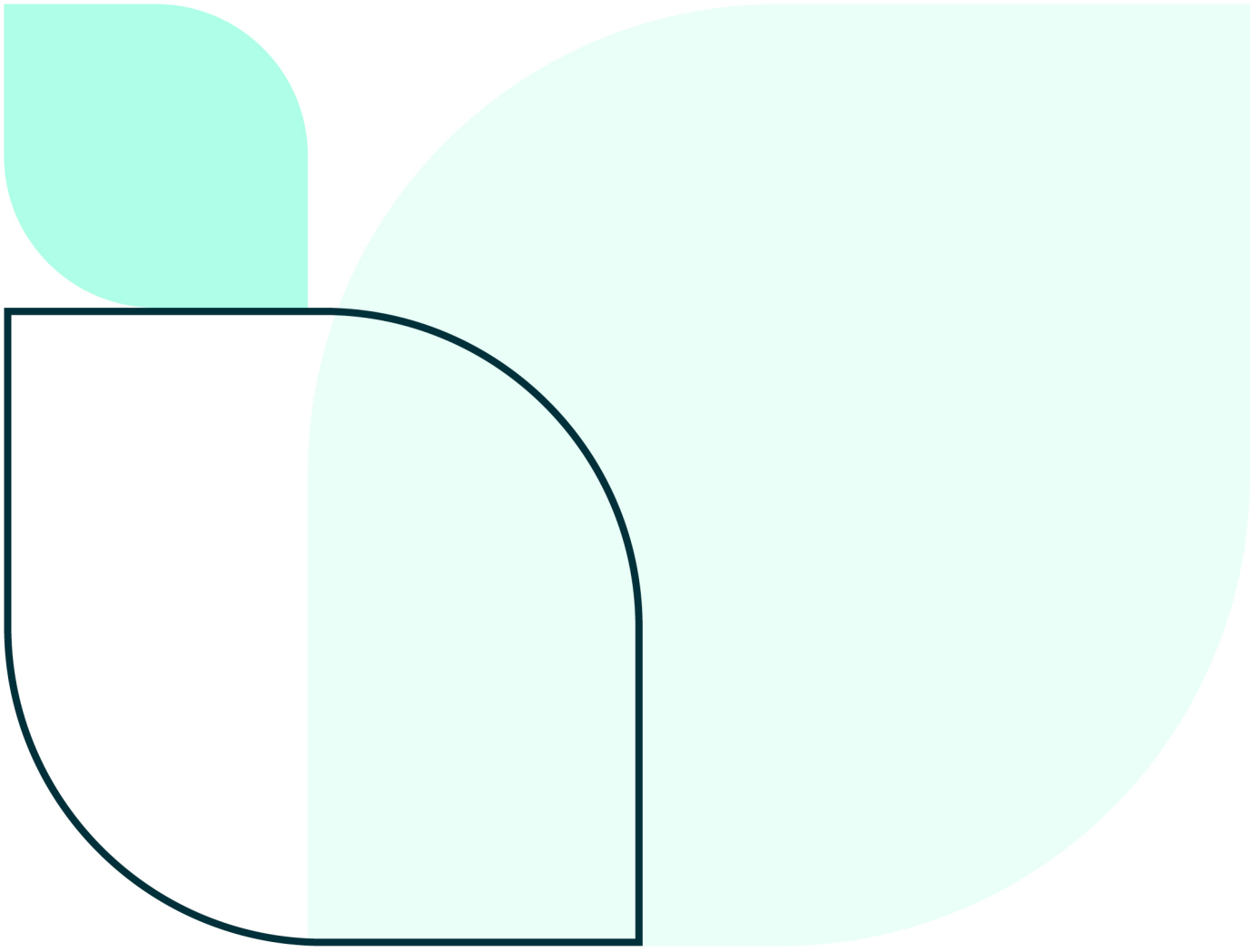
Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools
National Society for Education

SIAMS Complaints Policy for Schools

September 2026



Introduction

- Any complaint about the conduct of a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection is a serious matter. The SIAMS Complaints Policy addresses concerns raised by schools.
- Schools may raise a complaint about the conduct of the inspection if they believe that the process was flawed. A complaint may also include the potential that the process of a flawed inspection may have resulted in an insecure judgement.

1. Informal resolution

1.1. The inspector will maintain dialogue with the headteacher through regular feedback meetings, recorded on evidence forms. The inspector should make use of these meetings to identify, and then attempt to resolve, any concerns that school leaders may have on the day of the inspection. Any concerns raised by school leaders on the day of the inspection must be noted on the relevant evidence form.

1.2. Prior to the final feedback meeting, the inspector will meet with the headteacher on a one-to-one basis (or to include the deputy headteacher at the preference of the headteacher and the agreement of the inspector) to share the provisional findings. As part of this meeting, in addition to any previous occasions during the inspection (e.g. the midpoint update), the inspector will ask the headteacher for their views on the conduct of the inspection.

1.3. If the headteacher raises concerns, the inspector will note them on the final feedback evidence form and seek to resolve them if possible.

1.4. Not giving their view on the conduct of the inspection at this point does not preclude the headteacher from raising a complaint after the inspection. Timescales for this are set out below under 'Formal resolution: Stage One'.

1.5. All evidence should have been gathered before the headteacher and inspector meet. However, if, in unusual circumstances, the headteacher and the inspector agree that it is appropriate to accept further evidence at this late stage, the inspector should note it and reconsider the provisional judgement. If the headteacher offers additional evidence which the inspector does not believe to be material in causing a change to the provisional judgement/s, they will note the headteacher's and their own response.

1.6. Having considered any new evidence that is presented, the inspector will either adhere to their original provisional judgement or change it and proceed to the final feedback meeting.

1.7. No further evidence will be accepted at this final feedback stage or thereafter, and the inspection will then conclude.

2. Formal Resolution: Stage One

2.1. To instigate a formal Stage One complaint if informal resolution has not been possible, the headteacher, in agreement with and on behalf of the governing body, should send an initial email to the National SIAMS Team at SIAMS@churchofengland.org

2.2. The National SIAMS Team will arrange for the SIAMS complaints form to be sent to the school.

2.3. The deadline for requesting a complaint form is *no later than five working days after the school's receipt of the draft report*. If a headteacher wishes to raise a complaint sooner than this, they are able to do so.

2.4. The complaint should include first-hand evidence that relates to the conduct of the inspection, and it should be returned to the National SIAMS Team within two working days of the school's receipt of the form.

2.5. The Deputy Director of SIAMS will confirm receipt of the complaint within two working days. If on leave, they will do so on their return.

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2.6. Within a further two working days, the Deputy Director will appoint an adjudicator. If on leave, they will do so on their return.

2.7. Once appointed, the adjudicator will contact the school giving estimated timescales for completion of their investigation. Estimated timescales for completion are 10 working days.

2.8. The adjudicator will also contact the inspector (and any shadow or QA inspector, if applicable) to inform them that a complaint has been made, setting out what will happen next. In doing so, they will refer to Appendix One in the Complaints Policy for Inspectors – 'Report writing pending the outcome of adjudication of a complaint' and direct the inspector towards their report writing responsibilities in this scenario.

2.9. The adjudicator will speak with the headteacher to explain the process that is underway and to clarify, if they wish, some initial aspects/details of the complaint.

2.10. As part of this conversation, the adjudicator will set out the evidence-gathering process. This will include gathering the views of the headteacher and of any other school leaders/representatives, diocesan representatives/MAST, or pupils who have *relevant first-hand evidence of the conduct of the inspection*.

2.11. If evidence from pupils is relevant to the complaint, the headteacher will usually present this on behalf of the pupils.

2.12. If a representative from the diocese has first-hand evidence related to the conduct of the inspection, the adjudicator will speak to them as part of the evidence-gathering.

2.13. If the school is an academy and trust representatives have first-hand evidence related to the conduct of the inspection, the adjudicator will speak to them as part of the evidence-gathering.

2.14. As part of their evidence-gathering, the adjudicator will speak with the inspector.

2.15. If a trainee inspector shadowed the inspector on the day in question, the adjudicator will speak to them. This will be for the sake of triangulation purposes only – the trainee inspector's own written evidence base will not be called in by the adjudicator and it will play no part in the complaint process.

2.16. If the inspector was accompanied by a QA inspector, the adjudicator will also speak to them. The QA inspector's log is likely to be required by the adjudicator.

2.17. The adjudicator will make a written record of all elements of their investigation, including interviews and document scrutiny.

2.18. If the 10-day timeframe is unlikely to be met due to reasons related to evidence gathering and report writing, the adjudicator should contact the school to explain and to provide a new timescale for completion.

2.19. Once the adjudicator has completed their investigation, and reached their conclusions, they will send the draft report to the Deputy Director. This is for proof reading and coherence checking purposes only.

2.20. Once the Deputy Director has completed these checks, the adjudicator will write to the school setting out the scope of their evidence-gathering, the conclusions they have reached, the reasons for this, and the next steps that will be taken. The adjudicator will also send this information to the Deputy Director, the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), the diocesan director of education/MAST, and the CEO of the trust (if applicable).

2.21. If the adjudicator upholds the school's complaint, or elements of it, they will offer the school an apology on behalf of the inspector and the National SIAMS Team and will explain what will happen next.

2.22. If the adjudicator does not uphold the complaint, or part thereof, they will explain the reasons for their decision.

2.23. There are three possible outcomes of a complaint:

2.23.1. <u>The complaint (or part thereof) is upheld, and the adjudicator decides that the inspector's conduct compromised the outcome of the inspection.</u>

- The adjudicator will inform the Deputy Director recommending that the outcome is insecure, and that the inspection should be declared void.
- The Deputy Director will authorise a reinspection, in consultation with the Director.

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- The adjudicator will communicate these findings and the next steps to the school, the CEO of the trust (if applicable). the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), and the diocesan director of education/MAST. They will apologise to the school on behalf of the National SIAMS Team.
- The conduct of the inspector will be referred to the Deputy Director, who will contact the inspector. In some cases, the Deputy Director may recommend to the Director that the inspector should be deregistered.

2.23.2. The complaint (or part thereof) is upheld, and the adjudicator finds that the inspector's conduct has *not* affected the outcome of the inspection.

- The inspection judgement will stand, and the report will be published. This will involve the adjudicator liaising with the school so that they may carry out the 'normal' factual accuracy checks. At any stage, and in exceptional circumstances only, the Director and Deputy Director reserve the right to amend text in the report in line with the adjudicator's recommendations.
- The adjudicator will communicate the findings and the next steps to the school, the CEO of the trust (if applicable), the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), and the diocesan director of education/MAST. They will apologise to the school on behalf of the National SIAMS Team.
- The conduct of the inspector will be referred to the Deputy Director, who will contact the inspector. The inspector may require further training or quality assurance. In some cases, the Deputy Director may recommend to the Director that the inspector should be deregistered.

2.23.3. The complaint is not upheld, either in full or in part.

- The adjudicator will communicate their findings to the school, explaining the reasons for their decision.
- The adjudicator will also communicate their findings to the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), the diocesan director of education/MAST, the CEO of the trust (if applicable), and the Deputy Director of SIAMS.
- The report will be published (this will involve the school carrying out the 'normal' factual accuracy checks), and the matter considered closed.

3. Formal Resolution: Stage Two

3.1. Once all aspects of the Formal Resolution: Stage One are complete, it is possible that the school may remain dissatisfied if they believe that the adjudicator failed to accurately consider all relevant evidence. In such cases the headteacher, in agreement with and on behalf of the governing body, should contact the National Director of SIAMS – SIAMS@churchofengland.org. This must be done within five working days of the school's receipt of the original adjudication decision.

3.2. At this point, the headteacher should set out the evidence that they included in their original complaint, *but that the adjudicator failed to consider*. Apart from this, all evidence will be obtained from the adjudicator.

3.3. The National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director, will confirm receipt of the Stage Two complaint within two working days.

3.4. Within 10 working days of their confirmation of receipt, the National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director, will review the complaint and the adjudicator's Stage One findings, and they will take a view. If the National Director considers there to be a need for further evidence, they will contact those concerned within the 10 working days.

3.5. There are two possible outcomes of a Stage Two complaint.

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3.5.1. The findings of the original adjudication are upheld, and no further action is taken.

- The National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director, will write to the school to explain the reasons for the decision.
- They will also send this information to the original adjudicator, the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), the diocesan director of education/MAST, and the CEO of the trust (if applicable).

3.5.2. The findings of the original adjudication are over-ruled.

- The National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director, will write to the school to explain the reasons for the decision. They will also send this information to the original adjudicator, the inspector, the QA inspector (if applicable), the diocesan director of education/MAST, and the CEO of the trust (if applicable).
- The conduct of the inspector and the adjudication process will be reviewed, and the school will receive an apology.
- The inspector may require further training or quality assurance. This decision will be made by the National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director.
- In some cases, the National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director may decide that the inspector should be deregistered.
- If the Stage Two investigation indicates that the conduct of the inspection compromised the inspection outcomes, the National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director will authorise a reinspection.
- In such cases, if already published, the inspection report will be rescinded pending the reinspection.

3.6. The decision of the National Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Director, will be final and the matter considered closed.

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