



ISH

INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
HELSINKI

PARENT, LEGAL GUARDIAN AND STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES FOR THE PROVISION AND DELIVERY OF THE IB PROGRAMS

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1. Purpose

This procedure aims to provide a transparent, respectful, and effective process for parents, legal guardians, and students to raise concerns or complaints about the **provision and delivery of the IB Programmes** at ISH. The procedure ensures that all complaints are handled **fairly, promptly, and in line with the values and principles** of both ISH and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

This procedure **does not apply** to matters related to **behaviour, child protection, non-IB-related formal complaints, inclusion, well-being, or leadership accountability**. These matters must follow the [Communication Map](#), which provides guidance on the appropriate contact procedures for resolution.

2. Key Values from IB and ISH

ISH's complaints procedure is grounded in the shared values of ISH and the IB:

- **International-Mindedness:** We commit to handling all complaints with an **open-minded, global perspective**, valuing the diversity of our community.
- **Student Well-being:** ISH prioritizes student well-being in all decisions, ensuring that complaints related to student welfare are addressed **promptly and sensitively**.
- **Holistic Development:** Complaints will be addressed in a way that **fosters** the student's holistic growth, ensuring academic, social, and emotional development.
- **IB Learner Profile:** The resolution process is guided by the IB Learner Profile, promoting attributes such as caring, principled decision-making, open-mindedness, and responsibility.

3. Scope

This procedure applies specifically to complaints concerning the **school's implementation and delivery of IB Programmes**, including:

- **Academic Matters:** Teaching quality, curriculum delivery, **internal IB assessment procedures**, and **academic integrity** within the IB framework.
- **Behavioural Concerns:** Student conduct, disciplinary actions, and **support mechanisms** as they relate to IB expectations.
- **Policy Implementation:** Application of school policies that affect **student rights and well-being** within the IB programme, including **IB-mandated policies adopted by the school**.

4. Principles

The following principles guide the complaints procedure at ISH:

- **Fairness:** Every complaint will be treated equitably, ensuring all parties have an opportunity to be heard.
- **Respect and Courtesy:** All interactions must reflect **respect, courtesy, and openness** to diverse perspectives.

- **Accessibility:** The complaints procedure is **clear and accessible** to all parents, legal guardians, and students.
- **Timelines:** Complaints will be addressed **promptly**, following set timelines for responses.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled **discreetly and with privacy**, ensuring protection of personal information.
- **International-Mindedness:** ISH and IB emphasize cultural diversity and understanding, ensuring **sensitivity to our school community's unique backgrounds**.
- **Effectiveness:** The complaints procedure will be regularly reviewed and refined to ensure it remains **responsive and efficient**.
- **Sensitivity:** All complaints will be handled with **importance and discretion**, ensuring that all concerns are taken seriously and resolved in a professional manner.

5. Dialogue and Resolution

ISH encourages **open dialogue** as the most effective means to address issues. Parents, legal guardians, and students are encouraged to discuss concerns **directly with the relevant staff member (teacher, advisor, homeroom teacher, or Division Lead)** before escalating the matter formally.

- **Step 1:** Speak to the **staff member involved**. This should be the first step for classroom practices, learning, or programme provision concerns.
- **Step 2:** If the issue remains unresolved, the parent or student may contact the appropriate **Division Lead (PYP, MYP, or DP) for further discussion**.
- **Step 3:** If the issue remains unresolved, the **formal complaints process may be initiated**.

6. Formal Complaints Process

If a concern as per the scope section cannot be resolved through open dialogue, the following **formal process** should be followed:

Step 1: Submission of Formal Complaint

- Complaints must be **submitted in writing** to the Division Lead. If the complaint concerns a **Division Lead**, it should be addressed **directly to the Head of School**.
- The written complaint must include:
 - **Reference to “Formal Complaint” -process**
 - **The name and contact details of the complainant.**
 - **A detailed description of the complaint.** The scope section provides details to support this section.
 - **Any steps already taken to resolve the issue.**
- **Acknowledgement:** The school will **acknowledge receipt** of the complaint within **three working days**.

Step 2: Investigation

- The **Division Lead (or Head of School)** will initiate an **inquiry within ten working days**.
- The inquiry may include **discussions with the complainant, staff members, and other relevant parties**.
- **Outcome:** Upon conclusion, the complainant will receive a **written response outlining the findings and any actions to be taken**.

Step 3: Appeals to the Head of School

- If the complainant is **not satisfied** with the outcome, they may appeal to the **Head of School**.
- The appeal must be submitted **within ten working days** of receiving the initial outcome.
- The **Head of School** will review the case and respond within fifteen working days.

Step 4: Appeals to the ISH Board of Governors

- The **Board of Governors serves as the final arbiter** for disputes within the school community that cannot be resolved by other means.
- To initiate an appeal to the **Board of Governors**, please refer to **Board Policy 2.13**.

Step 5: Optional Appeal to the [Regional State Administrative Agency \(AVI\)](#)

- The **Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI)** serves as the appeal and complaint authority for specific issues under Finnish law.
- Parents and guardians may escalate complaints to AVI for cases explicitly covered by the legislation. This step is optional and should be considered when other resolution mechanisms within the school have been exhausted and the matter falls under AVI's jurisdiction.

7. Escalation to the IB

The **International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization** provides its own complaints and appeals procedures for matters related to **IB services, policies, or assessment decisions**. If the issue specifically concerns **IB standards or procedures**, the school will assist the complainant in contacting the IB.

- [IB Academic Integrity Concerns](#): Complaints involving **plagiarism, cheating, or misconduct** will follow **IB's Academic Integrity procedures**.
- [IB Services Feedback](#): Concerns about IB services should follow **IB's official feedback process**.
- [IB Services Complaints](#): Complaints related to IB services should follow IB's designated **complaints procedures**.

8. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled **confidentially**, with information shared only among those **directly involved** in investigating and resolving the issue. ISH is committed to **protecting the privacy and rights** of the complainant and those affected.

9. Monitoring and Review

This complaints procedure will be **reviewed annually** to ensure it aligns with **best practices, IB regulations, and Finnish educational laws**. The policy may be updated to reflect **community feedback and regulatory changes**.

Key Documents and Sources of Information

This is a list of key documents that informed this document:

1. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2019. *What is an IB education?* [pdf] Geneva: International Baccalaureate Organization. Available at: <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/what-is-an-ib-education-en.pdf> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
2. International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018. *Rules for IB World Schools.* [pdf] Geneva: International Baccalaureate Organization. Available at: <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/become-an-ib-school/rules-for-ib-world-schools-en.pdf> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
3. International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d. *Feedback About Services Provided by IB World Schools.* [online] Available at: <https://www.ibo.org/contact-the-ib/feedback-and-concerns/feedback-about-services-provided-by-ib-world-schools/> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
4. International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d. *Complaints About IB Services.* [online] Available at: <https://www.ibo.org/contact-the-ib/feedback-and-concerns/complaints-about-ib-services/> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
5. International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d. *Academic Integrity Concerns.* [online] Available at: <https://www.ibo.org/contact-the-ib/feedback-and-concerns/academic-integrity-concerns/> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
6. International School of Helsinki, 2024. *High-Quality Learning and Teaching Policy.* [internal document].
7. International School of Helsinki, 2024. *Mission and Vision.* [online] Available at: <https://ishelsinki.fi/mission-vision/> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
8. Finlex Data Bank, 1998. *Basic Education Act 628/1998.* [online] Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1998/en19980628> [Accessed 19 October 2024].
9. Regional State Administrative Agency [Challenging decisions - Individuals](#) and [Oversight of education services - Enforcement and reporting violations](#)