# West Yorkshire teacher struck off after knife possession and drink driving offences



An experienced primary school teacher from West Yorkshire has been struck off following a disturbing incident that has raised significant concerns regarding professional conduct within the teaching profession. Lauren Jenkins, 39, previously employed at Merlin Top Primary Academy in Keighley, was found in possession of two large kitchen knives and was intoxicated during a police intervention related to a disturbance at an address in August 2022.

The details surrounding her removal from the teaching register were discussed during a recent panel hearing convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency. During the police search, officers discovered the knives in Jenkins’ bag, marking a serious breach of public safety. She subsequently pleaded guilty to possession of a bladed article in a public place, receiving a suspended 12-week prison sentence at North Yorkshire Magistrates’ Court. This legal trouble came shortly after she had been sentenced for another offence: drink driving, for which she had already received a community order earlier in the same year.

The panel's evidence included memoranda of Jenkins' criminal history, revealing that she had ceased her teaching duties following the school’s internal investigation into her behaviour. A witness from the school recounted that Jenkins had informed him about her drink driving incident, mentioning that she could no longer drive, although he learned about the knife-related incident from media reports. The panel expressed that Jenkins' actions could severely undermine public confidence in the teaching profession, particularly given the authority and influence teachers hold over young minds. They noted, “The findings of misconduct are particularly serious … offences which placed the public at a risk of harm.”

In mitigating circumstances, a witness described Jenkins as a "fantastic teacher" assigned to later year groups, highlighting her prior dedication to the role. However, the nature of her offences—particularly the knife incident, which resulted in a suspended prison sentence—compounded the seriousness of her misconduct. The panel ultimately recommended that Jenkins be prohibited from teaching indefinitely, with the opportunity to apply for her order to be lifted in five years.

This incident is not an isolated case in a broader context of rising concerns regarding safety and behaviour within educational environments. The teaching profession has faced heightened scrutiny, particularly following violent incidents in schools, including a recent case where a 14-year-old pupil in Wales was charged with wounding staff members and a fellow student while in possession of a knife. Such events underscore the urgent need for increased security measures in schools, with unions previously reporting over 17,500 instances of physical assaults against educators within a single school year. This has led to discussions around implementing strict security protocols, including the potential use of metal detectors and empowering school leadership to enforce thorough searches for weapons.

As Jenkins reflects on her decision, it is clear the ramifications of her actions extend beyond personal consequences; they echo through the educational community, shining a spotlight on the delicate balance between maintaining professional standards and managing the complex challenges that educators may face. The sentiment within the community remains that while every teacher may encounter difficulties, such risks must be managed in a manner that safeguards students and sustains public trust in educational institutions.

This case serves as a stark reminder of the responsibilities teachers bear, and the importance of aligning personal conduct with professional integrity to safeguard the teaching profession's reputation.

## 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 – [[2]](https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/22572968.prison-sentence-woman-two-large-kitchen-knives-bag/), [[3]](https://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/national/24634701.girl-14-says-give-anything-go-back-school-stabbings/), [[6]](https://www.inkl.com/news/school-stabbing-highlights-risks-to-teachers-say-unions-e0822256-04b6-4f62-a759-ee51a52643e3)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## 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 with two large kitchen knives in her bag. Police responded to reports of aggressive behavior, and upon searching her bag, discovered the knives. 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. The court also imposed costs and a surcharge. Jenkins had been off work since February due to health issues and was expected to lose her teaching position. Her defense highlighted her significant mental health challenges, including self-harming behaviors. The incident led to her dismissal from teaching, as her conduct was deemed to fall significantly short of professional standards, potentially damaging public confidence in the teaching profession.
3. <https://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/national/24634701.girl-14-says-give-anything-go-back-school-stabbings/> - A 14-year-old girl in Wales pleaded guilty to wounding two teachers and a fellow pupil at Ysgol Dyffryn Aman in Ammanford. The incident occurred on April 24, with the girl admitting to three counts of wounding with intent and one count of possessing a bladed article on school premises. She expressed deep remorse, stating she would 'give anything to go back.' The court heard she had been bullied at school and had previously been caught with a knife by a teacher. The case highlights concerns about knife possession and violence in schools.
4. <https://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/10912877.keighley-news-review-of-the-year/> - In 2011, Keighley News reported on various local incidents, including the closure of Keighley Police Station's cells due to cost-cutting measures. The report also highlighted the return of the Keighley Gala parade after a hiatus since 2012, marking a successful community event. Additionally, the closure of Steeton Hall, a historic hotel and wedding venue, was announced, with the property being put up for sale. The report also mentioned safety concerns regarding children near a building site close to a primary school, emphasizing the need for improved road safety measures.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-england-leeds-41999751> - The BBC's live updates on Yorkshire news included coverage of the inquest into the murder of Leeds teacher Ann Maguire, who was fatally stabbed in 2014. The inquest revealed that Maguire gasped, 'He's stabbed me in the neck. I'm dying,' after being attacked by a 15-year-old student. The updates also featured reports on missing persons, such as Layla Page from Huddersfield, and other regional news developments.
6. <https://www.inkl.com/news/school-stabbing-highlights-risks-to-teachers-say-unions-e0822256-04b6-4f62-a759-ee51a52643e3> - Following the stabbing of teacher Ann Maguire in 2014, unions highlighted the risks teachers face, with over 17,500 incidents of students physically assaulting adults reported in 2011-12. The article discusses the introduction of security measures like airport-style arches to detect weapons and the empowerment of headteachers to search students for weapons, drugs, or stolen goods. Despite these measures, concerns about maintaining open and welcoming school environments persist.
7. <https://www.bakersfield.com/news/another-lawsuit-accuses-khsd-of-turning-a-blind-eye-to-teacher-misconduct/article_cba35512-4cfb-11e9-8585-f719eb1c7ebd.html> - A lawsuit filed against the Kern High School District alleges that officials ignored reports of teacher misconduct. The case involves a former Liberty High School basketball coach who admitted to inappropriate conduct with a 16-year-old student. The lawsuit claims the district failed to act on previous reports of misconduct, leading to further incidents. This case adds to a series of lawsuits accusing the district of negligence in handling teacher misconduct cases.