



Complaints policy

International School Ikast-Brande

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Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to International School Ikast-Brande (ISIB) about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate procedures, we will use this complaints procedure.

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 *'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. Most issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. International School Ikast-Brande (ISIB) takes concerns seriously, and we will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, the Head of School may agree to refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Head of School may choose to refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, ISIB will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be raised in person, in writing (e.g. by email), or by telephone.

In the first instance, concerns should be raised with the relevant homeroom teacher or subject teacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, as explained below.

Complainants should not approach individual board members (including the Chair of the Board) to raise concerns or complaints. Board members have no power to act on an individual basis, and it may prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head of School) should in the first instance be made to the Head of School via the school office (office@isib.dk). Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Head of School should be addressed to the Chair of the Board, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of the Board, any individual board member, or the board as a whole should be addressed to the Secretary to the Board via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head of School or Chair of the Board, if appropriate, will determine whether such a complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by ISIB, other than complaints that are dealt with under other procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police or local authority, this may affect our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against ISIB in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, ISIB 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 acknowledgement 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
- an apology.

The Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicizing the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

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

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Head of School (unless they are about the Head of School), via the school office. This must be done in writing, preferably on the Complaint Form.

The Head of School will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing. Within this response, the Head of School will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved, and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Head of School can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

During the investigation, the Head of School (or investigator) will, if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. A written record of meetings/interviews may be kept in relation to the investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Head of School will outline the actions taken to investigate the complaint, state the decision made, and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include an outline of actions ISIB will take to resolve the complaint. The Head of School will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Head of School, or a member of the board (including the Chair), a suitably skilled board member will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2: a meeting with members of the board's complaints committee, which will be formed of three available board members. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Secretary, via the school office, within five (5) school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. Requests received outside this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Secretary will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email). The Secretary will subsequently contact the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three board members, if possible with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three board members from ISIB available, the Secretary will source any additional, independent persons in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. (For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.)

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Before the meeting, the Secretary will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least two (2) school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least two (2) school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent

similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will subsequently provide the complainant and ISIB with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing.

The response will outline any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include an outline of actions ISIB will take to resolve the complaint. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Head of School, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):
Address: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, 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 documentation? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

For official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: