



## CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

This policy has been created in alignment with our identity as a community of learners, grounded in our vision, mission, and values. It is equally shaped by the principles of our accreditation bodies—Alberta Education, the International Baccalaureate, and the Council of International Schools—with the common aim of developing well-rounded and knowledgeable global citizens. Together, these foundations create an environment where every individual is empowered to learn deeply, act with integrity, and pursue personal excellence.

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## PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

TIS values open communication and constructive feedback from students, parents, and members of the public. Constructive criticism is welcomed when motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of educational programs and strengthen the school's effectiveness. This policy supports the values of fairness, transparency, and open communication promoted and reflected in the IB Learner Profile.

The school is dedicated to approaching sensitive situations with the utmost care and respect for all individuals involved, ensuring that each case is addressed thoughtfully and compassionately.

The school believes that concerns and complaints are best addressed and resolved as close to their origin as possible. Staff members are given the opportunity to consider concerns and render decisions before matters are escalated to senior administration or the Board of Directors.

This policy applies to:

- General school concerns and complaints
- Concerns related to the IB Programmes: Primary Years Programme (IB PYP), Diploma Programme (IB DP), IB Career-related Programme (IB CP)
- Student appeals regarding IB programme decisions made by the school
- Student appeals regarding official IB results, grading standards, or organizational policies.

All procedures outlined in this policy are made available to students, parents, staff, and the public through the school's official publications and website.



## 1. GENERAL CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure applies to **all members of the school community and external stakeholders**, including students, parents/guardians, staff, contractors, service providers, and members of the public.

### 1.1 Guidelines

- 1.1.1 TIS expects the staff to receive complaints courteously.
- 1.1.2 A complaint should be made at an appropriate time and place, and delivered in a respectful manner.
- 1.1.3 Complaints shall be made in private and not in front of students or the employee's co-workers.
- 1.1.4 Parents and students should limit complaints to direct experiences involving their own situation.
- 1.1.5 Anonymous complaints will not be considered under the general complaints process. However, anonymous reports may be filed under the TIS Whistleblower Policy, when the information provided meets the threshold of serious ethical, legal, financial, governance, or safeguarding misconduct
- 1.1.6 Appropriate confidentiality of students, staff, and parents will be maintained at all times.
- 1.1.7 All relevant parties will deal with each individual concern seriously, therefore, there is no benefit to and/or advantage in submission of multiple signature petitions.
- 1.1.8 When resolution is not satisfactory, the complainant will follow the School's Conflict Resolution Policy.
- 1.1.9 Complaints must be submitted within five (5) days of the date the individual determines that a concern has risen to the level of a Formal written complaint, even if the underlying issue existed prior to that determination.

### 1.2 Divisional Pathways

To ensure fairness, transparency, and timely resolution, all concerns and complaints must be addressed through the appropriate channel and in the sequence outlined below. All individuals are required to follow the **appropriate divisional pathway** (e.g., Primary, Secondary) and adhere to



the established sequence of escalation before advancing a concern to the next level. Concerns must first be directed to the staff member or department most directly responsible for the matter.

Failure to follow the correct divisional pathway or established sequence may result in the concern being redirected to the appropriate starting point.

## **1.2.1 Category A: Instruction and Discipline**

1. Teacher
2. Secondary Only: Grade Team Leader (discipline) / Head of Department (Instruction)
3. Vice Principal
4. Principal
5. Head of School
6. Chief Operating Officer
7. Board Chair

## **1.2.2 Category B: School Personnel**

1. Employee
2. Employee's Immediate Supervisor
3. Head of School
4. Chief Operating Officer
5. Board Member

## **1.2.3 Category C: Transportation**

1. Bus Services Provider
2. Business Administrator
3. Head of School
4. Chief Operating Officer
5. Board Member

## **1.2.4 Category D: School Operations and Policies**

1. Principal
2. Head of School
3. Chief Operating Officer
4. Board Member



## 2. DECISION APPEALS

This General Appeals Procedure outlines the process for requesting a formal review of a decision made by the school in relation to general concerns and complaints. It applies to matters not specifically governed by IB external regulations and ensures fairness, transparency, and due process in school-based decision-making.

The purpose of the appeals process is to provide a structured mechanism for reviewing decisions when an individual believes that established school policies or procedures were not properly followed.

### 2.1 Guiding Principles

- Appeals must be based on evidence that proper procedures were not followed, relevant information was not considered, or a decision was inconsistent with established school policy.
- A difference of opinion alone does not constitute grounds for appeal.
- Appeals will be handled confidentially, impartially, and in a timely manner.
- The school remains committed to resolving concerns at the lowest appropriate level before escalation.
- Appeals must proceed sequentially through the school's established escalation structure.

### 2.2 Appeals Process

#### Step 1: Completion of the Complaint Process

Before submitting an appeal, the complainant must have followed the appropriate divisional pathway and completed the established complaint process outlined in Section 1 (Categories A–D). Appeals will not be considered if the proper sequence of escalation has **not** been followed.

#### Step 2: Submission of a Formal Written Appeal

If the matter remains unresolved after the final decision at the appropriate administrative level, the complainant may submit a formal written appeal within a reasonable timeframe (**five (5) school days** of receiving the decision).

The written appeal must include:

- The name of the complainant, with signature
- The category of the complaint (see section 1.2 - 1.5)
- A clear description of the original concern, including date of occurrence
- A summary of the steps already taken
- The decision being appealed



- The specific grounds for appeal
- Any supporting documentation

Appeals should be submitted to the **Head of School (HOS)**, unless the decision being appealed was made by the HOS or the HOS has a conflict of interests, in which case the appeal should be submitted to the TIS Board via the **Board Secretary/Chief Operations Officer (COO)**.

### **Step 3: Review of the Appeal**

The reviewing authority will:

- Examine all relevant documentation
- Confirm whether established procedures were followed
- Determine whether the decision was reasonable and consistent with school policy
- Request additional information if necessary

A written response will be provided within **seven (7) school days**, where reasonably possible.

### **Step 4: Final Determination**

The decision rendered by the Head of School, Chief Operating Officer or School Board Chair (as applicable) constitutes the final level of appeal within the school's internal process.

### **Communication and Record Keeping**

Records will be maintained by the school administration in accordance with privacy and record-keeping procedures. This General Appeals Procedure ensures a fair and transparent process for reviewing school-based decisions while maintaining respect for established governance structures and administrative responsibilities.

## **3. IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (IB DP) AND IB CAREER-RELATED PROGRAMME (IB CP) CONCERNS**

### **3.1 Concerns pathway**

Concerns specifically related to the delivery, instruction, or administration of the IB DP or IB CP shall follow the process below:

1. IB Subject Teacher or Career-related Teacher
2. IB Coordinator (PYP, DP or CP, as appropriate)
3. Principal
4. Head of School



### 3.2 Student Appeals – IB Programme Decisions Made By The School

Students may appeal decisions made by the school regarding:

- Admission to the IB PYP, IB DP or IB CP
- Continuation in the IB PYP, IB DP or IB CP
- Course level placement (HL/SL)
- Removal from an IB course or programme
- Eligibility determinations based on prerequisite conditions

The decision of the Head of School shall be final in matters relating to school-based IB programme decisions.

### 3.3 Student Appeals – IB Programme Decisions Made By The IBO

#### 3.3.1 IB Assessment decisions

Concerns related to IB assessment decisions issued directly by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), including external examination results, are subject to IB regulations and procedures. The school will advise families on the formal IB Enquiry Upon Results (EUR) process, where applicable.

#### 3.3.2 Appeal Procedure

1. The student must submit a written appeal to the IB Coordinator within five (5) school days of the decision.
2. The IB Coordinator will review the appeal and respond in writing.
3. If unresolved, the appeal may be submitted in writing to the Principal.
4. A final appeal may be made in writing to the Head of School.

## 4. ACCESSIBILITY OF PROCEDURES

This policy and its associated procedures are:

- Available on the school website
- Available upon request from the school administration

The school ensures that students and families are informed of their right to raise concerns and to appeal decisions within the defined process.



## 5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In alignment with the school's commitment to respectful dialogue, procedural fairness, and the integrity of IB and provincial processes, all members of the school community share responsibility for ensuring that concerns, complaints, and appeals are addressed in a principled, timely, and professional manner.

### 5.1 Students

#### 5.1.1 Rights

Students have the right to:

- Raise concerns or complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the process.
- Receive clear information about complaint and appeal procedures.
- Have concerns addressed in a timely and professional manner.
- Appeal school-based IB programme decisions in accordance with established procedures.
- Receive guidance regarding formal IB processes when concerns relate to IB examination results.

#### 5.1.2 Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Raising concerns at the appropriate level and following the established sequence of steps.
- Communicating respectfully and at appropriate times and locations.
- Submitting formal complaints or appeals in writing, when required.
- Respecting the confidentiality and professional integrity of staff and other students.
- Adhering to established timelines, including submitting student appeals within five school days of a decision.

### 5.2 Families

#### 5.2.1 Rights

Families have the right to:

- Raise concerns or complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the process.
- Receive clear information about complaint and appeal procedures.
- Have concerns addressed in a timely and professional manner.



- Receive guidance regarding formal IB processes when concerns relate to IB examination results.

## 5.2.2 Responsibilities

Families are responsible for:

- Raising concerns at the appropriate level and following the established sequence of steps.
- Communicating respectfully and at appropriate times and locations.
- Submitting formal complaints or appeals in writing when required.
- Limiting complaints to matters directly related to their own child's situation.
- Respecting the confidentiality and professional integrity of staff and other students and families.
- Understanding that anonymous complaints will not be considered.

## 5.3 School Staff

### 5.3.1 Rights

School staff have the right to:

- Be informed promptly when they are the subject of a complaint.
- Be given the opportunity to present their perspective before a decision is made.
- Expect that concerns follow the established sequence prior to escalation.
- Work within a respectful and professional complaint process.

### 5.3.2 Responsibilities

School staff are responsible for:

- Receiving concerns courteously and responding in a timely and professional manner.
- Addressing concerns at the earliest appropriate level.
- Maintaining confidentiality throughout the process.
- Providing accurate information regarding IB regulations and formal IB enquiry upon results procedures when applicable.

## 5.4 Administration

### 5.4.1 Rights

Administration has the right to:

- Expect that concerns are first addressed at the appropriate level before escalation.



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- Request that complaints be submitted in writing, when required.
- Make final school-based decisions regarding complaints and appeals in accordance with policy.
- Be treated respectfully in the execution of leadership responsibilities.

## 5.4.2 Responsibilities

Administration is responsible for:

- Ensuring that complaints and appeals are handled fairly, consistently, and in accordance with policy.
- Informing employees when they are the subject of a complaint and providing them the opportunity to respond.
- Ensuring that appeals related to school-based IB decisions follow established timelines and documentation requirements.
- Communicating final decisions clearly and in writing where required.
- Recognizing that the decision of the Head of School is final in matters relating to school-based IB programme decisions.

## 5.5 Board of Directors

### 5.5.1 Rights

The Board has the right to:

- Receive written complaints that have followed the established process prior to escalation.
- Expect that concerns have been addressed at appropriate administrative levels before Board review.
- Receive clear documentation outlining the concern and the requested action.
- Be treated respectfully in the fulfillment of governance responsibilities.

### 5.5.2 Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for:

- Providing governance oversight to ensure the complaints and appeals process aligns with legislation and IB standards.
- Reviewing matters appropriately escalated in accordance with policy.
- Ensuring procedural fairness and consistency.
- Maintaining confidentiality and acting in the best interests of the entire school community.

## 5.6 Shared Commitment



All members of the school community share responsibility for fostering a culture of respectful dialogue and principled resolution of concerns. Through adherence to this policy and to IB and provincial expectations, the school ensures that concerns, complaints, and appeals are handled with integrity, fairness, and transparency.

## 6. POLICY REVIEW

This document was created in collaboration with the Principal (or designate), IB Coordinators, and Leadership Team, who form the body responsible for policy formulation and review committees.

The policy will be reviewed every year to ensure alignment with TIS's guiding statements, best educational practice, and updates from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and technological advancements (e.g., AI).

## 7. ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER TIS POLICIES

All policies pertaining to the IB evaluation process—including the Conflict Resolution Policy, Language Policy, Assessment Policy, Admissions Policy, Inclusion Policy, and Academic Integrity Policy—are reviewed in conjunction with one another. This coordinated review ensures alignment, consistency, and coherence across all areas of school practice, supporting a unified, whole-school approach in line with IB standards and expectations.

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Author note: [Poe.com](https://www.quora.com/poe.com) (Quora, 2023) Poe was used as a thought partner to support grammar, structure, and language refinement as to enhance clarity and coherence. The ideas, analysis, applications to context, and conclusions remain entirely the author's own.

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