

ist International
School of Tallinn

IST Complaints Policy

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1 PURPOSE

The International School of Tallinn is committed to providing a high-quality education and fostering a positive environment for all students, parents, and staff. We value suggestions and feedback from parents and take any concerns raised seriously. Our staff members are committed to listening to parents and stakeholders, and we work together to resolve any issues. We encourage parents to bring concerns to our attention as early as possible, allowing us the opportunity to address the issue or clarify the school's stance before the concern escalates.

Our school strives to handle all complaints in a fair, open, and honest manner. We carefully consider every complaint and aim to address them promptly. Our goal is to resolve issues through dialogue and mutual understanding, prioritising the best interest of all stakeholders.

This policy outlines the procedure for raising and addressing complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner and the steps for escalation if necessary.

2 SCOPE

The school's complaint handling policy addresses concerns related to:

- Student learning and teaching
- Student behaviour and emotional well-being
- School facilities
- Staff members

The policy does not cover complaints related to:

- The Admission Policy
- Complaints that target any religion, community, or ethnicity
- School fees

3 DEFINITIONS

Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school's operations, including academic matters, facilities, staff behaviour, and administrative processes.

Complainant – The individual or group raising the complaint.

4 PRINCIPLES OF THE PROCEDURE

In accordance with the IB Complaint Handling Procedure and to ensure an effective complaints process, the following principles are consistently applied:

Confidentiality – All complaints will be handled confidentially to protect the privacy of all parties involved.

Courtesy – All communication related to this procedure should be grounded in mutual respect, trust, and courtesy.

Impartiality – Complaints will be addressed in an impartial manner, ensuring that no one is treated unfairly or with bias.

Accessibility – Our goal is to have a complaints procedure that is easy to understand and readily accessible.

Timeliness – The school aims to resolve complaints promptly and effectively to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

4.1 Procedure for making a complaint

4.1.1 Informal discussion

- **Step 1:** The complainant should first address their concern directly with the relevant teacher or staff member involved. Most issues can be resolved quickly through direct communication via Toddle, email or by scheduling an appointment.

- **Step 2:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the response or if the issue is particularly sensitive or serious, they should bring the issue to the attention of the homeroom teacher by email or by scheduling an appointment. The homeroom teacher will discuss the matter with the parent, student, and any other relevant staff members, and will make every effort to resolve the complaint while considering the interests of all stakeholders.

If the issue remains unresolved proceed to Step 3

4.1.2 Formal complaint

- **Step 3:** The complainant may submit a formal written complaint to the school administration/IB Coordinator. The complaint should include:

- The nature of the complaint
- Relevant details and dates
- Any supporting documentation
- Desired resolution

- **Step 4:** The school administration/IB Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and initiate an investigation. The investigation may involve:

- Reviewing documentation
- Interviewing relevant parties
- Consulting external experts if necessary
- Discussions with the School Director

4.1.3 Outcome

- **Step 5:** The school administration/IB Coordinator will provide a written response to the complainant within two weeks of receiving the formal complaint. The response will include:

- A summary of the investigation findings
- The outcome and any actions to be taken
- Information on how to appeal the decision if the complainant is not satisfied

4.1.4 Appeals

- **Step 6:** If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal to the School Director. The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten working days of receiving the formal response from the administration team. The School Director will review the case and provide a final decision within two weeks.

4.1.5 External Review

- **Step 7:** If the complainant remains unsatisfied after the internal procedures have been exhausted, they may seek an external review from relevant educational authorities or regulatory bodies, e.g. Ministry of Education and Research, The Estonian Education and Youth Board (Harno), The Estonian Language Inspectorate.

4.2 Confidentiality

All complaints or concerns will be handled with confidentiality and respect. The details of the complaint will be shared only with the School Director and those directly involved. The school ensures that complaints made by parents will not negatively impact their children in any way.

However, there may be instances where it is necessary to inform relevant third parties outside the school about the complaint and the identities of those involved. This would typically occur only if the student's safety is at risk or if the matter needs to be referred to the police. In such cases, the parent making the complaint will be fully informed before any action is taken.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

5 MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

All complaints and related documentation will be recorded and maintained securely for a period of at least five years. These records will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints process and to identify areas for improvement. At the end of the academic year, the management team will analyse the trends and patterns of complaints and develop an action plan to prevent future occurrences.

6 COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy will be readily available on the school's website and in the school office.

6.1 Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current regulations and best practices.

Review date: September 2024

Works cited:

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (March version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

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BCIS (Beijing City International School). (April 2023). *Complaint policy*