



ISH

INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
HELSINKI

ISH GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR STAFF

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope of the Complaints Procedure.....	3
Distinction Between Complaints and Grievances.....	3
3. Complaints Procedures.....	3
Step 1 – Submission of Complaint:.....	3
Step 2 – Investigation Process:.....	4
Step 3 – Resolution and Actions:.....	4
Step 4 – Appeal Process:.....	4
4. Legal Compliance and External Escalation.....	4
5. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping.....	4
6. Whistleblowing.....	5
7. Monitoring and Review.....	5

1. Introduction

At ISH, we are committed to fostering a positive and respectful learning environment for all members of our community. This General Complaints Procedure ensures that concerns are addressed fairly, promptly, and in a structured manner, in compliance with Finnish education and administrative law.

2. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

This procedure pertains to general complaints from the ISH community involving employees concerning school operations, policies, staff, parents, and student matters that are not already covered by other specific policies (e.g., Academic Integrity, Inclusion, [IB Programme Delivery](#), or Safeguarding).

All complaints must be submitted in writing to ensure transparency and proper documentation.

Distinction Between Complaints and Grievances

- A **complaint** is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about an issue or decision made by the school that affects a staff member. It typically relates to school operations, teaching, professional conduct, or policy application.
- A **grievance** refers specifically to a concern raised by an employee relating to their terms of employment, working conditions, or treatment in the workplace. Grievances are addressed through the ISH Staff Grievance Procedure.

For clarity, complaints raised by staff that concern broader operational or community issues (e.g., leadership decisions, policy application) may follow this General Complaints Procedure. Employment-related issues, however, must follow the [Grievance route](#).

3. Complaints Procedures

If attempts to address the issue directly with those immediately involved have been unsuccessful, a complaint may be lodged following the procedures below. In line with our commitment to resolving matters at the most appropriate level, referring the matter back to the original parties for further dialogue or clarification may sometimes be necessary.

Step 1 – Submission of Complaint:

- Complaints must be submitted in writing
 - i. to the supervisor of the staff member, e.g., the Division or Business Lead (Director) or manager of the area in question (Instructional Leader, team leader).
 - ii. If the complaint is against the Division Lead or another member of Leadership, it should be submitted to the Head of School.

- iii. If the complaint is against the Head of School, it should be submitted to the Board Chair.
- The complaint must include a detailed account of the issue, relevant evidence, and any prior attempts to resolve it.

Step 2 – Investigation Process:

- The responsible authority (e.g. Director, Head of School, or Board Chair) will acknowledge the complaint within three working days and initiate an investigation.
- This may include discussions with the complainant, other staff members involved, and any relevant witnesses.
- The investigation will be completed within fifteen working days, including conclusions, recommendations, and a final decision, which will be communicated accordingly to relevant parties and in accordance with privacy laws.

Step 3 – Resolution and Actions:

- If the complaint is upheld, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with ISH policies and any relevant Finnish laws.
- If the complaint is not upheld, a rationale will be provided to the complainant.

Step 4 – Appeal Process:

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may submit an appeal to the ISH Board following Board Grievance procedure. The Board will review the case independently.
- The Board will provide a final decision within twenty working days during the school year.
- If an appeal is submitted during the summer break or any extended school closure, the timeline for review and response may be extended. In such cases, the Board will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and provide an estimated timeline for review, ensuring the matter is addressed as promptly as possible once normal operations resume.

4. Legal Compliance and External Escalation

- In compliance with Finnish law, staff members may have the right to escalate complaints beyond the school level when a satisfactory resolution has not been reached.
- The school will ensure compliance with relevant Finnish laws, maintaining fairness, confidentiality, and due process.

5. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All complaints will be handled with confidentiality, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

- Personal data included in complaint records will be processed based on legitimate interest. A written account of complaints and resolutions will be securely maintained for future reference. Records will be retained for a maximum of 10 years from the resolution date, unless a longer retention period is legally mandated.

6. Whistleblowing

ISH is committed to promoting a culture of openness, accountability, and integrity.

Whistleblowing (find relevant link [here](#)) is distinct from complaints and grievances. It refers to the reporting of serious concerns that are in the public interest and may indicate wrongdoing within the school. Examples include:

- Financial mismanagement or fraud
- Abuse or endangerment of students or staff
- Criminal activity or legal breaches
- Serious health and safety risks
- Systematic failure to follow legal or policy requirements

Whistleblower Protection

Individuals who raise a concern in good faith will not suffer any form of retribution or disadvantage as a result. Retaliation against whistleblowers is a serious matter and will be dealt with in accordance with Finnish labour law and ISH disciplinary procedures.

Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

Concerns may be reported in writing to the Head of School (via this [link](#)) or, if the concern involves the Head of School, to the Chair of the ISH Board. Reports must be handled confidentially, and the identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever legally and operationally possible.

This procedure is aligned with the Finnish **Act on the Protection of Persons Reporting Infringements of European Union and National Law (1171/2022)**, also known as the Finnish Whistleblower Act.

7. Monitoring and Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with Finnish regulations and ISH policies.