



Parent or legal guardian and student complaints procedure

SIA – Suzhou Innovation Academy is proud of its friendly and open atmosphere, equality, tolerance, and respect for each other’s differing views.

| Policy Review / Amendment Process | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Version | Revision Date (Document Review Date) | Authors (Who revised it?) | Any significant changes / editing to the original policy. |
| V1 | 25 th Feb. 2023 | George - author | GM – created this policy by applying IBO standards and by researching similar documents from other schools. |
| V2 | 28 th Feb. 2023 | | |
| V3 | 4 th June 2023 | | |
| V4 | 31 st Jan 2024 | | |
| | | Senior Leadership | Pankaj, Eric, Walker, Alice |
| | | DP staff | Collaborative DP meetings |
| | | DP students | CORE periods |
| | | Parents | |

SharePoint Location

https://chinabest.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/SIAFaculty/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B1DA328CA-91E9-42C4-8778-5042178A91CB%7D&file=Parent%20or%20legal%20guardian%20and%20student%20complaints%20procedure%20IB%20and%20Pre-IB%20courses.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1&ct=1706667509623&wdOrigin=OFFICECOM-WEB.MAIN.EDGEWORTH&cid=3cc8ec56-be6a-429a-b280-f01d637d9986&wdPreviousSessionSrc=HarmonyWeb&wdPreviousSession=bb52240d-7068-4ed5-ac79-dd2229844d00

Rules—Article 6: Internal complaints procedure

Article 6.1: The school must have in place written procedures for how it will deal with complaints and students’ requests for appeals against IB programme decisions taken by the school, ensure that details of these procedures are made widely available and accessible to all students, and operate in accordance with such procedures.

Article 6.2: The school must inform parents or legal guardians about the school's procedures for addressing complaints and students' requests for appeals of IB programme decisions taken by the school.

Leadership 4.4: The school ensures that students and legal guardians are informed of the general characteristics of relevant programme(s) and how the school implements them. (0201-04-0400)

Approaches to assessment 3.4: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews consistent and fair systems and processes for reporting student progress and handling appeals or challenges. (0404-03-0400)

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1. Purpose of this policy

This policy only fully applies to parents of registered IB DP students at Suzhou Innovation Academy.

SIA – Suzhou Innovation Academy is proud of its friendly and open atmosphere, fairness, tolerance, and respect of each other’s differing views.

SIA – Suzhou Innovation Academy provides the best possible education and support for all its pupils. This means having a clear, fair, and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints [from parents of registered pupils] to or against the school and its provision of the IB programme, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.

All school staff will be made aware of complaints procedures and expected to review this document regularly in order that they are familiar with our process of dealing with complaints and can be of the most assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

This document explains that procedure, and the steps that it outlines should be referred to and followed by all pupils and their parents whenever an issue arises that causes them concern. If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly, given an explanation and provided with revised timescales.

If you have any questions or complaints, we would like to hear about them as soon as possible so they can be resolved to the satisfaction of individuals and the community. We prefer if complaints can be dealt with in **an informal and friendly manner** by the individuals involved. However, if this is not possible then a formal procedure should be used. This procedure may be used by students and parents who have a complaint they wish to resolve.

2. Principles of this policy

To ensure the complaints process is effective, the following principles are applied throughout the complaints process and provide a framework for communication between stakeholders and IB staff.

Fairness – we aim to have a fair complaints procedure that ensures everyone is treated equally. **Courtesy** – all communication in relation to this procedure should be based on mutual respect, trust and courtesy.

Accessibility – we aim to have a complaints procedure that is easy to understand, easy to access and well publicized.

Timeliness – we aim to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely manner. **Effectiveness** – the complaints procedure is monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to be effective.

Attentiveness – you will be given every opportunity to put forward your complaint, and you can be assured that we are listening. We will update you on the process and status of your complaint as appropriate. (ref:)

1. Where possible we will handle complaints in confidence.
2. We will not take action against anyone who makes a reasonable complaint.
3. All relevant facts will be established and examined fairly before any action is taken.
4. We understand that in some situations people do not *intend* to offend others; instead they are misunderstood.
5. Parents and students may take complaints, problems or concerns to any member of staff.

The following people have a particular responsibility to listen to and to try and resolve complaints:

- **Personal Tutors – Homeroom advisors**
- **Subject teachers**
- **Boarding staff**
- **Diploma coordinator / s**
- **Vice Principals**
- **Principal**

3. Scope of the procedure - What this procedure covers.

Anyone who has directly accessed the IB's services, and has concerns about those services, can make a complaint to the IB which, in most cases, will result in a formal response.

To maximize the chances of a quick resolution, SIA asks that you submit your complaint within a period of 3 months following the incident. The IB is committed to handle it sensitively and efficiently in line with the principles of our procedure as listed above.

4. The difference between a concern and a complaint (key words – terminology)

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 ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

5. Informal Resolution

We prefer if complaints can be dealt with in an informal and friendly manner by the individuals involved.

We encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

If a student or parent has any concerns or complaints, they should:

- speak directly to the person responsible if appropriate **OR**
- write to the person responsible, outlining the nature of the complaint **OR**
- ask a friend to speak to the person responsible on your behalf.
- contact the Homeroom advisor - Personal Tutor and ask for advice on what to do or ask them to speak to the person responsible on your behalf.
- approach their child’s form tutor first as they will be best placed to help them either directly or by establishing which other member of staff they should be speaking to.
- if the complaint is about the Personal Tutor then contact the Vice Principal or the Principal.

The member of staff to whom the complaint is referred will investigate it and respond within 5 working days. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then you are advised to proceed with the complaint to the next stage of this procedure.

6. Formal Resolution

If your complaint is not informally resolved, it may be required to make a formal complaint in writing.

You should address your complaint to a Vice Principal (or to the principal if you are complaining about the Vice Principal).

- ❖ A written explanation of your concern will need to be given to the staff member that you speak to, so that it is easy to see – when complaints are taken further or referred to in the future – what the initial problem was.
- ❖ If your complaint is about a member of staff, you should first raise this with the Diploma Coordinator or Vice principal either in person or in writing, and a meeting can be arranged to discuss the issue at hand.
- ❖ If your complaint is about the Vice principal, you should raise your concern in writing with the Principal.

The complaint will be investigated, dealt with and a response made including a written report, within 10 working days.

What complaints are covered by this procedure?

All complaints are covered by this basic procedure e.g.

- related to a student's academic performance or to their life outside of the classroom
- involving a student's interaction with other students or with adult members of staff
- any staff or students related to SIA's procedures and facilities.

All written complaints are recorded and filed by the Vice Principal together with written responses or records of verbal responses.

7. Panel Hearing

If you are not satisfied with the response to your written complaint, please contact the principal who will organise the following:

- ❖ a hearing before a panel consisting of three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
- ❖ one person on this panel will be independent of the management and running of SIA.
- ❖ you may be accompanied to a panel hearing if you wish e.g., a student may ask their parent to accompany them;
- ❖ a written record will be kept of the process. The panel will make findings and recommendations. This represents the final stage in the complaint's procedure.

Appeals

If you are still not satisfied with the decision, you should proceed with an appeal to the school ownership:

The appeals panel may:

- dismiss all or part of the complaint
- uphold all or part of the complaint
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- evaluate all the evidence available and recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures as a preventative step against similar problems arising in the future.

The panel's decision is final.

Where a complainant attempts to re-open an issue which has already been dealt with under the complaints procedure, the principal will contact them to inform them that the matter has already been dealt with and that either that stage of the policy has been exhausted or that the complaints procedure has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed.

Where further correspondence is received on the same matter, this may be considered vexatious - bothersome, and the school will be under no obligation to respond to that correspondence.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the school again about the same issue, the school can choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which the school will not respond is if:

- the school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, and the school's position has been clearly set out in writing together with the complainant's options

- the complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time
- the complainant refuses to follow the complaints procedures
- the school reasonably believes the aim of the contact is to cause disruption or inconvenience
- that the complainant acts or communicates in an inappropriate way towards school staff.

Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing.

The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

8. Examples: A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint's procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;

- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically: -

- maliciously.
- aggressively.
- using threats, intimidation, or violence.
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language.
- knowing it to be false.
- using falsified information;
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

9. Submitting a formal complaint to IBO

If it has not been possible to resolve your issue informally or you wish to submit a formal complaint, the following procedure outlines how to submit your complaint to the IB:

Initial submission of a formal complaint

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the email address complaints@ibo.org3.

Please provide as much information as possible about the nature of your complaint and the departments or services involved. Specifically, you must supply us with the following:

- Your name, a contact address and telephone number or email address to allow the IB to contact you with regards to the complaint.
- If you are an IB student (or legal guardian of an IB student), the name and code of the IB World School which you attend or have attended.
- If you are an IB Educator, your personal code and your role(s).
- The service and/or department your complaint relates to.

- The details of your complaint including any previous attempts to resolve the matter and copies of all relevant documentation (where available).
- The Customer Service team will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three business days and will forward your complaint to the appropriate head of department, director or chief officer.
- The head of department, director or chief officer will oversee an investigation of the matter, and you may be contacted for further information if this is necessary.
- The head, director or chief officer will aim to respond to you with his or her conclusions within fifteen business days of receipt of the complaint from the Customer Service team. Where more time is required you will be notified, with an estimate of the timeline for receiving a final response.
- The IB reserves the right to cease corresponding with a complainant if their correspondence is, in our reasonable opinion, frivolous, vexatious, abusive or if the matter has reached a conclusion within the framework of the formal complaint process.

Concern Form

Please complete and return to <Name> *(either class teacher/form tutor/head of year/headteacher / school to delete as appropriate)* who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

| |
|--|
| Your name: |
| Pupil's name (if relevant): |
| Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant): |
| Address: |
| Postcode: |
| Day time telephone number: |
| Evening telephone number: |
| Please give details of your concern, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it. |

| |
|---|
| What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage? |
| Signature: |
| Date: |
| Official use |
| Date acknowledgement sent: |
| By who: |
| Concern referred to: |
| Date: |

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to <...Name> (*either principal / Clerk / complaints co-ordinator – school to delete as appropriate*) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

| |
|---|
| Your name: |
| Pupil's name (if relevant): |
| Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant): |
| Address: |
| Postcode: |
| Day time telephone number: |
| Evening telephone number: |

| |
|---|
| Please give details of your concern, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it. |
| What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage? |
| Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details. |
| Signature: |
| Date: |
| Official use |
| Date acknowledgement sent: |
| By who: |
| Complaint referred to: |
| Date: |

Publication and revision

This policy will be published on our school website and is available on ManageBac.

This policy is revised annually in a process that includes all school stakeholders.

Bibliography

- <https://www.ibo.org/contentassets/fab8ccef45b743c0a68de6f9ea989385/feedback-complaints-2.png>
- <https://www.ibo.org/contact-the-ib/feedback-and-complaints/>
- <https://www.ibo.org/contentassets/fab8ccef45b743c0a68de6f9ea989385/ib-complaints-procedure-nov-2018-en.pdf>

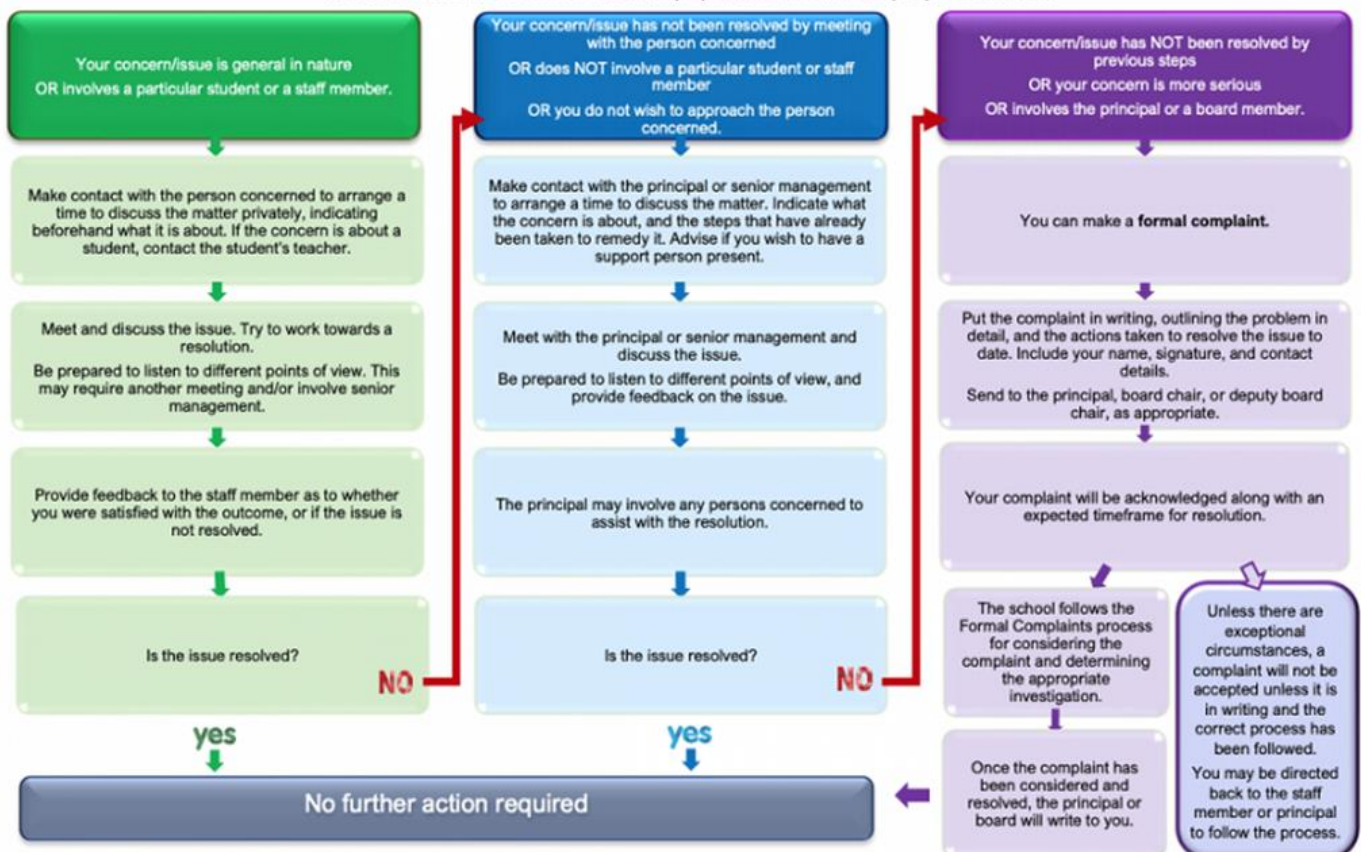
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Appendices



Concerns and Complaints Process

Most concerns can be resolved informally by discussions with the people concerned.



This flowchart aligns with the school's Concerns and Complaints policy and procedures.