

# Complaint Management Procedures at IGS

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## **Preamble**

The complaint management procedures at the International German School Ho Chi Minh City (IGS) serve the purpose of establishing a transparent procedure for addressing complaints. In alignment with our guiding principles and the associated school culture, our aim is to embrace complaints as opportunities for growth and strengthening dialogue. Consequently, IGS places significant importance on preventing discrimination or bias and ensuring a fair process for all members of the school community.

Within this framework, equality among all parties is upheld. Regardless of their role within the school community, everyone is entitled to a voice and fair treatment of their complaints. As such, IGS's grievance management encompasses students, their parents or guardians, teaching staff, as well as the educational and administrative personnel of the school.

This structure serves as a guiding document for grievance management and is regularly reviewed to meet the needs of the school community.

## **General Advice**

In cases of complaints or disagreements, it is advisable to initially arrange a comprehensive discussion among the parties involved. If this proves unproductive, the next step may involve engaging a mediator who will facilitate and document the conversation.

When complaints are directed at individuals, it is recommended to initiate an in-depth conversation and document the perspectives of all parties within a discussion forum consisting of a minimum of four participants. If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached, additional individuals or committees may be consulted. In more serious cases, the steps outlined below come into play to facilitate a comprehensive resolution of the incident.

## **General Provisions Regarding the Complaint Management**

1. Every individual, as part of a complaint procedure, has the right to have their concerns treated discreetly.
2. Any officially filed complaint will be handled confidentially by the relevant people involved.
3. Complaints should be submitted in writing to the complaints office unless there are specific reasons justifying an oral complaint.
4. The complaints office reviews the complaint and, if necessary, forwards it to the appropriate department for further processing.
5. The relevant department conducts an investigation, hears all involved parties, and makes an appropriate decision or recommends a solution.

6. The complainant is informed in writing about the decision or solution that has been reached.
7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, they may file an additional complaint with the appropriate complaints office.
8. The complaints office reviews the additional complaint and makes a final decision, which is communicated to the complainant in writing."

## **Authorities and Responsibilities**

1. The complaints office is responsible for the administration and coordination of the complaint procedure.
2. The complaints office receives complaints and forwards them for further processing.
3. The school management serves as the primary point of contact for complaints against teachers or educational staff.
4. The administrative management is responsible for handling and resolving complaints related to administrative personnel.
5. Subject department heads serve as the initial contact for subject-specific complaints.
6. Classroom teachers are responsible for addressing and resolving complaints at the classroom level.
7. The educational staff, including educational support, contribute to the handling of subject-specific complaints and school development.

## **Rights of Individual Members of the School Community**

### **Rights of Students**

1. Students have the right to file a complaint if they have a valid concern, and they may approach the Student Council teachers or a trusted teacher for assistance.
2. Students have the right to a timely and fair handling of their complaint.
3. Students have the right to confidentiality and protection from potential adverse consequences due to their complaint.
4. Students have the right to receive written feedback regarding the progress and outcomes of the complaint resolution process.

## **Rights of Teachers and Other Educational Personnel**

1. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to file a complaint if they have a valid concern.
2. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to a timely and fair handling of their complaint.
3. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to be informed about complaints that involve them.
4. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to respond to allegations and present their perspective.
5. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to a fair and unbiased investigation of their complaint.
6. Teachers and other educational personnel have the right to be informed about the progress and outcomes of the complaint resolution process.

## **Rights of parents and legal guardians**

1. Parents resp. legal guardians have the right to file a complaint on behalf of their child if they have a legitimate concern, and they should contact the classroom teacher.
2. Parents resp. legal guardians have the right to a timely and fair handling of their complaint.
3. Parents resp. legal guardians have the right to be informed about the progress and outcomes of the complaint resolution process.
4. Parents resp. legal guardians have the right to receive written feedback detailing how the complaint was addressed and resolved.

## **Rights of Administrative Personnel**

1. Administrative personnel have the right to file an official complaint, and they should address it to their direct supervisor.
2. Administrative personnel have the right to a timely and fair handling of their complaint.
3. Administrative personnel have the right to be informed about the progress and outcomes of the complaint resolution process.
4. Administrative personnel have the right to receive written feedback detailing how the complaint was addressed and resolved.

## Explanation of the Individual Complaint Procedures

### Procedure for Complaints Against the School Management

1. **Filing a Complaint:** In cases of complaints against the school management, a complaint from the faculty is submitted in writing to the Teachers' Council. A complaint from parents is addressed in writing to the Parents' Council. Students submit a corresponding complaint to the Students' Council teachers. Alternatively, complaints may be presented orally, but it is strongly recommended to document them in writing afterward. The complaint should provide a detailed account of the incident, and if possible, include relevant evidence or supporting documentation.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The designated complaints office carefully reviews the complaint and informs the school management about its contents.
3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** The school management is invited to a hearing to present their perspective. If necessary, teachers, students, or other witnesses may also be interviewed. Neutral mediation can be incorporated into the discussion if requested.
4. **Decision-Making:** Upon completion of the investigation and hearing of all involved parties, the responsible authorities make an appropriate decision. This decision is communicated to the complainant in writing. If necessary, measures may be taken to improve the situation or resolve conflicts.

### Procedure for Complaints Against the Head of Administration

1. **Filing a Complaint:** In cases of complaints against the administrative management, a complaint from the faculty is submitted in writing to the Teachers' Council. The Teachers' Council then forwards the complaint to the school board. A complaint from parents is addressed in writing to the Parents' Council. Students submit a corresponding complaint to the Students' Council teachers. Alternatively, complaints may be presented orally, but it is strongly recommended to document them in writing afterward. The complaint should provide a detailed account of the incident, and if possible, include relevant evidence or supporting documentation.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The designated complaints office carefully reviews the complaint and informs the administrative management about its contents.
3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** The administrative management is invited to a hearing to present their perspective. If necessary, teachers, students, or other witnesses may also be interviewed. Neutral mediation can be incorporated into the discussion if requested.

4. **Decision-Making:** Upon completion of the investigation and hearing of all involved parties, the school board makes an appropriate decision. This decision is communicated to the complainant in writing. If necessary, measures may be taken to improve the situation or resolve conflicts.

## Procedure for Complaints Against Teachers

1. **Filing a Complaint:** In cases of complaints against teachers, students or parents should submit the complaint in writing to the school management. Alternatively, complaints may be presented orally, but it is strongly recommended to document them in writing afterward. Complaints from the faculty can be directed either through the Teachers' Council or directly to the school management. The complaint should provide a detailed account of the incident, and if possible, include relevant evidence or supporting documentation.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The designated complaints office carefully reviews the complaint and informs the involved teacher about its contents.
3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** The teacher is invited to a hearing to present their perspective. If necessary, other teachers, students, or witnesses may also be interviewed. Neutral mediation can be incorporated into the discussion if requested.
4. **Decision-Making:** Upon completion of the investigation and hearing of all involved parties, the school management makes an appropriate decision. This decision is communicated to the complainant in writing. If necessary, measures may be taken, such as additional training or internal support for the affected teacher.

## Procedure for Complaints Against Students

### Complaints from Teachers

1. **Filing a Complaint:** In cases of complaints regarding the behaviour of students, the homeroom teacher is the first point of contact. They may involve appropriate individuals to clarify the situation and de-escalate it. The complaint can be presented orally, but it is strongly recommended to document it in writing afterward. The complaint should provide a detailed account of the incident, and if possible, include relevant evidence or supporting documentation.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The homeroom teacher informs both the head of department and the parents or guardians about the incidents. Additionally, the homeroom teacher reviews the complaint and may gather further information from all parties involved, including the affected students. The Teachers' Council can be consulted as advisors if necessary.

3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** The affected students are invited to a hearing to present their perspective. If necessary, teachers or other witnesses may also be interviewed. The Students' Council teachers can act as neutral mediators and participate in the discussions if needed.
4. **Decision-Making:** Upon completion of the investigation and hearing of all involved parties, the class teacher and department head make an appropriate decision. This decision is communicated to the affected parties in writing. If necessary, appropriate educational measures can be taken to correct or improve the behaviour of the students.

## Complaints from Students

1. **Filing a Complaint:** In cases of complaints regarding the behaviour of students, the homeroom teacher is the first point of contact. They may involve appropriate individuals to clarify the situation and de-escalate it.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The homeroom teacher conducts discussions with the involved students to resolve the conflict and find a solution. If necessary, the homeroom teacher can involve other suitable individuals or committees, such as the trusted teacher or school counselling.
3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** The affected students are invited to a hearing to present their perspective. If necessary, teachers or other witnesses may also be interviewed. The class representative team or the Students' Council can act as neutral mediators and participate in the discussions if needed.
4. **Decision-Making:** The homeroom teacher may initiate appropriate educational or disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's regulations. In particularly severe cases, the school management may become involved in the process.

## Procedure for Complaints Against Administrative Personnel

1. **Filing a Complaint:** Complaints against administrative personnel should be submitted in writing to their immediate supervisor. Alternatively, the complaint may be presented orally, but it is strongly recommended to document it in writing afterward. The complaint should provide a detailed account of the incident and, if possible, include relevant evidence or supporting documentation.
2. **Investigation of the Complaint:** The immediate supervisor reviews the complaint and may conduct an internal investigation if necessary. Other relevant individuals or departments may be involved to clarify the incident.

3. **Hearing of all Involved Parties:** Both the complainant and the affected administrative staff member are invited to a hearing to present their perspectives. If necessary, witnesses may also be interviewed.
4. **Decision-Making:** Upon completion of the investigation and hearing of all involved parties, the immediate supervisor makes an appropriate decision. This decision is communicated to the complainant in writing. If necessary, measures are taken to resolve the issue or make improvements.

## **Complaints Regarding Grading and IB Procedures**

### **General Grading**

When handling complaints regarding grading, adherence to pedagogical principles, regular verbal discussions of grades, and transparency in grading must be considered first. In cases of potential retention, the relevant regulations outlined in the regulation for the transfer of one grade to another come into play. If discrepancies or complaints arise concerning grading, students, their parents or legal guardians can file a complaint in accordance with the applicable regulations and school rules. They should initially contact the responsible teacher.

The teacher will examine the complaint. If the complaint persists, it may be forwarded to the subject department head or the department head. They will conduct a thorough investigation and, if necessary, involve additional educational professionals to ensure an objective assessment.

After the investigation is concluded, an appropriate decision is made and communicated to the complainant in writing. This complaint procedure ensures the protection of the rights of students and parents, as well as ensuring fair and transparent grading.

### **IB Related Complaints and Appeals**

As it is agreed upon with complaints regarding the general grading, IGS is also committed to ensuring that all complaints and requests for appeals regarding IB programme decisions are handled in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. This procedure outlines the steps to be followed by students, parents, or legal guardians when they wish to raise a complaint or appeal a decision related to the IB programme.

The school has implemented a system for reporting student progress and handling appeals or challenges. This system is reviewed on a regular basis. These systems are designed to ensure transparency and equity in all decisions related to the IB programme.

Students, parents or their legal guardians have the right to challenge awarded grades. However, it's crucial to ensure mutual agreement between those parties before initiating the



process. The specific procedure for contesting a grade varies depending on the entity responsible for awarding it:

Any concerns regarding grades awarded by the International German School Ho Chi Minh City should first be addressed with the respective subject teacher in accordance with the general school policy. If resolution is not achieved, the complaint must be formally submitted in writing to the IB Coordinator. Upon receipt, the IB Coordinator will request the subject teacher to provide their perspective on the matter. Subsequently, in collaboration with the Head of School, the IB Coordinator will determine appropriate further actions.

Any complaints concerning grades or procedures under the authority of the IB Organisation must be formally submitted in writing to the IB Coordinator.

Upon receiving the complaint, the IB Coordinator will promptly engage with the student, parents, and their legal guardian to discuss available options. This includes exploring the potential initiation of an Enquiry Upon Results (EUR) procedure, as well as addressing associated costs and the possibility of a grade reduction resulting from this process. Following this, the IB Coordinator will liaise with the IB Organisation to explore potential resolutions and determine further steps.

## **Step by Step Guide (Parents and Legal Guardians)**

In case of parents or legal guardians wishing to lodge an official complaint the following chain of action applies:

### **Step 1: Initial Discussion**

Students or their parents/legal guardians should first attempt to resolve the issue informally by discussing it with the relevant teacher or staff member directly involved in the decision. Most issues can be resolved at this stage through open communication.

### **Step 2: Formal Complaint**

If the issue is not resolved informally, a formal complaint can be lodged. The complaint must be submitted in writing to the IB Coordinator. The written complaint should include:

- The name and contact details of the complainant.
- A detailed description of the complaint, including any relevant facts and evidence.
- A proposal for solution according to the opinion of the complainant.

### **Step 3: Acknowledgement and Investigation**

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the IB Coordinator will acknowledge it within five working days and will initiate an investigation. The investigation will be thorough and impartial, involving relevant parties as necessary. The complainant may be asked to provide additional information or attend a meeting to discuss the complaint further.

### **Step 4: Decision and Response**

The IB Coordinator will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days of receipt. The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing, explaining the outcome of the investigation and the reasons for the decision. If additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the delay and the expected timeframe for a resolution.

### **Step 5: Appeal**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal in writing to the School Principal within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal should clearly state the grounds for appeal and any new evidence or arguments not previously considered.

### **Step 6: Final Decision**

The School Principal will review the appeal, conduct any further investigations deemed necessary, and make a final decision. The final decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal. This decision is final and marks the end of the school's complaints procedure.

### **Step by Step Guide (Students)**

In case of students wishing to lodge an official complaint the following chain of action applies:

#### **Step 1: Submission of Appeal**

If a student believes that an IB programme decision taken by the school is unfair or incorrect, they may submit a request for an appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the IB Coordinator within 10 working days of the decision being communicated. The appeal should include:

- The student's name and contact details.
- A clear statement of the decision being appealed.
- The reasons for the appeal, including any supporting evidence.

#### **Step 2: Review of Appeal**

The IB Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five working days and will review the appeal in consultation with relevant staff members. The review will be thorough and impartial, ensuring that all relevant factors are considered.

#### **Step 3: Appeal Outcome**

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal. The response will include the decision on the appeal and the rationale behind it. If additional time is needed for the review, the student will be informed of the delay and the expected resolution time frame.

#### **Step 4: Further Appeal**

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a further appeal to the School Principal within 10 working days of receiving the appeal decision. The further appeal should detail any additional evidence or arguments.

### **Step 5: Final Decision on Appeal**

The School Principal will review the further appeal and make a final decision, which will be communicated to the student in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the further appeal. This decision is final and concludes the appeal process.

## **Conclusion**

1. The school aims to address complaints in a timely and fair manner to reach a constructive resolution.
2. All parties should strive to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and respectful manner.
3. This policy promotes open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders.

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