



Mar Qardakh International School

Complaints Procedure Policy

Originally developed	February 2014
Previous review	December 2024
Current review	September 2026
Next scheduled review	September 2030

1. Introduction

Mar Qardakh International School (MQIS) has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns and complaints from members of the school community or the general public. With the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the mission of the school, we are committed to handling every complaint with fairness, transparency, inclusion and respectful, restorative dialogue.

2. Purpose and Rationale

It is important that the concerns of students, staff, parents, and members of the wider MQIS community are recognized and resolved in a fair and consistent manner. The purpose of this procedure is to make a genuine effort to ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly, at the earliest opportunity, and in a way that respects everyone involved.

Resolving a complaint well is also an opportunity for the school to improve its practice, to support the wellbeing of our community, and to strengthen our partnership with students, parents, legal guardians and staff.

3. Scope

Who may raise a concern or complaint

- Students
- Parents and legal guardians, on behalf of their child
- Teaching and non teaching staff
- Members of the wider school community and the general public

What a complaint may be about

A complaint may relate to one or more of the following:

- Inter-personal conflicts
- Administrative or procedural conflicts
- Academic programme(s), including the implementation of IB programmes
- Students' wellbeing
- Communication between the school and families
- School operations, environment and safety

Matters covered by other procedures

Some matters have their own procedures and are handled under the relevant policy rather than this one. These include academic misconduct (Academic Integrity Policy), students' behaviour and sanctions (Behaviour Policy), and staff employment matters (Staff Handbook).

4. Definitions

Concern: a worry, question or doubt that can usually be resolved quickly and informally, by speaking with the person concerned or with Programme Coordinator (Step 1 and 2 below).

Complaint: any expression of dissatisfaction where a response or resolution is expected. A concern that has not been resolved informally may become a formal complaint (steps 3 and 4 below).

5. Guiding Principles

MQIS is committed to handling all concerns and complaints:

- Fairly, respectfully and professionally;
- Promptly, at the level closest to the cause of the concern;
- Confidentiality, wherever possible;
- In a students centered and solution focused way;
- In accordance with IB standards and practices and in the school's safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.

Anyone with concern is encouraged to raise it directly with the person involved as soon as possible, so that it can be resolved before it escalates.

6. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Students' safety always comes first

Any complaint involving students safety, safeguarding, child protection, discrimination, harassment, bullying or students' wellbeing will be addressed immediately under the MQIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7. Confidentiality and Fair Treatment

All complaints are treated with discretion. Information is shared only with those directly involved in investigating or resolving the matter. To be fair to everyone, any person named in complaint will be informed of its details and given the opportunity to respond.

Everyone involved is expected to communicate respectfully and professionally throughout the process. No one will experience any disadvantage or retaliation for raising a concern in good faith.

8. Your Rights and Responsibilities

What you can expect from us

- Fair treatment and courtesy
- A timely response
- Accurate advice
- Respect for your privacy. Complaints are handled as confidentially as possible, although we may need to consult other appropriate parties.
- Clear reasons for our decisions.

Where a complaint is found to be justified, we will acknowledge this and take action to address it. If, after investigation there are judged to be grounds for the complaint you will be told so and given the reasons.

What we ask of you

- Raise issues promptly
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information about the issues you raise
- Follow this procedure and engage with it at the appropriate stage

9. How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

Concerns may be raised in person or through the school's official communication channels. The school office receives concerns and complaints in person **Sunday to Thursday, 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.** at the school building.

A formal complaint (step 3) must be made in writing, dated, signed and addressed personally to the Head of School. **A formal appeal (step 4)** must be made in writing to the Governor.

Anonymous complaints are normally investigated, because it is not possible to respond to the complainant or to give those named a fair opportunity to reply. However, the school leadership may review an anonymous complaint at its discretion where student safety, safeguarding or serious misconduct may be involved.

10. The Complaints Procedure

The table below summarizes each step. You may move to the formal stage (Step 3) directly if you feel that it is more appropriate, and safeguarding concerns may be escalated immediately (see section 6).

Step	Who deals with it	How	Timeframe
1	The person concerned	Conversation	As soon as possible after the issue arises
2A	Programme Coordinator	Meeting	Resolved at the meeting where possible; if more time is needed you will be told when to expect a response.
2B	Head of school (complaints about a member of staff)	Meeting	As for Step 2A
3	Head of School	Written complaint	Acknowledgment within two working days; response normally within 5 working days.
4	Governor	Written appeal	Acknowledgment within 5 working days, response normally within 10 working days.
5	International Baccalaureate	Email to complaints@ibo.org	In line with the IB's own procedure

Informal Stage Steps 1-2

Step 1- Speaking with the person concerned

In the first instance a complaint should normally be raised verbally with the person concerned, so that (s)he may have an opportunity to address the issue(s). This approach would not prevent you from choosing to enter the formal process at a later stage, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action. Complaints must be made within the timeframes described in guidelines so that

the administration can promptly investigate and correct any behavior that may be in violation of school.

Step 2.A - Contact the coordinator if your complaint is not resolved

If your complaint remains unresolved following Step 1, you should arrange a meeting with the programme coordinator to discuss the issue(s). In advance of this meeting, you should inform the programme coordinator of the nature of your complaint so that (s)he may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

Step 2.B - Contact the Head of School if your complaint is against a member of staff

If your complaint is against a member staff, you should arrange a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the issue(s). In advance of this meeting, you should inform the Head of School of the nature of your complaint so that (s)he may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

In some circumstances the coordinator or the Head of School may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and (s)he may require some time to investigate and prepare a response. If further time is required, you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

Formal stage steps 3-4

Step 3 – Writing to the Head of School

If a complaint is unresolved through the informal process at step 1 and 2, or you feel that indeed it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures at Step 3. You should write to the Head of School, and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within two working days.

This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

1. Provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
2. State that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 5 working days from the date on which

and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Head of School may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

Step 4 - Writing to the Governor

If you believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner following the completion of steps 1 – 3, or if your complaint concerns the Head of School, you should write to the Governor, including, if applicable, copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 3. The Governor will be responsible for investigating and responding to your complaint. Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue or issues that are of concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 5 working days.

This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

1. Provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
2. State that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 10 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Head of School or the Governor due to the notification that will be given of such meetings. The Head of School may also talk to the parties relevant to the complaint.

Step 5 – Raising the matter to the IB

A student, or parent(s)/legal guardian(s) acting on behalf of her/his student may choose to appeal to the IB¹ at any moment should they be dissatisfied with the action(s) taken by the school to address their complaint, or have a reasonable concern that the school has committed improper actions². Complaints regarding the IB program at MQIS go through the IB programme coordinator and the Head of School and fall within the remit of the school. Also, a student, or parent(s)/legal guardian(s) can directly raise a complaint to IB organization through writing to the email address complaints@ibo.org, introducing themselves by the name and code of the IB World School which they attend or have attended.

¹ IB Complaints procedure, 2018

² IB Whistleblowing policy, 2018

If an IB Educator wishes to file a complaint, (s)he can raise the complaint by contacting complaints@ibo.org and writing her/his personal code and role(s).

11. Record Keeping

The school keeps appropriate records of formal complaints, investigations, actions taken and outcomes. These records are stored securely and handled in line with confidentiality and data protection expectations.

12. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the school leadership team, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to ensure it remains aligned with the mission and vision of MQIS, IB standards and practices, local regulations and best practice in international education.

Approved by:

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda
Mar Qardakh International School Governor

Date: / /

Hala Warda
Head of School

Date: / /