elaborated and explained she would often follow Mrs Ballard driving the School car to the School and after School back to her house, as part of her regular commute. Witness E said that this would happen “*every day*”. The panel again considered the excessive mileage on the car which indicated it was being used for more than school purposes, and the fact that staff believed it to be “*Joy’s car*”.

Given the substantial evidence it had seen, alongside the evidence provided by Mrs Ballard, the panel considered it was more probable than not that Mrs Ballard had used the School car regularly and routinely for commuting during that time period, without permission, in circumstances where the car should have been used for school purposes.

The panel found this allegation proven.

### **c) A personal family trip to France in/around Easter 2024.**

The panel noted that Mrs Ballard had given inconsistent evidence in respect of this allegation. In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full. Further, in her mitigation statement she stated that *"I told the truth throughout the investigatory meeting held in Southampton with Individual A and Witness F [sic]. The only exception to this is when Individual A asked me if I had driven the school car to France during the Easter break 2024."* In her interview record during the School's investigation she stated *"we didn't take it to France"*. Whilst Mrs Ballard had denied this allegation during the School's investigation, it was clear that Mrs Ballard now admits it.

In respect of this allegation, the panel was satisfied that the aforementioned evidence in respect of the type of car, its registration index and that it was purchased by the School as a vehicle for school purposes was relevant to this allegation.

There was no evidence before the panel that Mrs Ballard had sought permission from the Trust to use the car for a personal family trip to France. The panel was satisfied that the Trust's Ethical and Professional Standards Policy, referred to above, did not permit personal gain from Trust's assets, and that using the car to go on holiday was for personal gain. The panel further noted there was documentary evidence that, absent the Trust's permission, Mrs Ballard did not have car insurance whilst using the car abroad.

The panel had before it a booking reference for Mrs Ballard for a ferry from Portsmouth to Caen in France on 9 April 2024 which uses the registration index of the School car. During the School's investigation, Mrs Ballard's evidence was that the registration index for the School car was used because she could not recall her own car registration, but that she changed this prior to the trip. During the investigation, Witness F confirmed Mrs Ballard was asked to provide evidence that the registration index had been changed on multiple occasions but he did not receive any.

Further, the panel had seen photographic evidence of a UK sticker, of the type used when driving a car abroad, on the car along with evidence that headlight adjusters were present on the car around this time. This was consistent with Witness A's written and oral evidence in respect of seeing these on the car. It also noted the high mileage on the car which was not consistent with the car being used only for school purposes.

The panel noted Mrs Ballard had since admitted that the car was taken to France, albeit it was unclear whether she drove the car herself. The panel considered the ordinary meaning of the phrase “you used” and determined that this included where Mrs Ballard was a passenger in the car.

In light of the above evidence, the panel considered it was more probable than not that Mrs Ballard had used the School car for a personal family trip to France around April 2024, without permission, in circumstances where the car should have been used for school purposes.

The panel found this allegation proven.

**2. In or around September 2023, you changed school term dates to accommodate your personal holiday arrangements, namely:**

- a) You changed the date(s) for the end of Autumn term 2023;**
- b) You changed the date(s) for the start of Spring term 2024.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel considered there was clear documentary evidence that the school term dates both at the end of the Autumn term 2023 and the start of Spring term 2024 had been changed, so that the term finished on 18 December 2023 and recommenced on 3 January 2024. This was corroborated by the witness evidence of Witness E, Witness A and Witness B.

The panel noted that there was inconsistent evidence around the timing of the change. Witness A stated he noticed the change around December 2023 and that the change had not been communicated to staff. Witness E recalled that the term dates were changed “last minute” and that there was no communication to staff about this change until 13 December 2024. Witness B confirmed that she had become aware of the change in date in November, because she had to move an appointment booked for Monday 18 December 2023 to reflect the change in term date. Witness A confirmed to the panel that there was no requirement to set calendar dates a year in advance, but it was good practice.

The panel saw a staff bulletin dated 8 September 2023. The bulletin was located by Witness D, and she stated that *“on the 1st September the school calendar was shared with staff which had the Autumn term ending on the 15th December (returning on Tuesday 2nd January). This was then amended on the 8th September so that the last day of term was Monday 18th December, returning on the 3rd January.”* The staff bulletin stated *“please note there has been a change to the December inset days”*.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel was satisfied that the evidence showed that the dates were changed *around* September 2023, although accepted that the communication of this change to staff may not have been effective, leading to confusion amongst staff and holidays or appointments needing to be changed.

Witness A confirmed to the panel this change in term dates had a significant impact on attendance at the school, because it created a “Bitsa week” of a single Monday. “Bitsa” weeks are to be avoided because *“asking students to come back for a single day a week before a holiday means lots of families and children vote with their feet and do not come in”*. The panel heard oral evidence from Witness A that the School’s attendance figures did not recover after this dip. Given the significance of the impact to staff, pupils and parents, the panel concluded there must have been a reason for Mrs Ballard to change them.

The panel went on to consider whether this was changed in order to accommodate Mrs Ballard’s personal holiday arrangements. The panel heard cogent evidence from a number of witnesses that Mrs Ballard was going on a cruise at this time. Witness E’s evidence was that Mrs Ballard told him she was changing the date so she could accommodate her holiday. Mrs Ballard accepted that she went on a cruise which docked on 3 January 2024. The panel was satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, Mrs Ballard was on holiday until 3 January 2024.

The panel carefully considered Mrs Ballard’s evidence in respect of the rationales for the change in date. The panel considered they were reasonable explanations, albeit the varying nature of them, from time to time, gave rise to concern about the credibility of them. One example was that they were changed to align dates with local primary schools, although Witness A’s evidence was that it was *“up to them”* what they did with their term dates. The panel also noted that academy schools also had more flexibility in relation to school term dates. It was also plausible, in relation to the organisational shortcomings at the School that the panel identified, that the draft term dates had been sent out in error, and Mrs Ballard arranged for them to be corrected in the staff bulletin on 8 September 2023. Another explanation offered by Mrs Ballard was that the School wanted to hold a reward day on Monday 18 December 2023 for pupils, although the panel noted this would have required significant planning.

The panel was aware that the burden was on the TRA with respect to this allegation and that Mrs Ballard did not have to prove anything, such as when she booked the holiday. However the panel noted Mrs Ballard was not expressly asked this in the School’s investigation interview. The panel was satisfied that sufficient evidence had been adduced by the TRA, given the inconsistency in Mrs Ballard’s evidence in respect of this change, the credible evidence it received that Mrs Ballard had been joking inappropriately during a staff meeting regarding the change and the evidence of the dates of Mrs Ballard’s holiday.

The panel concluded that Mrs Ballard would not have been able to attend the school on 2 January 2024, which was the original return date of the Spring term, and Mrs Ballard accepted she was still on a cruise then. On the balance of probabilities, the panel found that Mrs Ballard changed the term dates to accommodate this holiday.

The panel found this allegation proven.

**3. You did not attend school for the full day due to personal and/or holiday arrangements on:**

**a) 3 January 2024.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel heard evidence from Witness B, Witness E and Witness D that they did not see Mrs Ballard at School on 3 January 2024. Witness B stated she went to Mrs Ballard's office a couple of times that day and she was not there. Her evidence is that she would see Mrs Ballard most days. Witness E gave evidence to the panel that, when he went to see Mrs Ballard on 3 January 2024 and could not find her, Witness D told him that Mrs Ballard was on a cruise. He was also told by Individual B, [REDACTED], that she did not see Mrs Ballard on this date. The panel noted that in the School's investigation interview Witness A said that did not see Mrs Ballard on 3 January 2024 and he "*cracked on*" without Mrs Ballard, but in his later statement confirmed that he was not at the School on this day.

The panel considered whether there were any other reasons that Witness B, Witness E and Witness D had not seen Mrs Ballard on that day. Mrs Ballard's calendar indicated that she had a [REDACTED] on the morning of 3 January 2024 and therefore that she would not be at School for the full day due to a [REDACTED] reason.

Mrs Ballard's evidence during the School's investigation was that she [REDACTED] on the way home from her trip [REDACTED], arriving at 9.15am. Within her mitigation statement, Mrs Ballard's evidence was that she had planned to attend a [REDACTED], but that because Witness A [REDACTED], she changed her plans and went straight to the School, arriving at 9.15am. Further, none of the witnesses had indicated that Mrs Ballard was engaged in school business on that day, away from her office or the School.

Mrs Ballard accepted that the cruise did not dock until 3 January 2024. Mrs Ballard's evidence in both her mitigation statement and during the School's investigation was that she left the boat on foot with her own luggage, meaning that she could get off at 7-7.30am. Mrs Ballard accepted in her mitigation statement that School started at 8.30am and she attended school at 9.15am. Witness B's evidence in her oral and written testimony was the boat would dock at 10.30am. Witness B's witness statement

indicated that following Mrs Ballard tagging herself on Facebook in a post about being at the cruise terminal, she looked up the route of the cruise and saw that the ship would dock into Southampton at 10.30am on 3 January 2024. The procedures at the School for signing in and signing out were not entirely clear to the panel. The panel does not have any objective evidence of Mrs Ballard signing in or out which could verify whether or when she attended the School on that day. The panel noted that Mrs Ballard had given various accounts in respect of this day.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Ballard was not at the School for the full day on 3 January 2024, and that this was for personal and/or holiday reasons.

The panel found this allegation proven.

#### **b) 10 February 2023.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel received witness evidence from Witness A, Witness B and Witness E that Mrs Ballard was initially in attendance at the INSET day on 10 February 2023 and attended a session in the theatre. Witness B indicated that she was sat next to Mrs Ballard on the front row. Their consistent evidence was that, during the first session of the day, she took a phone call and left the theatre and the School. Witness E confirmed Mrs Ballard did not return and Witness A confirmed the same, to his knowledge.

Mrs Ballard's evidence during the School's investigation was that the Trust's headteacher INSET day was due to be held in the afternoon only on 10 February 2023 and this was later cancelled by the [REDACTED]. In Witness F's evidence to the panel he said that an INSET day being held in the afternoon only would be very unusual in his experience, and the panel accepted this.

Then, Mrs Ballard accepted in her mitigation statement that she left the School an hour early, but she continued to work, and that her line manager was aware of this. The panel noted that it also had evidence of a Facebook post being posted by Mrs Ballard's [REDACTED] of them both on a cruise on 10 February 2023. It was not clear to the panel what time the photograph was posted on Facebook, but the time at the top of the photograph was 5:08pm. Mrs Ballard's evidence was that last boarding time was usually between 4.30pm and 5.00pm. There was no other evidence available in relation to this particular cruise. In the panel's experience, the school day would finish at around 3.30pm, even on an INSET day, leaving the timing tight for Mrs Ballard to have left the School at its closing time, travel to the departure point and embark upon the cruise.

The panel noted that it was plausible that Mrs Ballard was engaged in other school business, as a headteacher, during the INSET day and this was the reason other staff

did not see her after this point. Nevertheless, the panel considered it was unlikely that she would have continued to work until around 3:30pm given the timing of the photograph on the cruise ship.

Whilst it was not clear to the panel when Mrs Ballard left the School, the panel was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that she did not attend the School for the full day due to personal and/or holiday arrangements on 10 February 2023.

The panel found this allegation proven.

**4. Between January 2021 and June 2023, you used School funds to purchase the following which had limited use to the School:**

**a) Camping equipment.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel received written evidence from Witness C that, in June 2023, Mrs Ballard spoke to her about an idea regarding purchasing tents for a year 6 pupils' summer school, rather than engaging an external company to provide the resources. Witness C approved the purchase from the School budget. The panel also had evidence from Witness B and Witness E regarding the timing of the purchase between April and June 2023. Witness F reviewed the School's purchase records and found evidence that camping equipment, including five tents and nine inflatable mattresses, had been purchased.

The panel heard evidence from a number of witnesses, including Witness B, that staff had been told, during a staff briefing on 28 June 2023, that the School had received a grant for the purchase. Mrs Ballard later explained during the School's investigation that a grant had not been received, but she did not want the School staff to know that there had been an underspend of the budget and it was being used to fund camping equipment. The panel accepted this evidence since, had there been a £10,000 grant, the panel considered there would have been a discussion on how the grant was going to be used. The panel was therefore satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, the date range was satisfied, and camping equipment was purchased with School funds.

The panel then turned to the question of the use of the camping equipment and whether it was of "limited use". In her mitigation statement, Mrs Ballard provided a number of reasons for the purchase, such as *"to allow other schools to holiday on the Isle of Wight for students who typically could not afford to do so"* and *"a reading project camping under the stars"*. Witness C gave evidence to the panel that she understood the camping equipment was for "PGL style" outdoor camping events for pupils and thereafter there would be no costs payable to PGL.

The panel concluded that Mrs Ballard had given multiple reasons for the purchase of the tents to various people. The panel noted that there was no clear plan for the use of the camping equipment which may have contributed to the impression that they were of limited use. Further, the panel noted that the first order of tents purchased by the School were “*too heavy*” and so Witness C approved the purchase of two further lightweight tents shortly afterwards.

Mrs Ballard accepted that the equipment had been purchased and admitted that the project was a “*disaster*” and a “*waste of taxpayer’s money*”. Mrs Ballard had indicated that the tents could not be used because of a lack of electricity and facilities on the School field. The panel had evidence of witnesses from the School, for example, Witness E and Witness B that this was not a credible reason, because the facilities were available, near to the field and could be opened up for use. Witness B indicated in her statement that some School staff loaned the tents for family camping trips, following this announcement from Mrs Ballard. The panel noted that the School had not been able to recover all of the camping equipment.

Witness A gave evidence [REDACTED] and confirmed that he had tried to repurpose the camping equipment across the Trust, because they were of limited use to the School.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found that the camping equipment was also of limited use to the School, and therefore the panel found this allegation proven.

#### **b) Karaoke machine.**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel noted that there was no evidence in the bundle that the karaoke machine was referred to by Mrs Ballard before 2021. Witness B referred to a conversation in January 2021 with Mrs Ballard in relation to a karaoke machine, and that shortly after this conversation that Mrs Ballard told her she had asked Witness C to order a karaoke machine for her. Witness C confirmed in her evidence that the karaoke machine was bought using the School rewards budget. The panel had email evidence that a karaoke machine was purchased for the School by Witness C in March 2021. The panel received evidence from Witness C that she had been told by Mrs Ballard that the first karaoke machine had not arrived, therefore she did not pay the invoice, and a second machine was ordered. Mrs Ballard confirmed that the School received two karaoke machines, but only one of the machines was paid for.

It was not clear to the panel whether the email in March 2021 related to the first or second karaoke machine, nor when the invoice was paid following delivery of the machine. However, given the date range being after January 2021, the panel was

satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, the date range in the allegation was satisfied, and a karaoke machine was purchased with School funds.

The panel then turned to the question of the use of the karaoke machine and whether it was of "limited use". Witness A gave evidence [REDACTED] and confirmed that there was only one karaoke machine currently in School. His evidence was that it was not being used, and had not been used much by the performing arts department who said it was complicated and not useful. The panel noted that there did not appear to be a discussion with the performing arts department prior to the purchase regarding the use of the machine and that this was an expensive model similar to those used on television shows, as set out in the written evidence of Witness B. The panel noted that a discussion with the relevant department may have assisted in the understanding whether the karaoke machine would be a useful curriculum resource.

Mrs Ballard's evidence during the School's investigation was that the karaoke machine was intended to be used for "X factor" type events. Mrs Ballard then admitted that the karaoke machine was no longer needed after investing in other technology. Witness C indicated that Mrs Ballard had told her the karaoke machine would be used in the School festival each year. In Mrs Ballard's mitigation statement, she stated that it was *"purchased for fun activities as part of our house competitions and rewards festivals"*. She confirmed in this statement *"I did use it once in school"*.

The panel was invited to look at a picture of a karaoke machine in Mrs Ballard's home. The panel noted that Mrs Ballard also had a karaoke machine but it had insufficient evidence to conclude that it was the second one delivered to the School. This was also denied by Mrs Ballard and she stated during the School's investigation that the second karaoke machine was at the School. The panel also noted that this was not an allegation before it.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found that the karaoke machine purchased using school funds was of limited use to the School, and therefore the panel found this allegation proven.

### **c) One or more television(s).**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

Witness E provided evidence to the panel that he was involved in setting up a gym at the School between June and September 2021. Witness E assisted with ordering cardiovascular equipment and weights, and two LG televisions were included within the order. A raffle was held at the School in October 2022 and the two televisions were raffled off at that time, for which there was evidence in the witness statements of both

Witness E and Witness D. The panel therefore was satisfied that the purchase took place within the date range set out in the allegation.

Mrs Ballard's mitigation statement confirmed that she did not purchase the televisions and that Witness E and Individual C [REDACTED] had complete control of the gym purchases. She stated she was unaware of the purchases until Witness E told her. Witness E's evidence was that Mrs Ballard would need to sign off the purchases as headteacher. Witness C confirmed that she was not aware of the purchases of the televisions and that the School had authority to raise their own purchase orders for purchases under £2000. On the balance of probabilities, and based on their experience, the panel was satisfied that a purchase of this nature would need to be signed off by the headteacher of a school. The panel was satisfied that Mrs Ballard used school funds to purchase two televisions.

The panel then turned to the question of the use of the televisions and whether they were of "limited use". Witness E gave evidence that the intention was that the televisions would be wall mounted and he chose those televisions because he could see on the advertisement that they could be mounted on the wall. Witness E was told by another staff member that the walls were not strong enough to wall mount the televisions, which in his opinion was incorrect. However, even if they could not be wall mounted, they came with a stand and could have been put on a table. The televisions were kept in boxes in the gym and were not used either on the wall or on a table.

Witness E saw in October 2022 that the televisions were listed as prizes in a raffle. The panel heard evidence that the televisions were won by Mrs Ballard's [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Mrs Ballard's evidence was that when the televisions were brought over following announcement of the winners, she realised that there was a large crack on one of the screens. She decided that the broken television should be the one [REDACTED] won. Witness D confirmed that Mrs Ballard told her one of the televisions was damaged and so asked her to put [REDACTED] as the winner of one of the televisions. The panel noted there was contradictory evidence in relation to the sequencing of events. Witness E's evidence was that there was no damage to the televisions.

Whilst the televisions could have had educational use at the School, the panel heard evidence that Mrs Ballard repurposed the televisions to a raffle meaning their educational use could no longer be realised. There did not appear to be any consultation on that, based on the evidence before the panel. It was acknowledged that Mrs Ballard did not try to keep the televisions and raffled the televisions instead.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel found that the televisions were also of limited use to the School, and therefore the panel found this allegation proven.

#### 4. Between September 2022 and June 2024, you did not follow appropriate procedures for the collection and/or banking of cash.

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, Mrs Ballard admitted this allegation in full.

The panel first considered what the appropriate procedures were for the collection and/or banking of cash.

The panel heard evidence that there were procedures for handling cash within the Trust's Financial Procedures, which applied to the School. The panel considered that the procedure set out in that document was clear. It stated that:

*"All cash and cheques must be kept in the finance office safe prior to banking. Banking should take place every week or more frequently to ensure the sums held at any one time do not exceed £2,000. Monies collected must be banked in their entirety in the appropriate bank account having been counted and ideally that count witnessed by a separate member of staff. The Regional Finance team is responsible for preparing reconciliations between the sums collected, the sums deposited at the bank and the sums posted to PSF."*

The panel noted the key points of the procedure, that banking should take place frequently; money should be kept in the safe prior to banking; and ideally the counting of money should be witnessed by a separate member of staff.

Mrs Ballard indicated in her mitigation statement that she did not follow the relevant procedures, because she did not know what they were. As set out above, School staff had to sign an annual declaration to indicate they had read the relevant policies. Furthermore, the panel heard evidence from Witness C that she had verbally set out the agreed procedures for collecting cash at the School when Mrs Ballard joined the School. The panel also considered that some of the procedures were 'common sense', such as ensuring that there was more than one person when cash was being counted, to avoid any allegations being made regarding the handling of money. The panel was satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that Mrs Ballard should have read the written policy and, as the headteacher, was responsible for ensuring that the procedures were followed.

The panel heard evidence from staff at the School that there were instances where the above procedures were not followed, for example, Witness A confirmed that, on one occasion in March 2024, he saw Mrs Ballard with cash in her handbag following a non-uniform day, in circumstances where it could not have been banked over the bank holiday weekend. Witness B confirmed that Mrs Ballard was "adamant" about the way she would count the money, and it had to be counted in her office, with "a couple of SEN students". Mrs Ballard admits that the procedures were not followed, including that, on one occasion, she did not put the cash in the safe and so she put it into her handbag under her desk. Further, she confirmed that she kept "much of the cash collected from

*mufti days which we used as cash support for many things*". In her oral evidence, Witness C confirmed that she did not know about this fund and this would not be acceptable under the Trust policy. The panel noted Mrs Ballard had an erratic banking schedule, which was confirmed by the evidence of banking provided during the School's investigation by Witness C, showing the delays in banking cash after fundraising days at the School.

Further, whilst not explicit in the policy, the panel noted that [REDACTED], assumed responsibility for banking the cash and that this task was undertaken alone. [REDACTED] was known by staff at the School as "[REDACTED]". The panel considered this was inappropriate and created a risk of allegations being made.

On the balance of probabilities, the panel considered that Mrs Ballard did not follow the appropriate procedures during the relevant time and therefore the panel found this allegation proven.

**6. Your conduct at paragraphs 1 and/or 2, and/or 3 and/or 4, and/or 5 above was:**

**a) Dishonest;**

In her signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026, having been informed of the legal test for dishonesty set out in the case of *Ivey v Genting Casinos (UK) t/s Crockfords*, Mrs Ballard admitted that her conduct was dishonest.

The panel had found all of the conduct in allegations 1-5 proven on the balance of probabilities. The panel noted the formulation of this allegation required the panel to find the conduct in one of the allegations to be dishonest and/or lacking integrity for this allegation to be proven.

The panel considered that Mrs Ballard knew that her use of the car for personal trips, commuting and for a personal trip to France was dishonest and that this was not the purpose for which the car was purchased for the School. Mrs Ballard had submitted a business case for the car and the panel further noted that Mrs Ballard would have signed an annual declaration in relation to the School's policies, which also confirmed that assets should not be used for personal reasons regularly. The panel took note of the fact that by this time Mrs Ballard had been a headteacher at the School for a number of years. Mrs Ballard sought to obtain permission for taking the car home from work from Witness C in April 2024, which was almost two years after she started using the car for commuting to work and/or personal trips.

Further, the panel noted that Mrs Ballard had attempted to conceal that she used the car on a personal trip to France in Easter 2024 during the investigation and sought to admit this only in her mitigation statement which was disclosed late in these proceedings. On the other hand, the panel noted that she was using the car in this manner openly and in

an obvious way in public, which may indicate she did not think this was dishonest at the time. The panel balanced this against the credible evidence that Mrs Ballard was aware of the Financial Procedures and that these were clear in relation to the personal use of Trust assets.

In view of the evidence as a whole, the panel considered this indicated that Mrs Ballard knew that she was doing this dishonestly and that there may have been a benefit in kind to her using the car in this way. The panel considered that this would be considered dishonest by applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people. The panel therefore found Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 1 to be dishonest.

In respect of the conduct in allegation 2, the panel considered the evidence showed that Mrs Ballard had knowingly and dishonestly changed the dates of the term time for personal benefit. The panel noted that Mrs Ballard would have understood the implications of this as an experienced headteacher and that a personal reason would not be a sufficiently good reason to change the term dates. The panel considered that this would be considered dishonest by applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people. The panel therefore found Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 2 to be dishonest.

In respect of allegation 3, the panel considered that this conduct fell short of the test for dishonesty and that Mrs Ballard may not have considered that not completing the full day at work to be dishonest and that this could often happen in a school context without raising concern. The panel found Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 3 was not dishonest.

In respect of the purchases set out in allegation 4, the panel concluded that the evidence indicated that each of them were bought for a school purpose, although the panel accepted that they did have limited use to the School. The panel considered the evidence showed that there was an intention by Mrs Ballard to use each of the items at the School and they were bought for a genuine reason, although the lack of planning for use of the items made them poor financial decisions. There was insufficient evidence to suggest that they were purchased for personal gain, although the panel understood why it gave rise to suspicion amongst the staff. The panel found that Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 4 was not dishonest.

Finally in respect of the lack of adherence to procedures in respect of the management of cash within allegation 5, the panel considered that Mrs Ballard was aware of the correct procedures, having been informed in a number of ways, and that she did not follow those procedures. The set of arrangements implemented at the School were not good practice, but there was no evidence before the panel that she did this for personal gain or for reasons of dishonesty. The panel was satisfied that Mrs Ballard was instead careless or reckless about the way that cash was handled and did not consider the implications of

the process she adopted, which the panel found to be chaotic but not dishonest. The panel understood how suspicions had been raised amongst staff due to poor practice in this regard. The panel found that Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 4 was not dishonest.

In line with the formulation of this allegation, as the panel had found that Mrs Ballard's conduct in respect of allegations 1 and 2 was dishonest, the panel found allegation 6 proven.

**b) Lacking integrity.**

In the statement of agreed facts, having been provided with the definition of integrity set out in *Wingate and Evans v SRA* and *SRA v Malins*, Mrs Ballard admitted that her conduct lacked integrity.

The panel considered whether Mrs Ballard had failed to adhere to the ethical standards of the teaching profession.

Mrs Ballard failed to have regard to the School's policies in relation to the usage of the car. The panel considered Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 1 to lack integrity.

With regard to the changes to the school term dates, the panel considered that Mrs Ballard did this for her personal gain. Further the panel considered it was unprofessional for Mrs Ballard to change the term dates in this way for personal reasons, with such a significant impact on staff, students and their families. The panel considered Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 2 to lack integrity.

In respect of allegation 3(a), the panel did not consider that not attending the full day at work, if there were legitimate reasons, to be conduct that lacked integrity. The panel had found on the balance of probabilities that Mrs Ballard was not at the School for the full day on 3 January 2024 due to personal and/or holiday arrangements. The panel did not consider this was a legitimate reason to be absent from work. The headteacher was responsible for discharging duties on the first day back of term and her absence on 3 January 2024 meant she was not able to fulfil that role. The panel also noted that Mrs Ballard did not inform staff that she would not be available to perform those duties on the first day of term. There was an expectation that all staff, and particularly the headteacher, were present at school on the first day of term and Mrs Ballard's conduct in booking a cruise which did not return until 3 January 2024 was such that she was not able to be present for the full day at the School. The panel found this to be conduct which lacked integrity.

In respect of allegation 3(b), the panel did not consider that not attending the full day on an INSET day to be conduct that lacked integrity. The panel had found on the balance of

probabilities that Mrs Ballard was not at the School for the full day on 10 February 2023 due to personal and/or holiday arrangements. The panel distinguished this allegation from 3(a), as students were not at the School on that day and it was part of the headteacher's role that there may be other tasks to attend to during an INSET day meaning they may not be present for all of the structured sessions on an INSET day. The panel could not be satisfied from the available evidence that Mrs Ballard left early by more than an hour. The panel did not find this to be the conduct which lacked integrity.

In respect of allegation 4, for the reasons set out above, the panel did not consider that purchasing equipment for a genuine school purpose in good faith, even if it transpired they were of limited use, was not conduct which lacked integrity, albeit it may have been a poor financial decision by Mrs Ballard.

In respect of allegation 5 in relation to procedures for cash management, the panel considered that adherence to such systems was a key role for a headteacher and that, as a matter of professionalism, and to guard against false allegations, the headteacher was responsible for ensuring that cash was properly accounted for. Procedures were in place to safeguard the School's finances, and to protect those involved in handling money from allegations of misuse. Mrs Ballard was an experienced headteacher by this time. The panel had received evidence that there was a "chaotic" banking practice and that this may have contributed to money appearing to go 'missing'. Mrs Ballard was aware of the procedures and that it was expected that two members of staff should count the money. The panel considered it was unprofessional to give [REDACTED] the role of banking the cash and that this took place alone, and that this undermined her professional integrity. Therefore the panel considered Mrs Ballard's conduct as set out in allegation 5 to lack integrity.

In line with the formulation of this allegation, as the panel had found that Mrs Ballard's conduct in respect of allegations 1, 2, 3(a) and 5 to be lacking integrity, the panel found allegation 6 proven.

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

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

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

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

The panel considered that Mrs Ballard had breached the requirement to act with honesty and integrity set out in the Preamble. The panel also considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mrs Ballard was in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Ballard, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Keeping Children Safe In Education (“KCSIE”).

The panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Ballard, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The panel also considered whether Mrs Ballard 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 carefully considered the offence listed on page 13 of the Advice of “fraud and serious dishonesty”. The panel found that the conduct within allegations 1 and 2 was dishonest, however, the panel considered that, whilst serious misconduct for a teacher, the dishonesty shown by Mrs Ballard was at the less serious end of the spectrum. The car was used for school purposes and not exclusively for her personal use. The term dates were knowingly changed for a personal reason, which the panel considered to be serious misconduct for a teacher but that it did not amount to conduct that constituted fraud or *serious* dishonesty.

In light of this, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel considered the following points were also relevant in determining whether Mrs Ballard’s conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct:

- The panel noted that Mrs Ballard had admitted that her conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct in the signed statement of agreed facts dated 2 March 2026.
- The evidence before the panel indicated that Mrs Ballard showed disregard for School policies, including the Trust’s Code of Conduct and the Financial Procedures. There were clear frameworks in place and Mrs Ballard was aware of these.

- The panel noted that Mrs Ballard was an experienced headteacher but the evidence showed that a number of the processes she adopted within the School were 'chaotic'. There was a clear need for Mrs Ballard to follow the clear guidance of the Trust to avoid colleagues being suspicious of her actions. It was important that Mrs Ballard conducted good financial management for the School.
- Further, the panel noted that teachers must act within statutory frameworks, which including the Teacher's Standards and the Academy Trust handbook, which is a mandatory regulatory document issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- The panel also considered that Mrs Ballard's conduct had breached the Nolan principles, by virtue of her role as a headteacher.
- There was a failure by Mrs Ballard to consider the wider impact of her decision to change the term dates for personal reasons, including outcomes for pupils.
- The panel noted that teachers were expected to maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality and that Mrs Ballard had fallen short of this standard on more than one occasion on 3 January 2024 and 10 February 2023. The panel accepted the evidence from staff that they did not know where she was on these dates.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mrs Ballard amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession in respect of allegations 1, 2, 5 and 6, but not in respect of allegations 3 and 4.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mrs Ballard was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct in respect of allegations 1, 2, 5 and 6.

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

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

As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mrs Ballard was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found that none of these offences were relevant, although the panel again considered carefully the offence of "fraud and serious

dishonesty". It did not meet this threshold and therefore none of these offences were relevant.

The panel considered the following points were also relevant in determining whether Mrs Ballard's conduct amounted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute:

- The panel noted that Mrs Ballard had used the School car, and moved the School term dates, when in a position of authority as a headteacher, for her own personal advantage. In respect of the change to term dates, there was a disadvantage to the pupils, parents and staff which Mrs Ballard did not appear to have any regard for, and the panel had evidence that the School did not recover from the dip in attendance caused by the change. In respect of the School car, it had been purchased using public funds for the benefit of pupils at the School, rather than for personal use. If parents and the community became aware of a headteacher using their position in this way, they would find this really concerning.
- The lack of financial planning and management in respect of the purchases of camping equipment and karaoke machine meant that these purchases were a waste of the School's funds which would call the profession into disrepute. It was not significant, in the panel's view, that there was a surplus of money in the budget which was used for these items. The panel considered the televisions were purchased with the intention it would be used for educational purposes and the panel did not have any evidence that Mrs Ballard was responsible for the televisions not being utilised for this purpose.
- The panel considered that the public expects headteachers to act with total probity and honesty and the chaotic cash management system at the School led to suspicion from members of staff at the School, who should be able to trust their headteacher. The fact that Mrs Ballard authorised [REDACTED] to handle cash for the School, including sole responsibility for banking, was unprofessional and could damage the public perception of teachers.

The panel considered that Mrs Ballard's conduct could potentially damage the public's perception of a teacher in respect of allegations 1, 2, 3(a), 4(a), 4(b) and 5, but not in respect of allegations 3(b) and 4(c).

For these reasons, the panel found that Mrs Ballard's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in respect of allegations 1, 2, 3(a), 4(a), 4(b) and 5.

## Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct in relation to allegations 1, 2, 5 and 6 and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in relation to allegations 1, 2, 3a, 4a, 4b and 5, 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.

In the light of the panel's findings against Mrs Ballard, which involved findings of dishonesty and lack of integrity in respect of some of the allegations, the panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was present as the conduct found against Mrs Ballard was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mrs Ballard were not treated with the utmost 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 Mrs Ballard in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining the teacher in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon her abilities as an educator and she is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession. The panel had no reason to doubt that these contributions would continue if Mrs Ballard were not prohibited from teaching.

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 considered that, in light of its findings of dishonesty and lack of integrity in particular, the behaviour was serious misconduct for a teacher, albeit the dishonesty shown by Mrs Ballard was at the less serious end of the spectrum.

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

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
- dishonesty or a lack of integrity, including the deliberate concealment of their actions

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 Mrs Ballard's actions were deliberate, in that she made a choice to use the car for personal reasons, to amend the term dates, to absent herself from parts of inset days, to purchase equipment of limited benefit to the School and to not follow appropriate cash handling procedures.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mrs Ballard was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. The panel noted that she had described [REDACTED] she was experiencing during this time in her evidence, but she did not consider these impacted her leadership and she did not seek to advance this in her defence. The panel did not consider this amounted to duress.

Mrs Ballard did have a previously good history and the panel accepted that it had evidence she was an inspirational leader. She did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct, but she had made an evidently positive contribution to the education sector over her long career in teaching. In particular, the panel considered the following points within the evidence before it:

- Mrs Ballard achieved "good" ratings from Ofsted for her leadership at the School. Witness A confirmed in his evidence that the Ofsted inspections at the School took place in 2019 and 2022 and it was rated as "good". He confirmed that prior to 2019 the School was rated as "inadequate or requires improvement". The panel noted that it had not been provided with the Ofsted reports, nor could Mrs Ballard provide detailed information in respect of them.

- Mrs Ballard has provided evidence in the form of many character references from former pupils which stated that Mr Ballard had a positive impact on their lives, particularly with respect to disadvantaged pupils.
- Mrs Ballard took part in the television programme “Educating Cardiff”, which Mrs Ballard described as ‘daring’. The panel accepted her explanation that she did this to promote the school and to showcase its pupils, despite it being described as one of the “toughest schools” in the country.
- She has been recognised for the work that she has done in teaching, for example she won a Pearson Teaching Award in 2015 and she provided newspaper articles to the panel relating to her teaching.
- She was a headteacher for a significant period of time, at the School and a former school. Mrs Ballard’s evidence was that she improved attendance, improved GCSE outcomes for pupils at these schools and increased the number of pupils on roll at the School. The panel noted however that Mrs Ballard was not able to provide further detail or data to illustrate the improvements in attendance or GCSE outcomes.
- Mrs Ballard gave very forthright evidence and it was clear to the panel that she saw her role was to promote the best interests of the pupils.
- Witness F’s evidence was that, at the early part of her time at the School, his experience of Mrs Ballard was what he described as “*strong inspirational leadership*”. The panel heard evidence that Mrs Ballard made a significant contribution at Ryde Academy for the first few years of her headship.
- Witness B stated in her written evidence with respect to Mrs Ballard that “*when she met with the Senior Team, she [Mrs Ballard] was inspirational. She [Mrs Ballard] spoke eloquently about her passion for children and that she had the best interests of the children at her heart. We had a good professional working relationship for the first couple of years, which continued over time. I believe that Joy Ballard admired me, as she often told me that she thought I was very brave in terms of how I would lead. She would tell me that she wanted to invest in my career. We did a lot of good together to get the School to a good standard. She would let me get on with my role, which suited me, and I believe she trusted my professionalism.*”
- Witness C stated in her written evidence that she considered Mrs Ballard to be honest.
- Individual D stated that “*I have a good relationship with her, I would say that about all of my head’s [sic] – my modus operandi is to build good strong relationships.*”

*She will offer the school up for things – she will speak at national conferences, she plays a part in the team meetings – there’s a strong comederie [sic].”*

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

Mrs Ballard provided the panel with what she described as “character statements” from approximately 50 individuals, either by letter, email or social media messages. Some of these references were unsolicited. The panel noted that none of the witnesses referred to the TRA proceedings or were aware of the specific nature of the allegations, although some of them pre-dated her time at the School. There were a variety of character witnesses, including former colleagues, former pupils and their parents, who could attest to her professional ability, along with personal references which contained evidence of pastoral support she provided.

The panel considered all of the character references in detail. In particular, the panel drew out the following key examples across all of the “character statements”:

- A [REDACTED] who has known Mrs Ballard since 2000: *“Joy’s values of trying her utmost to ensure that every child under her care is able to reach their full potential and have a happy and fulfilling life resonates with my own. Joy is, to quote Ofsted, ‘an exceptional leader’ but she is also an outstanding team player. If you were lucky enough to work with or for Joy, she would go out of her way to help you with your own career progression and, although she demanded high standards, she was always extremely fair and supportive of her colleagues and led by example. A number of the schools that Joy and I have worked in have been in the most deprived areas of the Country... Joy has changed so many young people’s lives through her generosity and fighting spirit”.*
- The [REDACTED]: *“Joy played a crucial role in supporting my sons development in dance at a time when, as a single mother, I was struggling financially. She believed in his talent and potential from a very young age and went above and beyond her professional responsibilities to ensure he had access to opportunities that would otherwise have been impossible for us... Joy is an exceptional educator with compassion, vision and genuine dedication to her students’ futures.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“She is a naturally warm and welcoming person who consistently went above and beyond for those around her, not only for her own family, but also for friends and visitors to her home. She created an environment that was supportive, respectful and grounded in strong values, which left a lasting positive impression on me.”*
- A [REDACTED] of almost 20 years: *“Growing up was extremely difficult...I remember feeling a bit envious that her kids who were my friends had such a*

*wonderful caring loving mum her kids just always seemed so happy. That's until I realised Joy wasn't just their mum... she was everyone's. Everyone thought she was amazing. Her door was always open..."*

- A [REDACTED] for over 35 years: *"I have known Joy to be a kind, loyal, supportive and a respectful person, she will put other people first before herself."*
- A [REDACTED] of 30 years: *"She wasn't my mum. She had no reason to show me and others all the kindness she did but she did because that's who she is... She was really there for me and at a time where I really needed it, offered me a safe space at her house away from all the things a child shouldn't really have to deal with."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"My introduction to secondary school was an exceptionally difficult one... [REDACTED]... as a result I struggled greatly with attending school and coping with the emotional weight of [REDACTED]... during this period, Joy was a beacon of warmth, kindness and reassurance. She made me feel welcome at a time when I felt lost and vulnerable, and she played a significant role in helping me gradually feel safe enough to remain at school... my experience was not unique. Joy had an extraordinary ability to recognise children who were struggling and to offer them care, guidance and compassion."*
- The [REDACTED]: *"Joy Ballard was a deputy head teacher there at the time of my children going to school... A few of my children struggled at school, not with their academics, but personally. Joy Ballard was always there for them as a teacher, and a confidant, she supported them when they were struggling in a fair and honest manner."*
- A [REDACTED] who had been in the teaching profession for 45 years: *"During my teaching career I have had many Headteacher's [sic] both in England and abroad. For me, Joy has been the most caring and thoughtful Headteacher that I have had the pleasure to work with. She has always been totally reliable and very diligent, for example coming to school when she was unwell and staying late after school... Joy is incredibly good at finding solutions for all scenarios... Our school was an inclusive school under Joy's leadership. She completely turned it round into being a GOOD [sic] school and this was no easy task. She was a very popular Headteacher and did her utmost to support everyone in the school community, especially the disadvantaged students. Her morning briefings were always filled with new ideas about improving our school for students."*
- An individual who has known Mrs Ballard since her appointment at the School: *"While I do not know directly of the competence of her work and leadership, as a retired former [REDACTED], I do believe that I can certainly confirm and attest to*

*her strong commitment to her staff and pupils and to her fundamental integrity and total honesty.”*

- A [REDACTED]: *“During the time I worked under Joy’s leadership, I was consistently impressed not only by her tireless work ethic but by her unwavering optimism. Joy possesses a unique ability to see the best in people and situations, a trait that allowed her to strive for – and achieve – excellence in a challenging environment. As a leader, Joy was transformative. She made decisions with a distinct “people first” philosophy, always prioritising the well-being of her students and staff. Perhaps her greatest achievement was the cultural shift she engineered at the Academy... She turned a difficult environment into a supportive community where students felt safe to learn. On a personal level, Joy’s impact on my career has been profound... her mentorship gave me the confidence to flourish and her goal was always to help staff become independently strong professionals.”*
- A [REDACTED] for 31 years: *“Through the early ages, Joy’s approach was always about encouragement, pointing out the best traits, using positive reinforcement, not only to me but all the children in her life. This extended to the neighbourhood.... One needs only to watch an episode of Educating Cardiff to see who Joy truly is... What I saw on TV is what I was [sic] and still am privileged to have experienced firsthand. Intelligence will get you so far in life, but adding in a heavy dose of values, morals, personality and genuine human touch, will stand you out from the rest, and grant you the utmost respect, from students, peers, friends and family alike. This is evidenced in every episode. Joy shows that when you make an effort, you will be praised, when you are slacking, she will be direct and tell you.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“I’d like to say I know her as my teacher but I’m going to say I know her as the mother I never had. She saved my life. If it wasn’t for Joy being a part of my life I’d most likely be in jail or worse dead... I’d take [breakfast] back to her office and she would sit with me and teach me how to reads and write. Them [sic] mornings were the only time I ever felt cared for. I had really bad anger problems and would flip easily. Joy helped me manage that anger... She believed in me when no one else did. She gave me her time not because it was her job because she cared with every inch of her heart.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“During the time I have known Joy, she has consistently demonstrated admirable levels of professionalism and dedication to her students. One example that stands out to me personally is the copious amounts of hours she spent making my school life as a teenager bearable... Joy was one of the few guiding lights I had in my life. She always listened to my concerns, never brushing them off as other adults usually would.”*

- A [REDACTED]: *“Joy is one of the most kind, loving, thoughtful, funny, welcoming, passionate, inspiring, empathetic, loyal, devoted, compassionate people I have ever met.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“I have come to know her as a person of strong character, integrity and reliability. One of Joy Ballard’s greatest strengths is her ability to support others and work collaboratively and remain calm. For example when I was going [REDACTED] Joy Ballard was always understanding and caring towards me as a student.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“During this time [REDACTED] and Deputy Headteacher, and I can confidently say she was one of the most inspiring and supporting leaders I have worked under. Joy is an exceptional professional with a rare balance of authority, kindness and approachability... [REDACTED] I had the pleasure of sitting in on some of Joy’s lessons. In addition to being a brilliant leader, Joy is also an outstanding teacher. Her lessons were engaging, inclusive, and thoughtfully planned, ensuring that every child had the opportunity to succeed.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“I had lost my love for learning, I did not want to come to school, I tried to throw away all of my abilities due to the lack of support I felt within the school. I would walk out of lessons and leave the school premises.... That all changed when I was introduced to Joy. Joy changed my life at school. Not only did she work to make it feel a safe space for me, she encouraged me to take the big steps and make changes to benefit me. She suggested I applied to become a school prefect. She helped me choose my GCSE options in school... She believed in me. I would not have stayed in that school if it wasn’t for her. She went beyond what a teacher needed to do for a student.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“I have witnessed Joy’s exceptional commitment to the welfare and education of her students. Her dedication to understanding the backgrounds and needs of her students is exemplary. Joy consistently demonstrated outstanding attention to detail and a proactive approach to supporting students, particularly those transitioning into college post year 11.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“Joy Ballard reassured me that she would support me in any way possible and encouraged me to communicate openly should I require further adjustments... despite the circumstances, I remain grateful to Joy Ballard for the support she provided during the most difficult period of my life. She enabled me to return to work temporarily, implemented protective adjustments, and supported my exit from the role in the least damaging way possible.”*
- A message which stated: *“Thank you Joy for all the support you generously gave me. I felt thankful you were always there.”*

- A [REDACTED]: *"I don't know if you remember me from [REDACTED] but I wanna say thank you or everything you did for me. [REDACTED] now."*
- The [REDACTED]: *"If it wasn't for you I think [REDACTED] would of [sic] given up but now is doing a [sic] level maths, his GCSE English again in the hope to get a C."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Your [sic] such an amazing person and an incredible headteacher you've opened so many paths for me and belived [sic] in me I wouldn't be me now if it wasn't for you."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"It also made me think back to my time in [REDACTED] and how rough and patchy it was, but I guess what I'm saying is thank you for everything because if it wasn't for you I would [sic] have achieved what I've done before my accident if it wasn't for you setting me on the right path."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"You was [sic] the only person to understand me truly and help me to get my grades that I will never forget and they all said that's the lady off the TV and couldn't believe me that I knew you so well. I owe so much to you."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Thank you Mrs, couldn't have done it without you", in relation to what appears to be BTEC results.*
- A [REDACTED]: *"You always gave me a lot of support and encouragement when you were at [REDACTED] and whenever things are looking they're worst I always try and think "what would Joy say" and it usually helps me to pick myself up again."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Still have the same love and respect for what you, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] done for me and [REDACTED] and will forever be in debt to you, I have a successful career in insurance and earning great money... who knew a guy with behavioural issues and trust issues would be successful, proved a lot wrong."*
- A message which stated: *"Thank you for all of your support and kindness over the past few years. I am gutted I won't be getting a bit more Joy Ballard time! But I have really learned so much from you."*
- A message which stated: *"Thank you so much for the lovely surprise and for the kindness and generosity you have shown me."*
- A member of the public having watched "Educating Cardiff": *"I watched it in its entirety yesterday and I have to say I was inspired and awed by the whole thing... I can't say enough about how great it was. Thanks for lighting the fire to keep doing what we do for these kids."*

- A message which stated: *"I was clearing out my wardrobe and came across my prom dress and it literally made me emotional... just wanted to let you know that little things you've done for soo [sic] many children will stick with them forever, you have no idea how you have impacted peoples [sic] lives."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Just wanted to wish you well at your new school. I know you'll whip them all in to shape in no time. On a personal note, thank you so much for your faith in me when you gave me the [REDACTED] job. You definitely gave me the confidence to do what I feel I am best at."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"My mum just told me the news about my English... I am so happy and I can't thank you enough. You are amazing at what you do."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"I just wanted to thank you for taking a chance on me all those years ago and being so supportive throughout my career."*
- A message which stated: *"You truly have been such a massive part of my working life, and life in general, and the kind words and advice you have said to me will stay with me forever. Please know that you are truly missed."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"I'd like to say thank you for all the help you have given to everyone in [REDACTED] including me. If it were not for you becoming headteacher I don't think I would have got anywhere near the grades I have today."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Thank you for everything you have done for me and Ryde. Been so many years now and sad to see you moving on. Thank you always being really supportive, approachable and for the general vibe you give off. You've made Ryde a lovely place to be part of."*
- A message which stated: *"One of the students in Ozone today chatting said "I really miss Mrs Ballard she was always so nice and kind"."*
- A message which stated: *"Considering that you were always there for me when I needed the most, furthermore more [sic] you believed in me and made my dreams come [sic] true to become a maths teacher in your amazing school."*
- A [REDACTED]: *"Best headteacher and person I have ever had the privilege to work for and have the up [sic] most respect and admiration for. I will literally never get better than you in my professional career I reckon."*
- A message which stated: *"I managed to secure myself a Level 3 apprenticeship studying Teaching and Learning... If it hadn't been for you helping me and giving*

*me some experience at Ryde, I would never have had the courage to even apply, so I have a lot to thank you [for].”*

- A [REDACTED]: *“I know I wasn’t the brightest start in school but just wanna say you were always good with me from when you came to the school... I’m hoping to start my own plastering business this year so I didn’t do to [sic] bad after all.”*
- A member of the public after watching “Educating Cardiff”: *“I just wanted to say how inspirational you are. I used to be a teacher and was forced to leave my post due to ill health.”*
- A message which stated: *“You really inspired children at [REDACTED]. You made a difference at [REDACTED].”*
- A message which stated: *“I just saw you on itv [sic] and thought I must message you. You’ve done so much for so many kids and it’s just the nicest feeling to see you’re doing well.”*
- A [REDACTED]: *“I just want to say what a fab job u [sic] did in turing [sic] [REDACTED] around I used to be a pupil at there [REDACTED] I had a very bad time there I just wish that I was still there lol it’s a much better place and that’s all down to you.”*
- A member of the public after watching “Educating Cardiff”: *“Your approach to some of the kids was exceptional. Your patience, kindness, the stand back and consider the situation was incredible.”*
- A message which stated: *“Just wanted to say that your approach to teaching our wonderful special young people really inspires me and gives me hope that there are teachers out there that go the extra mile to truly understand the young people trying to work out their place in the world.”*

The panel also took into consideration that Mrs Ballard made full admissions during the TRA investigation, initially signing an agreed statement of facts on 25 January 2026.

In respect of remorse and insight shown by Mrs Ballard:

- The panel noted that Mrs Ballard admitted during her oral evidence that she had lied during the School’s investigation, when denying the allegations in respect of the car. The panel considered this showed an initial lack of remorse, but, as set out above, Mrs Ballard made full admissions during the TRA investigation and gave evidence that she deeply regretted her conduct in relation to the lie.
- The panel considered that Mrs Ballard’s oral evidence was honest and credible. During her oral evidence she admitted that, with the exception of using the School

car for personal reasons, she wouldn't do anything differently, motivated by her belief that she was promoting the best interests of the pupils. This did not suggest that she had learned anything from the incidents. She stated: *"I am not a rule follower, I like going against the grain to benefit the kids."* She was clear this was not for personal gain.

- Whilst the panel accepted the best interests of the pupils was important, the panel considered that Mrs Ballard had failed to reflect on the fact that:
  - She was required to spend School funds strategically to make sure the needs of the children were met. This may have required liaison with other staff members on initiatives and/or requesting support from others where needed.
  - Changing the term dates had an impact on the attendance of pupils, which went against her stated objective to encourage more pupils to attend school.
  - It is possible to make a difference to pupil's lives without 'breaking the rules'.
  - The actions she took could undermine the public confidence in the profession and in her ability to run the School strategically and appropriately, ensuring financial competence.
  - Notwithstanding the fact Mrs Ballard did not believe anybody else at the School was prepared to handle the cash, there were alternative options in respect of cash handling procedures and it was possible to put in place a safe and robust banking system for the School.
- Mrs Ballard showed insight and remorse in relation to her personal use of the School car, and she expressed that she would never do this again.
- The panel was concerned that Mrs Ballard did not appear to have reflected on the bigger picture, shown by the conduct underpinning the allegations, and appeared at times to blame others, or did not unequivocally accept the panel's findings. This showed a lack of insight into her actions (with the exception of the use of the School car as referred to above), the impact on others (including the School community) or on how she was perceived.
- In her oral evidence Mrs Ballard confirmed she was unaware of the statutory guidance called the Academy Trust Handbook. She contended that the School's policies were 'fluid' and it was not always clear when changes had been made. She told the panel she tried her best to keep up to date with the changes. Overall,

the panel considered that the evidence before it showed Mrs Ballard had a lack of regard for the School's policies or the statutory framework within which all academy schools operate, and had not adequately reflected on this. The panel therefore considered there was a risk of repetition.

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

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

The panel was of the view that prohibition was both proportionate and appropriate. The panel decided that the public interest considerations outweighed the interests of Mrs Ballard. The panel's findings of dishonesty and lacking integrity in respect of some of the allegations, the impact of that on the public confidence in the profession, and Mrs Ballard's poor insight into her actions were significant factors in forming that opinion. Accordingly, the panel made a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be imposed with immediate effect.

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

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

None of the listed characteristics in paragraph 50 were engaged by the panel's findings.

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

None of the listed characteristics in paragraph 51 were engaged by the panel's findings.

The panel noted that these lists are not intended to be exhaustive and the panel should take into account all the circumstances of the case.

The panel considered the number of mitigating circumstances in this case and the extent to which Mrs Ballard had shown insight into her actions. There was a risk of repetition in

this case. However, in light of the positive contribution, as set out above, that Mrs Ballard obviously made to the profession, her passion for teaching, and her intentions to act in the best interests of pupils, the panel considered she should be given the earliest possible opportunity for the prohibition order to be reviewed.

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

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

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

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

In this case, the panel has found all of the allegations proven and found that some of those proven facts amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In this case, the panel has also found some of the allegations do not amount to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

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

In particular, the panel has found that Mrs Ballard 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, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

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

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a headteacher behaving in a way which was dishonest and lacking in integrity.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In assessing that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mrs Ballard, 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. While the panel suggests that some of her behaviour may potentially had an impact on pupils, it records no evidence that Mrs Ballards actions directly affected their safety and wellbeing in a negative manner.

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

"Overall, the panel considered that the evidence before it showed Mrs Ballard had a lack of regard for the School's policies or the statutory framework within which all academy schools operate, and had not adequately reflected on this. The panel therefore considered there was a risk of repetition."

In my judgement, the lack of evidence that Mrs Ballard has developed full insight into her actions means that I concur with the panel 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 offers this observation:

"In the light of the panel's findings against Mrs Ballard, which involved findings of dishonesty and lack of integrity in respect of some of the allegations, the panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was present as the conduct found against Mrs Ballard was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

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

I am particularly mindful of the finding of dishonesty in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an “ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen.”

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mrs Ballard herself. The panel makes this observation:

“Mrs Ballard did have a previously good history and the panel accepted that it had evidence she was an inspirational leader. She did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in her personal and professional conduct, but she had made an evidently positive contribution to the education sector over her long career in teaching.”

The panel also records having had the benefit of considering extensive character evidence attesting to Mrs Ballard’s commitment to teaching and to her pupils.

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel’s comments concerning the lack of evidence of full insight and consequent risk of repetition, the dishonesty demonstrated by Mrs Ballard, and the negative impact of her actions on the public’s perception of the profession. I have also placed weight on the panel’s findings that her actions were both deliberate and committed free of extreme duress.

I have given less weight in my consideration of sanction therefore, to the contribution that Mrs Ballard 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, does not in my view satisfy the public interest requirement concerning public confidence in the profession.

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest in order to achieve the intended aims of a prohibition order.

I have gone on to consider the matter of a review period. In this case, the panel has recommended a two-year review period.

In doing so, the panel has made reference to the Advice:

“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 in paragraph 50 were engaged by the panel’s findings.

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

None of the listed characteristics in paragraph 51 were engaged by the panel’s findings.”

I have considered the panel’s concluding comments:

“The panel considered the number of mitigating circumstances in this case and the extent to which Mrs Ballard had shown insight into her actions. There was a risk of repetition in this case. However, in light of the positive contribution, as set out above, that Mrs Ballard obviously made to the profession, her passion for teaching, and her intentions to act in the best interests of pupils, the panel considered she should be given the earliest possible opportunity for the prohibition order to be reviewed.

The panel decided that the findings indicated a situation in which a review period would be appropriate and, as such, decided that it would be proportionate, in all the circumstances, for the prohibition order to be recommended with provision for a two-year review period.”

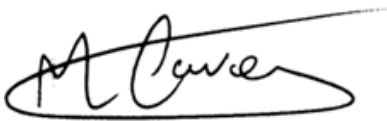
I have considered whether a two-year review period reflects the seriousness of the findings and is a proportionate period to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. In this case, factors mean that I agree with the panel that allowing such a review period is sufficient to achieve the aim of maintaining public confidence in the profession. These elements are the dishonesty found, the lack of evidence of full insight, and the likely negative impact on the standing of the profession.

I consider therefore that a two-year review period is required to satisfy the maintenance of public confidence in the profession and to allow Mrs Ballard the time to fully demonstrate that she has developed full insight into her behaviour and provide assurance that the risk of repetition is negligible.

**This means that Mrs Joy Ballard is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England.** She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 23 June 2028. two years from the date of this order at the earliest. This is not an automatic right to have the prohibition order removed. If she does apply, a panel will meet to consider whether the prohibition order should be set aside. Without a successful application, Mrs Ballard remains prohibited from teaching indefinitely.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cavey', written over a horizontal line.

**Decision maker: Marc Cavey**

**Date: 11 June 2026**

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