

SIAMS Appeals & Complaints Policy

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Methodist Schools



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
EDUCATION OFFICE

SIAMS Appeals and Complaints Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. Any complaint about a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection is a serious matter.
2. The SIAMS Appeals and Complaints Policy addresses concerns raised by schools and provides advice for inspectors who are trained and accredited by the National SIAMS Team and who are officially engaged by them to conduct an inspection.

1. CONCERNS FROM SCHOOLS

- 1.1. There are two types of concern that a school can raise at the end of an inspection or within five working days of the end of an inspection.
 - a) If a school has grounds to believe that the inspection outcome is inaccurate, it should raise an appeal and follow the **Appeals Policy** (section 3 of this document).
 - b) If a school has concerns about the inspector's conduct, it should raise a complaint and follow the **Complaints Policy** (section 4 of this document).
- 1.2. A school may wish to raise both an appeal and a complaint about the same inspection. If this is the case, the Appeals process related to the inspection outcomes takes precedence.
- 1.3. A complaint against an inspector will not affect the inspection outcome. If a school feels that the inspection outcome was affected by the inspector's conduct, the Appeals process will highlight this.
- 1.4. At the end of the SIAMS inspection the inspector will ask the school two questions:
 - a) *Does the school consider the outcomes to be fair?*
If the school replies 'no' to this question, they should follow the Appeals Policy. The resulting adjudication may result in a higher or a lower outcome for the school in one or more of the areas inspected.
 - b) *Does the school consider the inspection to have been conducted in a professional and appropriate manner?*
If the school replies 'no' to this question, feels that they cannot answer, or if they raise a concern about the inspector's conduct with the National Director of SIAMS within five working days of the end of the inspection, the Complaints Policy will be followed.
- 1.5. Inspection protocol requires the inspector to maintain dialogue with the headteacher and senior leaders through regular feedback meetings, recorded on evidence forms. The inspector should make use of these meetings to attempt to resolve any concerns that are raised on the day of the inspection.

2. CONCERNS FROM INSPECTORS

- 2.1. Inspectors should be able to inspect and report their findings professionally, without fear or favour. They have every right to expect that schools and those involved in the quality assurance of their work will act in the same professional manner.
- 2.2. If an inspector wishes to raise concerns about the way in which they have been treated during the QA process, they should write to the National Director of SIAMS outlining their concerns.
- 2.3. If an inspector wishes to raise concerns about a school's conduct, they should follow the relevant school's complaints policy. In such circumstances, the inspector should let their QA Inspector know that they are taking this action. The QA Inspector will offer pastoral support to the inspector.

3. SIAMS APPEALS POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

3.1 Informal Resolution

- 3.1.1 If there are unresolved issues relating to inspection outcomes at the end of the inspection day, the school can raise them with the inspector by answering 'no' to the first question on the Final Feedback evidence form. (*Does the school consider the outcomes to be fair?*)
- 3.1.2 In response, and having ascertained the reasons for the school's comment, the inspector may reconsider the evidence or consider any new evidence that has not been previously presented.
- 3.1.3 The inspector must note the school's response on an evidence form along with the reasons for and time of the late presentation of evidence.
- 3.1.4 Having considered any new evidence that is presented, the inspector will either adhere to their original judgement or change it.
- 3.1.5 In either scenario, the inspector will note their decision and their reasons for it on an evidence form. They will also note the school's response to the (revised) judgement.
- 3.1.6 Having considered any new evidence, evaluated its impact on the original judgement, shared the (revised) judgement with the school, and noted the school's response the inspector must draw the inspection day to a close and leave the school. They must do so even if the school still does not accept the outcomes.
- 3.1.7 No evidence presented after the inspection day will be considered.
- 3.1.8 The inspector must inform the QA Inspector at the start of the Quality Assurance of Reports (QAR) process.

3.2 Stage One

- 3.2.1 If the concern is not resolved on the day of the inspection the inspector should inform the QA Inspector that the school does not consider the outcomes to be fair or accurate.
- 3.2.2 As a routine part of QAR, the QA Inspector will confirm whether the judgements are supported by the text of the report.

- 3.2.3 If the QA Inspector believes that they are, the inspector will complete the QAR process with the QA Inspector. The draft report will then be sent to the school for factual accuracy checks.
- 3.2.4 If the QA Inspector does not believe that the judgement/s are supported by the text, they will ask the inspector to revisit their evidence base and to present additional evidence.
- 3.2.5 If the inspector does not have additional evidence, the QA Inspector will ask the inspector to change the judgement/s to ensure coherence.
- 3.2.6 The draft report will then be sent to the school for factual accuracy checks.
- 3.2.7 If the inspector has changed the judgement/s as part of the QAR process, they must inform the school of the change at this point.

3.3 Stage Two

- 3.3.1 If the school remains dissatisfied with the findings of the QAR process and has evidence to justify an appeal, the headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should contact the Deputy Head of SIAMS. They should put the details of their appeal, i.e., what they consider to be inaccurate and their reasons for this, in writing.
- 3.3.2 The appeal must be raised within five working days of the school's receipt of the draft report, following the Stage One review by the QA Inspector.
- 3.3.3 The Deputy Head of SIAMS will confirm receipt of the appeal within five working days. If on leave, they will do so on their return.
- 3.3.4 Within a further five working days, the Deputy Head of SIAMS will appoint an Adjudicator who will write to the school, giving estimated timescales for completion of their investigation. If the Deputy Head of SIAMS is on leave, they will appoint an Adjudicator within five working days of their return.
- 3.3.5 Estimated timescales are 10 working days. The Adjudicator will let the school know if they consider it unlikely that these timescales will be met.
- 3.3.6 The Adjudicator should receive a written copy of the school's appeal, and the inspector's evidence base, including the pre-inspection plan and the self-evaluation document. It is solely against this that they will carry out their review.
- 3.3.7 If a school is only challenging one judgement, then only that judgement is subject to adjudication and the Adjudicator should not consider the other judgement/s.
- 3.3.8 As part of the adjudication process, the Adjudicator will gather the views of the school and of the inspector and will make written notes.
- 3.3.9 The Adjudicator will make a written recommendation and will inform the Deputy Head of SIAMS, the inspector, and the school.

3.3.10 As part of the process, the Adjudicator may ask the inspector to amend the report to reflect the outcome of the adjudication process.

Please note: If the appeal goes to adjudication and the Adjudicator's findings reflect those of the original QAR process, the school will be liable to meet the cost of adjudication. This will be charged at £40 per hour.

3.4 Stage Three

3.4.1 If the school remains dissatisfied once all aspects of Stage Two are complete, the headteacher on behalf of the governing body, should contact the National Director of SIAMS. This must be done within five working days of the school's receipt of the adjudication.

3.4.2 Within 15 working days, the National Director of SIAMS will review the inspection evidence and the Adjudicator's findings and will take a view.

3.4.3 The decision of the National Director of SIAMS will be final.

There are three possible outcomes of an appeal:

- i. The original inspection judgements are upheld.
- ii. The original inspection judgements are over-ruled and changed. Please note that an appeal may result in either a higher or a lower grade in one or more of the areas inspected.
- iii. The National Director of SIAMS deems the inspection to be void and authorises a reinspection.

4. SIAMS COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

4.1 Stage One

4.1.1 If the school wishes to raise a complaint about the conduct of the inspector, the headteacher on behalf of the governing body, can reply 'no' to the relevant question at the end of the final feedback on the day of the inspection. (*Does the school consider the inspection to have been conducted in a professional and appropriate manner?*)

4.1.2 If the school does not feel comfortable to do this, they may still raise a complaint about the inspector's conduct if they do so within five working days of the end of the inspection.

4.1.3 This must be done in writing, providing evidence for the complaint, and should be addressed to the Deputy Head of SIAMS.

4.1.4 The Deputy Head of SIAMS will confirm receipt of the complaint within five working days. If on leave, they will do so on their return.

4.1.5 Within a further five working days, the Deputy Head of SIAMS will appoint an Adjudicator who will write to the school, giving estimated timescales for completion of their investigation.

4.1.6 Estimated timescales are 10 working days. The Adjudicator will let the school know if they consider it unlikely that these timescales will be met.

4.1.7 The Adjudicator will gather the views of the school and the inspector on the specific issues raised in the complaint and will write a report.

There are three possible outcomes of a complaint.

- i. The complaint is upheld but the Adjudicator finds that the inspector's conduct has not affected the outcomes of the inspection. In this case, the inspection outcomes will stand.
 - The conduct of the inspector will be referred to the Deputy Head of SIAMS and the school will receive an apology.
 - The inspector may require further training or quality assurance.
 - In some cases, the matter will be referred to the National Director of SIAMS who may decide that the inspector should be deregistered.
- ii. The complaint is upheld, and the Adjudicator decides that the conduct of the inspector has compromised the outcomes of the inspection.
 - The Adjudicator will inform the Deputy Head and the National Director of SIAMS recommending that the inspection should be declared void.
 - Once a decision has been made, the Adjudicator will communicate the outcome to the school and to the inspector.
 - In the case of a void inspection, the National Director of SIAMS will authorise a reinspection.
- iii. The complaint is not upheld.

4.2 Stage Two

- 4.2.1 If the school remains dissatisfied once all aspects of Stage One are complete, the headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should contact the National Director of SIAMS. This must be done within five working days of the school's receipt of the adjudication.
- 4.2.2 Within 15 working days, the National Director will review the inspection evidence and the Adjudicator's findings and will take a view.
- 4.2.3 The decision of the National Director will be final.