

Appendix (36)
The International Academy - Amman

Policy Name:	Parents complaints policy & Procedures, Policy 8.50
Effective from:	September 2021
Last Updated:	June 2021

I. PURPOSE

IAA has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching, learning and pastoral care provided to students taking our IB programmes in Grades 6 to 12. However, if parents/guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with Parents complaints procedure. Parents/guardians can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

II. POLICY

All parents have the right to file a complaint or concern following the IAA complaint procedure. All complaints whether formal or informal must be in writing. All complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to the Secondary school IB programs for parents/Guardians complaints and concerns

SECONDARY SCHOOL IB PROGRAMES: PARENT/GUARDIAN COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

IAA has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching, learning and pastoral care provided to students taking our IB programmes in Grades 6 to 12. However, if parents/guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. Parents/guardians can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

A copy of this procedure can be found on IAA's website. IAA will ensure that parents/guardians of students and of prospective students who request it, are made aware that this document is published.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **concern** may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A **complaint** may be defined as *'a written expression of dissatisfaction, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. IAA takes concerns and complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

How to raise a complaint

Complaints must be made in writing (email or letter) to the appropriate member of the school community as described in the document. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

PART A - INFORMAL RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly (within 14 days) and informally.

If a parent/guardian of any student has a concern or complaint they (“the complainant”) should contact one of the following in the first instance:

- Pastoral Issues: the student’s Tutor or the Grade Leader,
- Academic issues: the student’s subject teacher or the Head of Department.
- Should it be necessary then concerns and complaints can also be addressed to the Deputy or Head of MYP, the Diploma Coordinator or the Secondary Principal.

These members of staff will respond to the concern or complaint, communicating the outcome through an official school channel (school phone, email or letter). If the matter is not resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction, they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Part B of this procedure.

PART B – FORMAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

Should a formal complaint need to be lodged it must be done in writing. See Stage 1 below. At each stage in Part B, IAA wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Stage 1: A letter/email to the Secondary School Principal

- (a) If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction by the informal process, the complainant may invoke the formal part of this Complaints Procedure. They should do this in writing to the Principal giving details of their complaint and the outcome they are seeking.
- (b) The Principal will then either take the case forward himself or appoint a senior colleague who had no prior involvement in the matter to do so.
- (c) The Principal or (where applicable) the senior colleague appointed by the Principal will offer to communicate or meet with the complainant to discuss the matter, normally within seven working days.
- (d) The complainant will be given an estimate of the time that is likely to be required to complete any necessary investigation, normally not more than five working days. If more time is required (e.g. if the complaint is made during school holidays and relevant staff are away), this would be discussed with the complainant.
- (e) Written notes will be kept of all material meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- (f) The complainant will be notified in writing of the decision reached at Stage 1.

Stage 2 – Appeal to the Principal

- (a) If the complainant is not satisfied with that person's decision in respect of their complaint, the complainant should appeal to the Principal in writing within five working days after receiving the decision.
- (b) The Principal will offer to meet with the complainant to discuss the matter, normally within seven working days. If more time is required (e.g. if the complaint is made during school holidays and the Principal is away), this would be discussed with the complainant.
- (c) Once the Principal is satisfied that any new, relevant facts have been established, the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing, within five working days of meeting with the complainant. The Principal will give full reasons for the decision.

Stage 3 - Appeal to the Director

- (a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Principal, they should send written notice of their complaint to the Director within five working days after receiving the appeal decision. When doing so, the complainant should: (i) give reasonable particulars of their complaint; and (ii) specify the outcome they are seeking.
- (b) The matter will then be considered by the Director (who may decide to involve a panel that may, if appropriate, include a member of the Board). The Director will schedule a hearing to take place within 14 working days of the receipt of the appeal.
- (c) Where an appeal that reaches Stage 3 is brought by one parent/guardian only, IAA will (save in exceptional circumstances) keep the parent/guardian informed and invite them to attend any meeting with any other adult who entered into the contract with IAA for the education of the relevant student. IAA also reserves the right to keep informed and invite to attend the meeting any other adult whom the school believes to have parental responsibility for the relevant student.
- (d) The complainant shall produce (within five working days of the Director's request) any such further information and documentation that the Director reasonably considers may be required in order to make an informed decision about the appeal.
- (e) At least 3 working days before the meeting, the Principal shall submit to the Director a written statement setting out views in relation to the appeal. The Director shall give a copy of the Principal's statement to the complainant.
- (f) It will not normally be appropriate for the complainant to be legally represented at the hearing and legal representation requires the prior approval of the Director.
- (g) If possible, the Director will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Director will decide how it should be carried out.
- (h) If the Director shall so decide, the hearing may be recorded by a recording device or be transcribed.
- (i) If the Director reasonably believes that evidence should be heard from an individual in private (i.e. in the absence of the person bringing the complaint or any third party), he/she may so decide. In those circumstances, the complainant will be given reasons for that decision. The complainant will be given a summary of the individual's relevant evidence after the event if the Director believes the evidence to be relevant to the complaint. The Director may withhold the identity of a student who gives evidence in private to the Director.

- (j) The Director’s findings and recommendations in relation to the complaint shall be documented in the form of a report.
- (k) Within five working days after the meeting, the Director will send the complainant and the Principal a copy of the draft report.
- (l) If the complainant believes that the report is not factually accurate, the complainant shall inform the Director in writing within five working days thereafter, giving details of the alleged inaccuracies. If the Principal believes that the report is not factually accurate, he shall likewise inform the Director in writing within five working days thereafter, giving details of the alleged inaccuracies.
- (m) The Director shall then finalise the report. A copy of the report will be: (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and (ii) available for inspection on school premises by the Governors and the Principal.
- (n) Subject to the rules set out in this document, the Director may regulate their proceedings as they see fit.
- (o) For the purposes of this procedure “working day” means a day which is not a Friday, Saturday or any scheduled school holiday or National holiday.

The scope of this Complaints Procedure

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Assessments of Special Educational Needs 	<p>Concerns about admissions should be raised with the Admissions Office. Concerns over the assessments of Special Educational Needs should be addressed to the Head of Inclusion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy. All matters concerning Child Protection should be addressed to the Secondary Child Protection Lead through the dedicated and confidential email link.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school 	<p>Complaints about the exclusion of a child from IAA should be addressed to the Academic Misconduct Committee c/o Secretary to the Board of Governors.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>IAA has an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees. This can be found in the IAA Procedure on Whistleblowing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures. For advice on this please contact HR.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Whilst parents may officially lodge their complaint with the Principal, the complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>

Serial and Persistent complaints

If all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, and a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, IAA will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant contacts IAA again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and IAA may choose not to respond.

Complaints pertaining to the Principal or the Director

Complaints about the Principal should be addressed directly to the Director and complaints about the Director should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors and submitted to the Secretary of the IAA Board of Governors (c/o the Office of the Director at IAA)

Documentation and Record-keeping

IAA maintains a record of all complaints for at least three years for regular review by senior management. The record states whether the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stages or proceeded to a panel hearing and will state the action taken as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).