

Ermitage IB School: Complaints Policy for Parents

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Embracing Individuality, Learning Together: From our green setting of Maisons-Laffitte, Paris our IB Programmes offer meaningful and engaging learning experiences which inspire students every day to thrive and reach their potential, preparing them to succeed and make a difference as responsible global citizens.

Our key values are:

- Wellbeing
- Connection & Community
- Inquiry & Innovation
- Multilingualism
- Global Citizenship in Action

Purpose of Complaints Policy

Ermitage IB School (“IB School”) aims to provide excellence in its academic, extra-curricular provision and in its pastoral care, within a caring and happy environment for its students and staff. There may, however, be occasions when parents are dissatisfied and wish to raise a concern or make a complaint. This policy is made available to parents of enrolled and prospective students through the School's website and in hard copy from the school offices.

The primary aim of this policy is to set out how complaints may be resolved fairly and quickly. Complaints will be managed sympathetically and will be dealt with in an impartial and confidential manner. We believe that it is beneficial to deal with a complaint informally wherever possible and as speedily as is practicable.

The term ‘parent’ includes a current parent or legal guardian or education guardian. This Policy applies to complaints from parents of current students and to parents of former students provided that the complaint was raised formally when the student was registered at IB School. Any matter about which a parent of a student is unhappy and seeks action by a school is a ‘complaint’. It may come as an expression of dissatisfaction however made, 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 this complaints procedure.

Policy Aims

The aims of the IB School Complaints Policy are:

- To promote a culture that is open and welcoming
- To demonstrate to parents that their opinions are valued and to encourage parents to raise any concerns that they might have
- To enable parents to feel comfortable in communicating with IB School
- To enable members of staff to feel comfortable when dealing with complaints
- To establish a means of dealing with complaints



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- To ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level.
- To resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way and as soon as possible

1. Complaints Procedures

The IB School's complaints procedure has three stages:

Stage 1 Informal Resolution	Where an informed concern or complaint is raised, addressed by the most appropriate staff member, and the level at which most issues are resolved swiftly and satisfactorily.
Stage 2 Formal Resolution	A formal complaint in writing to the Head of School, where the concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally.
Stage 3 Panel Hearing	In exceptional circumstances, an Executive Committee Complaints Panel will address complaints through a formal panel hearing.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns or complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact ibprograms@ermitage.fr so that we can ensure the matter is managed by the most appropriate person in school. In many instances this might be directed to the class teacher in the first instance. In many cases the matter will be resolved at this level to the parents' satisfaction. The appropriate teacher will be expected to consult appropriately and keep written records of the action taken.
- Complaints made at other levels, for example, to the Head of Department, Coordinator, or Head of School will follow the appropriate pathways of consultation and will hopefully be resolved quickly and to the parents' satisfaction. A written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept.
- All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Knowledge of the complaint will be limited to those directly involved.
- Should the matter not be resolved in this informal way then parents are advised to proceed with the complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
- The member of staff in receipt of the complaint will make a written record of it and the date on which it was received. An informal complaint provided in writing will be acknowledged by telephone, email, or letter within 2 working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. A matter raised orally will not necessarily be acknowledged in writing, but a record of the matter will be made. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or if the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.



Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School.
- Head of School to contact parents with a resolution normally within 10 working days. The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, email, or letter within 3 working days during term time, and as soon as practicable during the holidays, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale.
- Once the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, where necessary via investigations, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision, and the reasoning behind it, in writing. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
- It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome, or that, at least, all of the concerns raised by the parents have been fully and fairly considered. If, in extreme circumstances, parents are not satisfied they may if they wish to proceed with an appeal to the Executive Committee responsible for the Complaints Procedure.
- A complaint against the Head of School should be put in writing to the Executive Committee (via azeitoun@ermitage.fr) who will follow the procedure set out in Stage 3.

Stage 3 - Appeal to the Executive Committee

- If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision or the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 2, the parent can request that the complaint be referred to the Executive Complaints Panel under Stage 3 of this procedure.
- Parents should address their complaint to the Executive Committee (via azeitoun@ermitage.fr) within 10 working days of receiving the decision at Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal, the outcome sought and full details of their complaint. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint, which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure. The Executive Committee (or appointed representative) will acknowledge the request for a Hearing in writing within 3 working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays.
- The Executive Committee will appoint a representative who will normally respond to the parent concerned within five working days indicating how the complaint is to be resolved. Though, it may be necessary for the Executive Committee representative responsible for the Complaints Procedure to carry out further investigations that may include consulting with other Executive Committee Members. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Executive Committee appointed representative is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and members of the Executive Committee are in agreement, a decision will be made. The parents and the Head of School will be informed of this decision, and the reasoning behind it, in writing. The decision will be written by the Executive Committee representative responsible for the Complaints Procedure and will be binding on all parties.



2. Expulsions, Extended suspensions, Removal of Scholarships

This appeal procedure is also intended for those parents whose child has been expelled from IB School or has been suspended for more than 14 days (or has been removed from any scholarship) and who may wish to appeal against such a decision.

In such cases, this appeal procedure will take the place of Stage 3 of the complaints procedure, and for the avoidance of doubt, no complaint under the complaints procedure can be made against the conduct of or a decision of this appeal procedure.

3. Best practice approach to complaints

- A parent who makes a complaint may feel vulnerable and the School should attempt to reduce anxiety by taking the matter seriously and dispelling any uncertainty as to the way in which a complaint will be handled. It will often help if:
 - Information about the complaints procedure is clear
 - Complaints are acknowledged immediately or within 5 working days
- Staff should always inform parents what is happening because of their complaint and, if a detailed response is needed, the date by which it is likely to be received.
- Confidentiality is often a crucial issue for parents, students, and staff. It is essential that any complaint is treated both in a confidential manner and with due respect. If necessary, the policy on maintaining confidentiality may need to be explained to a complainant. Parents and students should never feel that making a complaint will adversely affect a student or his/ her opportunities at the School. It may sometimes be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals. However, even if names are not provided, the source of the complaint may be clear. Care may need to be exercised in this situation and the balance between dealing effectively with a complaint on the one hand and maintaining confidentiality on the other may need to be weighed particularly carefully.
- Staff members are invariably concerned that they should be informed of complaints, which might be damaging to their reputation. Training may help staff to deal not only with complaints which are made to them, but also with complaints which are made about them. The School should be aware of the need to provide support for members of staff against whom a complaint is made; a colleague who is not otherwise involved could often provide such support. If there is a possibility of an issue concerning child safety or protection, or a situation which is likely to involve the police, the appropriate procedures and guidance on confidentiality must be followed particularly carefully.



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- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

It is hoped that through this policy, complaints will be dealt and resolved as early as possible, effectively, and fairly for all parties involved, as part of ensuring the best possible academic and pastoral outcomes for the students in our care.