

SIAMS COVID-19 Policy

September 2021



Methodist Schools



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
EDUCATION OFFICE

SIAMS COVID-19 Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. In March 2020, section 48 inspections were suspended by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the COVID-19 legislation.
2. That suspension was lifted in September 2021.
3. Cases of COVID-19 remain endemic in the community and DfE guidance on schools' responses to positive cases is subject to change, at times with little notice.
4. Visitors to schools, including inspectors, must be sensitive to and work within schools' COVID-19 risk assessments.
5. This might, at times, result in last minute changes to inspection plans, including a delayed inspection or the use of online platforms for some inspection activity.
6. If an inspector is in doubt at any time during an inspection, they should contact the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Duty Desk for advice.
7. If an inspector has any concerns related to COVID-19 in the week before the inspection, they should contact the National SIAMS Team (siams@churchofengland.org).

1. INSPECTOR COVID-19 TESTING

- 1.1. If an inspector tests positive for COVID-19 and/or is required to self-isolate in line with Government guidance at any time before an inspection is due to take place, they should contact the National SIAMS Team (siams@churchofengland.org) immediately.
- 1.2. SIAMS inspectors should take a National Health Service (NHS) lateral flow test three days before they are due to inspect and again on the evening before the inspection.
- 1.3. If either of the lateral flow tests produces a positive result, the inspector must contact the National SIAMS Team who will then liaise with the school.

2. SCHOOL CASES OF COVID-19

- 2.1. It is possible that the number of cases of COVID-19 in a school may render an inspection unwise on health and safety grounds at any time in the week before the date of the inspection.
- 2.2. Headteachers are asked to keep the inspector apprised of school COVID-19 cases during the week before the inspection and to make decisions about external visitors in line with their risk assessment.

- 2.3. If numbers of COVID-19 cases increase unexpectedly on the day of the inspection, the headteacher and inspector must together agree on the wisdom of continuing the inspection. If in doubt and/or if an in-school decision is made to send pupils home or to draw the inspection to a close, the inspector should contact the Duty Desk.
- 2.4. If an inspection is more than halfway through, and the inspector believes that they have sufficient evidence to make a judgement, they should discuss this with the headteacher. If both parties agree, the inspector should write the report as planned using the evidence that has been collected. The inspector should contact the Duty Desk to advise of this approach.
- 2.5. If either party believes that insufficient evidence has been gathered to enable the inspector to make a valid judgement, the inspection should either continue via an online platform or be rescheduled. The inspector should contact the Duty Desk to advise of this approach.
- 2.6. The headteacher and inspector may agree, either on the day of the inspection or during the week before, that some meetings are better conducted using an online platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 2.7. This must be noted on the relevant SIAMS Evidence Forms.
- 2.8. In the week following the conclusion of face-to-face inspection activity, the inspector should carry out a further COVID-19 lateral flow test. They should inform the headteacher and the SIAMS Team if either of these tests produces a positive result.