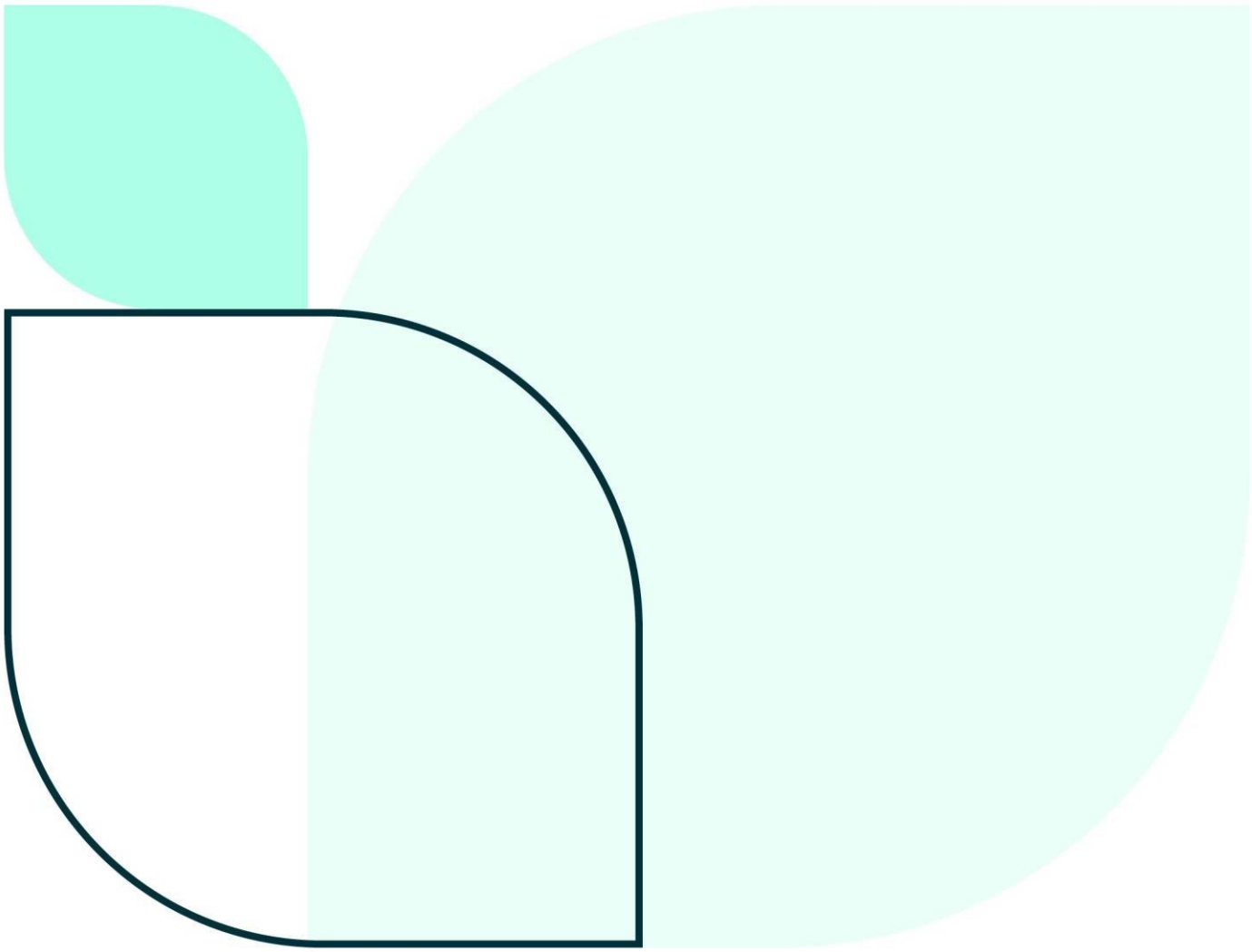
Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools
National Society for Education

SIAMS Inspection Deferral Policy

September 2026



Introduction

1. There may be a small number of cases in which exceptional circumstances or concerns in a school warrant consideration of a deferred inspection.

2. The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure by which a school may request a deferred inspection.

3. Deferrals can only be approved by the National Director or the Deputy Director of SIAMS.

1. Deferring an inspection

1.1. SIAMS inspections will only be deferred in the following exceptional circumstances.

1.1.1. The school has very recently experienced a major incident, such as a fatal accident involving a member of staff or pupil.

1.1.2. The headteacher or a member of the school's senior leadership team is the subject of a current police investigation which would be compromised by an inspection of the school.

1.1.3. The school is closed to all pupils, for example, due to an Inset day, adverse weather conditions, for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.

1.1.4. At least three quarters of the pupils will not be at school for example, due to a school trip, or a religious festival, for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.

1.1.5. The school is confirmed to shortly close/cease operation.

1.1.6. Other exceptional circumstances which, in the judgement of the National Director of SIAMS, justify a delay to the scheduled date of the inspection.

1.2. To request an inspection deferral, the headteacher should first notify the National SIAMS Team. This will usually occur either during the notification phone call or immediately after receiving the notification email. In the case of an academy, before the request for a deferral is made the school must secure the consent of the trust.

1.3. Occasionally, the need to request an inspection deferral may occur in the week between the notification and the day of the inspection. In such cases, the headteacher should contact the National SIAMS Team (SIAMS@churchofengland.org) as soon as possible.

1.4. Once the National Team is aware of the intention to request a deferral, they will send the headteacher the SIAMS Inspections Deferral Request form for completion.

1.5. As part of completing this form, the headteacher should set out the reasons for the request (see list above) and refer to all relevant evidence that the National Director of SIAMS will need to make a decision.

1.6. The completed form will be provided to the National Director of SIAMS for a decision.

1.7. The decision will be communicated via email to the headteacher, and also to the Diocesan Director of Education, the Diocesan SIAMS Lead, and, in the case of an academy, to the trust CEO.

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1.8. Applications to defer an inspection on the following grounds will not be accepted.

1.8.1. The headteacher is expected to be out of school on the day of the inspection.

1.8.2. Members of the school team are not available/working on the date of the inspection.

1.8.3. There has been an unfavourable recent inspection judgement made by Ofsted.

1.8.4. There are difficult relations between the governing body and the senior leadership team.

1.8.5. There is a clergy vacancy in the parish.

1.8.6. The school wants more time to improve in order to secure the best judgement.

1.8.7. There is an imminent change of leadership.

1.8.8. The school has plans to or is due to become an academy (unless a conversion date is confirmed and is immediately imminent).

1.9. On occasion, a school's SIAMS and Ofsted inspections will be scheduled on the same day, or there may be a no-notice Ofsted inspection once the SIAMS inspection has begun. In such a situation the SIAMS inspection will be rearranged.

1.10. If a no-notice Ofsted inspection were to commence once the inspector has arrived at the school, the inspector must contact the SIAMS Duty Desk, and the inspection will be rescheduled.

National Society for Education

Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ

T: 020 7898 1885
W: churchofengland.org/education
E: siams@churchofengland.org

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