

## **Deferral of Diocesan inspections**

There are a limited number of circumstances when we may decide that an inspection should not go ahead on the planned dates. This document sets out Diocese's approach to the deferral, cancellation and re-scheduling of inspections.

The Diocese of Westminster's policy is that deferral or cancellation should normally only be granted if:

- the headteacher or a member of the senior management team is subject to a current police investigation or serious concern from another agency that would be compromised by an inspection
- the school has experienced a recent major incident, such as a fatal accident to a pupil or a member of staff
- the school is due to merge, close or move and it is decided that no useful purpose will be served in inspecting it
- the school's setting is closed to all users – for example, owing to a staff training day or adverse weather conditions – for at least half of the time for which the inspection has been scheduled
- at least three quarters of the pupils will not be on the school's premises – for example, owing to a school trip – for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled
- other exceptional circumstances that, in the judgement of the Chief Inspector justify deferral or cancellation of the inspection.

The Diocese of Westminster puts the interest of pupils and students first and it is only in the exceptional circumstances set out above that Diocese would consider granting a deferral of inspection.

Applications to defer a planned inspection on the grounds that the headteacher or particular member of the leadership of the school is not present will not be accepted if the school is still in session.

Building work will not be a reason for deferral if pupils are still on site.

Where a deferral is proposed, we must consider that the timing of any rescheduled inspection does not fall outside of any legally defined period for the inspection of that school.

## **Deferral process**

Schools who are considering lodging a request for deferral of their inspection should study the criteria above carefully and ensure that at least one of the criteria applies before they make a request.

Requests should be made in writing to the Chief Inspector at the earliest opportunity.

Arrangements for the inspection will continue to be made while the request for deferral is considered.

### **If a school cannot be contacted by the Chief Inspector on the day of announcing the inspection**

In exceptional circumstances, it may prove difficult for the Chief Inspector to make contact with the school to tell the headteacher that an inspection will be taking place. In such cases, the inspection will normally go ahead and the Chief Inspector will continue to try to contact the school over the following two days. If there continues to be no answer, the inspection will be undertaken as an unannounced inspection.

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