

# Conduct during inspections

For inspectors undertaking inspections on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills

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## Introduction

1. Ofsted inspects and regulates to achieve excellence in education and skills for learners of all ages and in the care of children and young people, thereby raising standards and improving lives.
2. This guidance applies to all inspectors conducting inspections in all of Ofsted's remits: early years, schools, further education and skills, and social care.

## Conduct during inspection

3. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work and treat everyone they encounter during inspections fairly and with respect and sensitivity.
4. Inspectors will:
  - evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
  - uphold and demonstrate Ofsted values at all times<sup>1</sup>
  - evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or regulatory requirements
  - base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
  - declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and have no real or perceived connection with the provider that could undermine objectivity
  - report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
  - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
  - take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and minimise stress
  - act in the best interests and well-being of service users, prioritising the safeguarding of children and learners at all times
  - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected and communicate judgements sensitively but clearly and frankly
  - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
  - respond appropriately to reasonable requests

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about Ofsted's values, see *Raising standards, improving lives: Ofsted's strategic plan*, Ofsted, July 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-standards-improving-lives-ofsted-strategic-plan-2014-to-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-standards-improving-lives-ofsted-strategic-plan-2014-to-2016).

- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues
  - use their title (such as Her Majesty's Inspector, Ofsted Inspector or Regulatory Inspector) only in relation to their work for Ofsted.
5. At all times, inspectors are required to act in accordance with Ofsted's internal policies and procedures on expected standards of behaviour and conduct and the Civil Service values and standards.<sup>2</sup>

## **Expectations of providers<sup>3</sup>**

6. It is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a positive working relationship based on courteous and professional behaviour. Ofsted expects providers to:
- be courteous and professional, treating inspectors with respect and sensitivity
  - apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
  - enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
  - enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the frameworks, standards or regulatory requirements
  - provide evidence that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
  - work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
  - ensure the good health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
  - maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team
  - draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
  - recognise that sometimes inspectors will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

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<sup>2</sup> Civil Service: values and standards of behaviour, March 2015;  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code)

<sup>3</sup> This applies to all services inspected by Ofsted, including local authorities.