

PARENT/GUARDIAN COMPLAINT POLICY

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Harfa International School Parent/Guardian Complaint Policy

Primary Years Programme (PYP) & Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Policy implementation: 2025

Last revised: August 2026

Next revision: August 2028

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IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

HIS Mission Statement

At Harfa International School, our mission is to deliver the highest quality educational experience, supporting students to become global citizens and lifelong learners, while enabling them to recognize and embrace their own uniqueness and achieve their full potential.

HIS Vision

To be students' and parents' number one choice in education by demonstrating scientifically based transformative methods that are embraced and implemented worldwide.

Policy Purpose and Scope of the Policy

This Parent/Guardian Complaint Policy outlines the formal and informal procedures for addressing concerns raised by parents or legal guardians at Harfa International School.

The purpose of this policy is to foster a respectful, transparent, accessible, and solution-focused dialogue between families and the school community.

This document:

- Defines what constitutes a complaint,
- Describes the stages and processes for managing complaints,
- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved,
- Reinforces our commitment to confidentiality, fairness, inclusivity, and open communication,
- Ensures compliance with the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme Standards and Practices (2020).

This policy applies exclusively to concerns raised by parents or guardians regarding their child's experience in the Harfa International School. It does not apply to complaints about final grades after a review process or subjective personal opinions about individual staff members, as such matters fall outside the scope of formal resolution mechanisms.

IB Standards, Approaches and Practices

This policy aligns with the following IB practices:

- **Culture 2.1:** The school implements inclusive policies that support the school's IB philosophy and promote a positive school climate.
- **Culture 4.1:** The school implements and reviews policies and procedures that promote open communication and respectful interactions among all members of the school community.
- **Culture 4.4:** The school ensures that all stakeholders understand the rights and responsibilities of the school community and that appropriate channels exist to address concerns in a fair and timely manner.

Leadership 2.2: The school provides procedures and resources to ensure students and parents are supported in having a voice in school matters.

Guiding Principles and Core Values

At Harfa International School, we believe that effective resolution of concerns is essential to maintaining a supportive, inclusive, and trusting educational environment. This policy is founded on the following core values:

- **Respect and Cooperation:** All communication and interactions must be guided by mutual respect, active listening, and a constructive approach to problem-solving.
- **Confidentiality:** Every effort is made to ensure that complaints are handled discreetly and that the privacy of all parties involved is protected.
- **Shared Responsibility:** The resolution of concerns is a collaborative effort between families and the school, based on honesty, empathy, and professionalism.
- **Timeliness and Clarity:** Concerns must be communicated clearly and resolved within the timelines set forth in this policy.
- **Right to Be Heard:** All parents and guardians have the right to raise concerns, be heard without prejudice, and expect fair, transparent, and accessible procedures.

Inclusivity and Accessibility: The school is committed to ensuring all parents and guardians, regardless of language, culture, or background, can access and understand the complaint process with appropriate support services available.

Definition of a Complaint

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction made by a parent or legal guardian regarding the services, actions, or decisions of the school that affect their child's educational experience or well-being.

Complaints may include, but are not limited to:

- Concerns regarding classroom management or teaching methods,
- Issues related to student well-being, support, or inclusion,
- Communication breakdowns between parents and staff,
- Administrative or procedural concerns that affect a student's learning environment.

Complaints not covered by this policy include:

- Appeals regarding final grades after the official review process has been completed,
 - Complaints based solely on subjective personal opinions about a teacher or staff member that lack clear evidence of misconduct,
 - Legal or contractual issues that fall outside the authority of the school administration.
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Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians

- Express concerns clearly and constructively, including all relevant facts,
- Respect the timelines and stages outlined in this policy,
- Engage respectfully with staff and participate in resolving issues collaboratively,
- Maintain confidentiality during and after the complaint process,
- Seek language support if necessary to fully understand and engage in the process.

Homeroom Teachers

- Serve as the first point of contact for informal complaints,
- Listen actively and seek to resolve concerns promptly and respectfully,
- Document all complaints and communications accurately,
- Maintain a secure and confidential complaint documentation.

School Leadership

- Handles formal complaints when informal resolution is unsuccessful,
- Schedules and facilitates meetings involving relevant parties,
- Ensures fair, consistent, and timely resolution processes are followed,
- Maintains oversight of policy implementation, compliance, and trend analysis,
- Provides feedback to parents on the final resolution and possible next steps.

IB Coordinators

- Support the complaint process ensuring alignment with IB philosophy and standards,
 - Provide staff with training and guidance on handling parent concerns,
 - Monitor complaint trends and recurring issues to inform systemic improvements,
 - Collaborate with the School Leadership on policy review and staff development.
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Complaint Process Overview

The complaint process includes two main stages: informal resolution and formal complaint.

8.1 Informal Complaint (Stage 1)

- The parent/guardian sends a Toddle message or an email or arranges a meeting with the homeroom teacher describing the concern,
- The homeroom teacher acknowledges receipt within 48 hours of working days,
- The teacher investigates, consults others involved (including the student if appropriate), and responds within a reasonable timeframe,
- Many concerns are resolved at this stage through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

8.2 Formal Complaint (Stage 2)

- If unsatisfied with the informal resolution, the parent/guardian may escalate the complaint to the School Leadership,
- The formal complaint should include a summary of the original issue, steps taken, and unresolved concerns,
- The School Leadership acknowledges receipt within five working days,
- The School Leadership may arrange a meeting with all parties to collaboratively resolve the issue,
- Final outcomes are communicated in writing, including options for further appeal or external advice if applicable,

- Parents/guardians have the right to request clear feedback and next steps after case closure.

Record-Keeping, Confidentiality, and Data Use

- Every complaint is documented and archived securely for quality assurance and continuous improvement,
 - Homeroom teachers file all correspondence confidentially, accessible only to authorized staff,
 - Complaint records are used for identifying systemic issues and improving school practices but never to penalize any party raising concerns in good faith,
 - Data is handled according to applicable privacy laws and school data protection policies.
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Complaints Outside the Scope of This Policy

Certain matters require different procedures and will be redirected accordingly:

- Final assessment decisions: Once grading and feedback processes are complete, final grades cannot be appealed further through this policy,
 - Subjective personal judgments: Complaints based solely on personal preference or emotional reactions toward staff without evidence of misconduct,
 - Legal disputes, employment matters, or issues requiring external legal advice are referred to appropriate authorities or legal counsel,
 - Serious allegations of misconduct, including discrimination or abuse, will be handled following school safeguarding policies and may involve external agencies.
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Communication Channels and Access

Harfa International School commits to fostering open, transparent, and respectful communication with parents and guardians through:

- **Weekly Individual Meetings:** Homeroom teachers hold designated weekly sessions for confidential parent-teacher discussions,
 - **Email Correspondence:** Parents are encouraged to submit concerns via Toddle or email for clear documentation,
 - **Timely Responses:** Informal complaints answered within 48 hours of working days, formal complaints within five working days,
 - **Language and Cultural Support:** Interpretation or translation services will be arranged as needed to ensure full understanding and participation,
 - **Respectful Engagement:** All parties are expected to communicate professionally and courteously, focusing on collaborative solutions.
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Professional Development

To equip staff for effective, empathetic complaint management, Harfa International School provides ongoing professional development, including:

- Training in conflict resolution, active listening, and cultural sensitivity,
 - Workshops on IB philosophy related to parent partnerships and student well-being,
 - Regular reviews of complaint handling procedures and sharing of best practices in staff meetings,
 - Access to external resources and seminars on effective communication with families.
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Policy Review and Approval

This policy is reviewed every two years to maintain relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with IB standards and community needs. Review includes:

- Input from IB Coordinators, homeroom teachers, school leadership, and selected staff,
- Feedback from parents through surveys and meetings,
- Analysis of complaint trends and resolution outcomes,
- Consideration of legal or regulatory changes affecting policy,
- Formal approval by the School Principal and Founder.

The current policy version is publicly available on the school website and communicated annually to all parents.

References

1. *International Baccalaureate Organization. Programme Standards and Practices.* Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization (UK), 2020.
2. *International Baccalaureate Organization. Middle Years Programme: From Principles into Practice.* Updated August 2022. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization (UK), 2014.
3. *International Baccalaureate Organization. Language and Learning in IB Programmes.* Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization (UK), 2011.
4. Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
5. Further guidance for developing MYP assessed curriculum. International Baccalaureate Organization (Switzerland), 2015.