# Primary school teacher banned indefinitely after knife possession and drink-driving convictions



An experienced primary school teacher has been barred from teaching indefinitely following a series of alarming incidents, culminating in her discovery drunk and in possession of two large kitchen knives. Lauren Jenkins, 39, previously employed at Merlin Top Primary Academy in Keighley, West Yorkshire, found herself at the centre of a police investigation after officers were called to a disturbance at her parents' home in August 2022.

During the police intervention, Jenkins was found restrained by her father and was searched, leading to the discovery of the knives in her bag. Following this incident, she pleaded guilty to possessing a bladed article in a public place at North Yorkshire Magistrates’ Court. Her sentence included a 12-week prison term, suspended for a year. This incident wasn't her first encounter with the law; earlier that year, she had been handed a community sentence for drink-driving.

At a recent conduct panel meeting convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), it was revealed that Jenkins had resigned from her position shortly after the internal investigation at the school, which initiated a referral to the TRA. Testimony from a colleague noted that Jenkins had previously confided about her drink-driving conviction, which had resulted in her being unable to drive and subsequently led to her extended absences from work.

The panel expressed concerns about the potential impact of Jenkins' conduct on public trust in the teaching profession. The gravity of her actions was underscored by the fact that her offending behaviour not only breached the law but also represented a significant risk to public safety. The panel stressed that the reputation of educators is paramount, given the influence they wield over young minds and families within the community.

In light of the serious nature of her offences, the TRA panel recommended an indefinite ban on Jenkins from teaching in any educational setting within England. In its ruling, the panel stated that Jenkins’ actions significantly fell short of the rigorous standards expected in the profession. Furthermore, they highlighted that her behaviour constituted a breach of trust, which is particularly concerning in a school environment.

Jenkins, who did not attend the hearing, was described as a "fantastic teacher" by a colleague, a sentiment that underscores the dissonance between her professional capabilities and her personal conduct. The panel noted that while individual qualifications and teaching abilities are essential, maintaining the integrity and safety of the teaching profession is of utmost importance.

As the teaching profession grapples with issues of misconduct and safeguarding, it is crucial to highlight the broader context within which these incidents occur. Between 2013 and 2018, over 450 teachers in England faced bans for various forms of misconduct, with inappropriate conduct being the dominant reason. A worrying trend has emerged, where a significant number of these cases involved sexually motivated behaviour, prompting calls from education bodies like the National Education Union to enhance safeguards for children and ensure only suitable individuals are entrusted with teaching roles.

In Jenkins’ case, while she may have found some level of personal fulfilment in her role as an educator, her actions serve as a reminder of the critical need for accountability in the profession. The indefinite ban provides a necessary measure to protect students and uphold public confidence in the education system.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lauren-jenkins-merlin-school-misconduct-teaching-b2756838.html), [[2]](https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/22572968.prison-sentence-woman-two-large-kitchen-knives-bag/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lauren-jenkins-merlin-school-misconduct-teaching-b2756838.html), [[2]](https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/22572968.prison-sentence-woman-two-large-kitchen-knives-bag/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lauren-jenkins-merlin-school-misconduct-teaching-b2756838.html), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-44643267)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lauren-jenkins-merlin-school-misconduct-teaching-b2756838.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/22572968.prison-sentence-woman-two-large-kitchen-knives-bag/> - In August 2022, Lauren Jenkins, a 36-year-old primary school teacher from Cross Hills, was found outside her parents' home, restrained by her father, with two large kitchen knives in her bag. Police responded to reports of aggressive behavior and discovered the knives during a search. At the time, Jenkins was serving a community order for a previous drink-driving offense. She admitted to possessing the knives in a public place without lawful reason and was sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months. Jenkins had been off work since February due to health issues and would lose her teaching position as a result of the conviction. ([thetelegraphandargus.co.uk](https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/22572968.prison-sentence-woman-two-large-kitchen-knives-bag/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-39667562> - Francoise Jenkins, a 45-year-old teacher at Danum Academy in Doncaster, was banned indefinitely from teaching after engaging in sexual relations with a female pupil. The relationship began in April 2007, and the pupil later reported the incidents, leading to an investigation. Jenkins had obtained the pupil's mobile number from the school's database and met her both inside and outside of school. The disciplinary panel found that Jenkins had engaged in sexual activity with the pupil at her home and had paid one of the men £13,000 to prevent him from reporting the relationship. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-39667562?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-61007857> - Lauren Melvin, 41, head of science at Newstead Wood School in Orpington, was struck off after 'sexually motivated' actions towards two girls in her care. Allegations included making inappropriate comments, sharing alcohol with pupils, and engaging in physical contact. The professional misconduct panel found these actions to be proven and concluded that Melvin should be permanently banned from teaching. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-61007857?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-44643267> - Between April 2013 and March 2018, more than 450 teachers in England were banned following misconduct hearings, with 'inappropriate conduct' being the most common reason. A third of these cases involved sexually motivated behavior, including teachers engaging in sexual activity with pupils and showing them pornography. The National Education Union emphasized the importance of safeguarding children and ensuring that only the best individuals are in the teaching profession. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-44643267?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network?page=7> - An article from The Guardian's Teacher Network discusses various issues in the education sector, including the shortage of school places in England, the impact of academies on this shortage, and the success of the Michaela free school in achieving high GCSE results. It also highlights the gender disparity in A-level science entries, with female students outnumbering males, and notes that young people are becoming more skeptical about the necessity of attending university. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network?page=7&utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/teachers/page-6/> - An article from The Telegraph's Teachers section covers various topics, including the potential closure of Scottish schools due to a teachers' strike, the first national walkout since the 1980s, and the possibility of the strike being canceled if a better pay offer is submitted. It also discusses the impact of teacher bias on students' grades, with studies suggesting that anonymized marking could affect the gap between male and female students. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/teachers/page-6/?utm_source=openai))