



# **Mr Paul Price: 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:** Mr Paul Price

**TRA reference:** 24223

**Date of determination:** 18 June 2026

**Former employer:** Leasowes High School, Halesowen

### **Introduction**

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened on 17 to 18 June 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Paul Price.

The panel members were Mrs Bev Williams (teacher panellist – in the chair), Miss Faye Darlington (lay panellist) and Mr Jonathan Wettreich (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Miss Rebecca Hughes of Birketts LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Ms Shirlie Duckworth on behalf of Brabners LLP solicitors.

Mr Paul Price was present and was represented by Ms Penny Maudsley of Alexander Barristers Chambers.

The hearing took place in public, save for the parts which were held in private, and was recorded.

## **Allegations**

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 19 March 2026 as amended by the preliminary application referred to below.

It was alleged that Mr Price was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that, whilst employed as a Teacher by Leasowes High School:

1. On 25 January 2024 he left a class of pupils unsupervised in his classroom:
  - a. during a practical lesson;
  - b. while the tool cupboard in the classroom was unlocked;
  - c. while a pupil or pupils in the classroom were using:
    - i. a sanding machine;
    - ii. hand tools.
2. During his conduct as described at paragraph 1, he was in the metalwork storeroom where he was using an e-cigarette / vape pen.

Mr Price admitted the facts of allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c)(i), 1(c)(ii), and 2, as set out in the response to the notice of proceedings dated 10 April 2026. Mr Price further admitted that those admitted facts amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Mr Price also admitted the facts of the allegations in the statement of facts dated 17 June 2026 ("Statement of Facts").

## **Summary of evidence**

### **Documents**

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

Section 1: Notice of proceedings – pages 3 to 27

Section 2: TRA witness evidence – pages 28 to 167

Section 3: TRA documents – pages 168 to 223

Section 5: Teacher documents – pages 224 to 295

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

The panel was also provided with a Statement of Facts dated 17 June 2026, which it also read.

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**

Mr Price attended the hearing and gave oral evidence in respect of mitigation.

## **Decision and reasons**

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

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

In April 2018, Mr Price commenced employment as a design and technology teacher at Leasowes High School ('the School').

On 25 January 2024, Mr Price left his classroom unattended while pupils were engaged in practical work, during which it was alleged that the tool cupboard was left open and that pupils were using equipment, including saws and a sanding machine. During this time, Mr Price was present in a nearby metalwork storeroom using an e-cigarette/vape.

On 26 January 2024, Individual A, [REDACTED], spoke to Individual B, [REDACTED], about the incident that occurred on 25 January 2024, and concerns were raised regarding the safety of pupils in the classroom. The following day, Individual A wrote a statement about the incident and provided it to the School.

On 29 January 2024, an initial fact-finding meeting took place with Mr Price, during which he admitted that he had left the classroom and had used a vape whilst in the storeroom. On the same day, Mr Price was suspended from duty pending investigation.

On 3 July 2024, a disciplinary hearing was held by the School, and Mr Price's employment at the School was subsequently terminated for misconduct on 4 July 2024.

On 31 July 2024, the School referred the matter 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:

The panel noted that Mr Price admitted allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c)(i), 1(c)(ii) and 2, as set out in the response to the notice of proceedings dated 10 April 2026. In respect of those admitted facts, Mr Price later admitted that his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel considered the Statement of Facts. In the Statement of Facts, Mr Price admitted allegations 1 and 2 and further admitted that the facts of the allegation amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that brings the profession into dispute. Notwithstanding this, the panel made a determination based on the facts available to it.

- 1. On 25 January 2024 you left a class of pupils unsupervised in your classroom:**
  - a. during a practical lesson;**
  - b. while the tool cupboard in the classroom was unlocked;**
  - c. while a pupil or pupils in the classroom were using:**
    - i. a sanding machine;**
    - ii. hand tools.**

The panel considered the Statement of Facts, in which Mr Price admitted that on 25 January 2024, he had left the class unattended.

The panel considered the written statement (reflective statement) of Mr Price dated 19 April 2026 ("Mr Price's Written Statement").

Mr Price wrote that on 25 January 2024, he left a classroom of pupils unattended in a workshop environment. During the lesson, the pupils were using hand tools and machinery. When he left the classroom/workshop, these hand tools and the sanding machine were in use. He was found crouched in a neighbouring room by a colleague, where he was using an e-cigarette. Although he did not recall using the e-cigarette clearly, he trusted the colleague's account of what happened. He therefore admits the allegations.

Mr Price explained that, by leaving the pupils unattended without a responsible adult supervising them, he put them at risk of harm to themselves and others. He

acknowledged that, during the lesson, the pupils were conducting practical tasks and using tools and machinery, and that, although he had always demonstrated how to use the tools and machinery safely before allowing pupils to use them, he was not able to oversee the safe use of these tools and machinery due to his absence from the room.

Mr Price described that, when using a sanding machine, there was a risk of material or fingers and hair becoming caught in the rotating disc, and that all students present had received a demonstration of how it should be used correctly and safely. He accepted that this did not excuse his absence from the working environment. Mr Price stated that his absence could have led to injury to any of the pupils, and that, in a normal workshop environment, if he had observed incorrect use of equipment or poor behaviour, he would usually stop all practical tasks immediately and gather students for a demonstration of correct use. Mr Price explained that it was normal practice for a tool cabinet to be left open for the duration of a lesson so pupils could access and return tools, but in his absence, pupils may have had the opportunity to access other tools or misuse tools. He acknowledged that tools such as saws could have been misused as weapons and that poor behaviour or accidental misuse could have caused harm, and therefore, there was potential to harm others.

The panel considered the written statement of Individual A dated 4 March 2025.

Individual A described that on 25 January 2024, at around 12 noon, she was working in the T4 computer room, organising photocopying ahead of the next rotation, and was unsure how many pupils were in one of Mr Price's DT classes, so she went to find him. Individual A outlined that Mr Price was teaching in the T7 workshop, which is next to the T4 computer room, and that there is a door between the two rooms and glass walls around them so you can look into all the workshops. Individual A explained that, when looking into the T7 workshop, she could see that Mr Price's Year 9 class were working in a practical lesson, the tool cupboard was open, and pupils were using saws and files to shape their wooden work. Individual A described that one pupil was working at the belt sander in the far corner of the workshop, and that the pupils were getting on with their work and chatting loudly, and that there were no adults in the room. Individual A outlined that, as she could not see Mr Price, she went to the metalwork storeroom to find him. Individual A described that, on walking into the storeroom, she immediately saw Mr Price, who was crouched in the back corner, around a metre and a half away, and that she had a clear view of him.

Individual A stated that Mr Price said he was getting a card out of the storeroom, then said he had been putting it back, and quickly left the room. Individual A explained that she did not know how long Mr Price had been out of the T7 workshop, as she was not looking into it before entering the room. Individual A further described that, after the class had ended and the pupils had gone to lunch, she spoke with Mr Price and informed him that it was not acceptable to leave class during a lesson with a child working on a machine, and that the children had access to saws and sharp implements and that it was

not good practice to leave the class unsupervised. Individual A explained that Mr Price apologised, saying he had been struggling and would not do it again.

The panel considered the written statement of Individual C investigating officer at the School. Individual C described that she first became involved in the matter when she was asked by the headteacher of the School to investigate an allegation made by Individual A, who had reported that she had found Mr Price's DT workshop unsupervised by a teacher during a practical lesson and had gone into one of the DT storerooms to find Mr Price crouched on the floor. Individual C explained that the investigation report was completed on 22 May 2024 and that it was straightforward, as Mr Price accepted what had happened, including that the pupils had been left unsupervised with access to the workshop's tool cupboard and the risks associated with this. Individual C outlined that she found that Mr Price had breached a number of School policies by leaving pupils without supervision in order to vape and recommended that the case proceed to a disciplinary hearing.

The panel considered the minutes of the investigation meeting with Mr Price, in which he stated that he left the workshop because he felt a panic attack coming and did not know what to do. It was recorded that he explained he had taken some resources to the metalwork cupboard and said he was gone for approximately 30 seconds. Whilst in the metalwork cupboard, he admitted that he had taken his vape out of his pocket and used it whilst in the cupboard. He stated that he was not aware of what he was doing at the time and lacked comprehension of what was going on.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found allegations 1(a), 1(b), 1(c)(i), and 1(c)(ii) proved.

**2. During your conduct as described at paragraph 1, you were in the metalwork storeroom where you were using an e-cigarette / vape pen.**

The panel noted that Mr Price admitted allegation 2, as set out in the response to the notice of proceedings dated 10 April 2026. In respect of those admitted facts, Mr Price further admitted that his conduct amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

The panel considered the Statement of Facts, in which Mr Price admitted that on 25 January 2024, he had been using a vape pen.

The panel considered Mr Price's Written Statement. Mr Price admitted that he was vaping in the metalwork storeroom to calm himself due to a panic attack. He acknowledged that this did not excuse him having done so and explained that he should have sought help sooner if he was struggling. Mr Price further admitted that he breached the no-smoking policy by using an e-cigarette. He outlined that the policy stated that

smoking is banned at the School and applies to anything that can be smoked, including electronic cigarettes and vapes.

The panel noted the statement prepared by Individual A and provided to the School, dated 25 January 2024. Individual A explained that she was working in T4 organising photocopying for the next rotation, facing T7, and wanted to ask Mr Price something about the rotation. She described that, on observing that Mr Price was not in his class, she looked in the metalwork storeroom, as this was a place he visited regularly. She stated that Mr Price was bent over into the back corner, facing the wall. Although she did not see him vaping, Individual A reported that she could smell vapour. She further stated that, after the lesson, she approached Mr Price and informed him that it was unacceptable to leave his lesson unsupervised while vaping in the storeroom. She stated that Mr Price knew this. In her statement, Individual A recorded that she had told Mr Price she knew he vaped in the metalwork area or the wood storeroom, although she noted that she could not prove this.

The panel considered Individual A's written statement dated 4 March 2025. Individual A stated that she could not see Mr Price in T7, so she went to the metalwork storeroom to find him. Individual A described that, on walking into the storeroom, she immediately saw Mr Price, who was crouched in the back corner, around a metre and a half away, and that she had a clear view of him. Individual A explained that she was initially worried for him, as she knew he had previously fainted and had some heart issues, and asked him if he was alright. Individual A described that Mr Price looked shocked, as if he knew he had been doing something wrong, with a guilty look and a bit sorry for himself, and that she could smell vaping vapour in the air and was sure it was from a vape.

Individual A further stated that, after the class had ended and the pupils had gone to lunch, she spoke to Mr Price and told him she had seen him vaping in the metalwork storeroom. In which Mr Price apologised, saying that he was really sorry.

The panel considered Individual C's written statement. Individual C stated that Mr Price had reportedly admitted vaping in the storeroom when confronted by Individual A. Individual C further stated that the headteacher held an informal meeting with Mr Price on 29 January 2024, during which Mr Price admitted to vaping during the lesson.

The panel considered the notes of the informal meeting with Mr Price on 29 January 2024, which recorded that he admitted to "*briefly*" vaping during the lesson as a form of instant stress relief. It was recorded in the notes that he was experiencing personal difficulties at home, [REDACTED], and that there was a significant amount going on for him at the time.

Having considered the admitted facts and the supporting evidence, the panel found on balance allegation 2 proved.

## **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 Mr Price, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers’ Standards.

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

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils’ well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel considered the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy, which identified examples of misconduct, including smoking in any area, and expressly includes electronic cigarettes and vapes.

The panel had regard to Mr Price’s job description, which required subject teachers to meet the Teacher Standards appropriate to their level of experience, maintain high standards in classroom practice, promote and safeguard the welfare of children, and comply with policies relating to child protection, health, safety and security.

The panel further considered the Trust’s Code of Conduct, which set out the duty of care owed by staff, and the Trust’s Health and Safety Policy, including specific guidance applicable to the Design and Technology department. This included requirements relating to adequate supervision and safe working practices when using tools.

The panel noted that the Trust’s No Smoking Policy expressly prohibits smoking on School premises, including the use of electronic cigarettes and vapes.

The panel acknowledged that no student was harmed on 25 January 2024. However, it found that a risk of harm had been created by the teacher leaving pupils unsupervised in a workshop environment with access to machinery and tools, including a lockable cupboard containing various saws, files, planes, squares and mallets (18 Tenon Saws, 22 Coping Saws, 8 Junior Hack Saws, 23 Files (including 4 round files), 20 Steel rules, 9 Planes, 1 Square, 10 Try squares and 2 Mallets).

The panel also considered whether Mr Price's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice. The Advice indicates that, where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel considered that Mr Price had admitted that his conduct, as found proven, amounted to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel acknowledged that the incident was of short duration. However, it considered that parents would not expect their children to be left unsupervised in a classroom, particularly in a Design and Technology setting involving dangerous equipment. The panel placed weight on the fact that Mr Price was an experienced teacher, with appropriate qualifications and training, including regular health and safety training, and therefore understood the risks involved.

The panel found that, by leaving the classroom while responsible for pupils and using a vape on school premises, Mr Price prioritised his personal needs over his safeguarding responsibilities. Although no harm ultimately occurred, and there was a technician in the vicinity, the panel concluded that a risk of harm had been created, especially given the nature of the environment and equipment.

The panel considered that the conduct was not comparable to a low-risk classroom setting. It concluded that the combination of leaving a class unsupervised in a workshop environment and breaching the School's no-smoking policy was sufficiently serious to amount to unacceptable professional conduct.

The panel directed itself that unacceptable professional conduct is conduct of a serious nature, falling significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher. In doing so, it took into account of the submissions of the presenting officer, including the distinction between a serious breach and a merely temporary lapse. However, the panel noted that, due to the high-risk nature of the classroom environment in this case, it was reprehensible conduct.

The panel noted Mr Price's account which was that he was experiencing a panic attack at the time. While this was taken into consideration by the panel, the panel also noted that

there was no contemporaneous or corroborating medical evidence to support that assertion.

The panel also had regard to Mr Price's admission of the conduct and his role in safeguarding pupils. It considered that there were alternative steps available to him, such as seeking assistance, rather than leaving the class unsupervised.

For these reasons, the panel was satisfied that the conduct of Mr Price amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was satisfied that Mr Price was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Price'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 into account the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Price's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Price was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the panel found none of the conduct in the offences relevant.

The panel considered that the findings of misconduct were serious, and the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher.

In particular, the panel considered that leaving a classroom unsupervised while in charge of pupils who were using machinery and tools and using a vape on School premises whilst Mr Price should have been in the classroom, risked undermining public confidence in the profession.

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

## **Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State**

Given the panel's findings in respect of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to

consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

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

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case, namely: the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils; the maintenance of public confidence in the profession; and declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct.

In light of the panel's findings against Mr Price, which involved leaving pupils unsupervised during a practical lesson while they were using tools and machinery, and being in a storeroom vaping during that time, there was a strong public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the lack of supervision of pupils who were using tools and machinery.

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

The panel was of the view that a public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Price was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Price in the profession. The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining Mr Price in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and the panel considered that he is able to make a valuable contribution to the profession.

The panel considered carefully the seriousness of the behaviour, noting that the Advice states that the expectation of both the public and pupils, is that members of the teaching profession maintain an exemplary level of integrity and ethical standards at all times.

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

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;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils...; and
- failure in their duty of care towards a child, including exposing a child to risk or failing to promote the safety and welfare of the children (as set out in Part 1 of KCSIE).

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

There was no evidence that Mr Price's actions were not deliberate.

There was no evidence to suggest that Mr Price was acting under extreme duress, e.g. a physical threat or significant intimidation. However, the panel accepted that he was experiencing significant personal pressures, including [REDACTED] and stressful life events.

The panel also had regard to the mitigating personal circumstances outlined by Mr Price. This included evidence that there was a melting pot of stressors affecting him, [REDACTED]. The panel noted the cumulative impact this had on him at the relevant time.

Mr Price did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education sector, but the panel recognised there was no evidence that his quality of teaching was in question. The panel also noted he had been teaching for a significant period of time.

The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.

The panel considered the character references provided on behalf of Mr Price, including Individual D, [REDACTED], and Individual E, [REDACTED]. In particular, the panel noted the following character reference:

Individual F, [REDACTED]:

- *“Although it was in no way good for Paul to react the way he did, which resulted in children being left without a supervising adult whilst in control of power tools... this was completely out of character and also not something Paul had ever done up to that point in his twelve-year career.”*

- *“Since that time though Paul has been able to face his issue head on... [REDACTED] I have seen a massive change in how Paul copes with pressures in his life... he is now much more open... seeks help when required [REDACTED].”*

The panel considered whether Mr Price demonstrated sufficient insight, remorse, and other mitigating factors in respect of his conduct. The panel noted that Mr Price accepted that, by leaving pupils unattended while they were using tools and machinery, he put the pupils at risk of harm to themselves and others and acknowledged that his absence meant he was not able to oversee the safe use of these tools and machinery. He further recognised that his absence could have led to injury and that there was a *“potential for harm to be caused to others,”* including through misuse of tools.

In relation to allegation 2, the panel noted that Mr Price accepted that he was vaping in the metalwork storeroom during the lesson, explaining that this would have been to calm himself due to a panic attack. He acknowledged that this does not excuse his conduct and accepted that he breached the School’s no smoking policy.

Mr Price further acknowledged that his actions failed to safeguard pupils’ wellbeing and undermined public trust in the profession.

The panel found that Mr Price demonstrated a high level of insight into his conduct. He provided a detailed reflection on the risks arising from his actions, including the potential for pupils to misuse tools or cause harm to themselves or others, and explicitly accepted that he had breached safeguarding principles and professional standards. The panel also noted that Mr Price recognised the wider impact of his conduct, including on pupils, parents, colleagues, the School, and the reputation of the profession as a whole, and expressed that he *“deeply regret[ted]”* the incident and was *“extremely remorseful.”*

The panel also considered that he demonstrated integrity in admitting the misconduct at an early stage and engaging openly with the regulatory process.

The panel also noted that Mr Price completed a safeguarding course on 26 April 2026, which addressed safeguarding legislation, recognising risks, and reporting concerns. [REDACTED]. He described learning to communicate more effectively, identified his tendency to mask difficulties, and developed strategies to manage stress and prevent escalation. The panel noted that Mr Price reported that [REDACTED] he had developed coping mechanisms and greater awareness of triggers, as supported by his character references.

The panel also had regard to the mitigating personal circumstances outlined by Mr Price. He described that he was experiencing the cumulative effect of significant stress due to his personal circumstances, and [REDACTED]. The panel noted that Mr Price accepted he had not communicated these difficulties effectively at the time and recognised that he should have sought support or removed himself from teaching duties.

The panel also took into account that Mr Price identified clear strategies for preventing repetition, including ensuring that, if similar circumstances arose, he would stop all practical work, seek assistance from colleagues, and not leave pupils unsupervised. He demonstrated an understanding that he should not place himself in a position where his health could compromise pupils' safety.

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.

In reaching its decision, the panel considered the case of *Wallace v Secretary of State for Education 2017*. The panel concluded that a less intrusive measure would be more appropriate in these circumstances, especially taking into account the consequences for Mr Price of prohibition. The panel found that publication would strike the correct balance between Mr Price's rights and the interests of the public.

The panel found that the conduct found against Mr Price was at the less serious end of the scale of severity.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response.

The panel took into account the fact that Mr Price has not practised as a teacher since the incident, and had spent significant time reflecting and taking action in order to reduce the risk of future repetition, and therefore, the imposition of a prohibition order at this stage would serve no useful additional protective purpose.

The panel considered what additional public interest would be achieved by imposing a prohibition order in circumstances where the risks have been identified, addressed, and mitigated, and where Mr Price has demonstrated insight, remorse, and rehabilitation. The panel concluded that the public interest would not be materially advanced by further restricting Mr Price's ability to return to the profession.

Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour was at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case. The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to Mr Price as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable. The panel considered that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession and that this represented a proportionate and less intrusive means of maintaining confidence in the profession and declaring proper standards.

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

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

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

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

The panel has recommended that the findings of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in relation to Mr Paul Price, should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

The panel has found that Mr Price is in breach of the following standards:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach...
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The panel finds that the conduct of Mr Price fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding that Mr Price had left pupils unsupervised in a workshop environment with access to machinery and tools.

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of unacceptable professional conduct and conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have

considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Price, 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 safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, *“The panel acknowledged that no student was harmed on 25 January 2024. However, it found that a risk of harm had been created...”* A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel’s comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows,

*“The panel found that Mr Price demonstrated a high level of insight into his conduct. He provided a detailed reflection on the risks arising from his actions, including the potential for pupils to misuse tools or cause harm to themselves or others, and explicitly accepted that he had breached safeguarding principles and professional standards. The panel also noted that Mr Price recognised the wider impact of his conduct, including on pupils, parents, colleagues, the School, and the reputation of the profession as a whole, and expressed that he “deeply regret[ted]” the incident and was “extremely remorseful.”*

The panel also noted that Mr Price *“...demonstrated an understanding that he should not place himself in a position where his health could compromise pupils’ safety.”*

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observed, *“...the panel considered that leaving a classroom unsupervised while in charge of pupils who were using machinery and tools, and using a vape on School premises whilst Mr Price should have been in the classroom, risked undermining public confidence in 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 Mr Price himself. The panel comment,

*“Mr Price did not demonstrate exceptionally high standards in his personal and professional conduct or that he had contributed significantly to the education*

*sector, but the panel recognised there was no evidence that his quality of teaching was in question. The panel also noted he had been teaching for a significant period of time.*

*The panel accepted that the incident was out of character.”*

I have considered the mitigating personal factors that the panel outline and the panel's finding of the cumulative impact these had on Mr Price at the relevant time.

I have also considered the panel's description of the positive character references provided in support of Mr Price.

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

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning the lack of insight or remorse. The panel has said it *“...took into account that Mr Price identified clear strategies for preventing repetition, including ensuring that, if similar circumstances arose, he would stop all practical work, seek assistance from colleagues, and not leave pupils unsupervised. He demonstrated an understanding that he should not place himself in a position where his health could compromise pupils' safety.”*

I have also placed considerable weight on the finding of the panel that,

*“The panel considered what additional public interest would be achieved by imposing a prohibition order in circumstances where the risks have been identified, addressed, and mitigated, and where Mr Price has demonstrated insight, remorse, and rehabilitation. The panel concluded that the public interest would not be materially advanced by further restricting Mr Price's ability to return to the profession.”*

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



**Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield**

**Date: 22 June 2026**

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