



**British International School
of Timisoara**

We Provide the Foundation on Which Our Children Can Flourish

School Policies

Complaints policy & procedure

Approved by: Head of School

Date: May 2019

Last reviewed by: School Leadership Team

Date: March 2025

Next reviewed by: School Leadership Team

Date: May 2026

Complaints policy

General

British International School of Timisoara is a coeducational private international school offering a British-style education and accepting children aged between 4 and 18.

British International School of Timisoara offers its students a truly international experience through a British-style curriculum and adheres to the guidelines of the Council of British International Schools, Cambridge Assessment International Education and the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Our qualified, internationally experienced and dynamic educators teach all subjects in English, with the exception of the lessons of Romanian, which are being taught by qualified and engaging local teachers.

Our Vision

*We provide the Foundation on which our Children can Flourish
Inspiring our students to Learn and Live with Purpose*

Our Mission

Building a community of learners where students are given meaningful opportunities to learn, experience, grow, succeed and excel in all areas of their academic and personal development

Our Core Values

*We Think, We Explore and We Learn
We Listen, We Respect and We Care
We Speak Up, We Participate and We Strive*

At BIST we want to ensure that all members of our community understand and adhere to our school ethos and values. Rules and regulations will be in place to protect all members of the community and to give everyone equal opportunities for development and progress.

Introduction

At BIST we believe that parent feedback is important. For this reason, we encourage our parents to raise their concerns directly with the appropriate teacher, or a member of the School Leadership Team, if required. We will always take concerns raised seriously, carry out a thorough investigation if needed, and reply to the parent or parents raising the concern within an acceptable period of time.

Parents should raise concerns or complaints with members of staff either in person, or in writing by email. We advise that for all email correspondence relating to concerns raised that the relevant Head of School is in cc. All concerns raised will be logged in the Complaint Register for future reference.

We ask that any concerns raised, or complaints made relate directly to a child of the parent making the complaint and should be about matters relating to health and safety, student support and academic progress or staff professionalism.

Distribution

This policy shall be available online, on the School's website; it shall be made available in print upon request to any parent or pupil requesting it. This policy is meant for the use of the School's parents and pupils, and may not be used by a third party or by a member of staff in relation to BIST.

Stages of resolution

It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

- In the first instance, any issue or complaint should be raised directly with the class/subject teacher, form teacher or the relevant Head of School (Informal Complaint);
- If he / she cannot resolve the matter, the complaint will be brought to the attention of the School Director (Formal Complaint);

*BIST is committed to child protection and safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all students.
We expect staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and the students to share this commitment.*

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- If the problem is still not resolved, it should be brought to the attention of the School Board (Chair of the School Board) who will consider the panel, if and when necessary (Stage 3);
- Complaints regarding the Head of Primary/Secondary should be directed to School Director;
- Complaints regarding the School Director should be directed to the Chair of School Board;

Tracks of complaint and responsibilities

It is important to develop good communication protocols, in order, to solve any issues in a timely and efficient manner.

- Matters pertaining to teaching, class activity, pastoral care, should be brought to the attention of the teaching staff;
- Matters related to teaching staff, should be brought to the attention of the relevant Head of School if not solved in the first instance with the respective member of staff;
- Matters related to Head of Primary/Secondary, should be brought to the School Director;
- Matters pertaining to administrative matters may be brought to the attention of the Office manager or School Director;
- Matters related to School Director, should be brought to the attention of Chair of School Board;
- Matters related to Safeguarding will be brought to the attention of the School Director or DSL;

Means of filing a complaint

Complaints may be presented informally, in a first instance, to teachers and/or administrative staff, if they do not concern the health and safety of the child. Simple expressions of concern will not be recorded, and teachers or administrative staff will try to solve the situation, to the best of their abilities and without a reasonable delay.

Situations of higher concern should be communicated in writing. Parents and pupils wishing to file a formal written complaint should address it to the relevant Head of School (PS/SS) and/or the School Director.

Time required

While we acknowledge that complaints need to be taken seriously and acted upon in a timely manner, it is also important that haste does not compromise the resolution of the situation. The receipt of the communication will be acknowledged within 1 working day and shall contain an estimate when parents should be expecting a solution to their complaint.

In situations where facts, causes and effects are not clear, the school will take up to three working days before responding to the parents' or pupil's complaint.

Registry of Complaints

All formally lodged complaints shall be kept in the School's records in original and copy. A registry of complaints shall be maintained by administrative staff, where the issues, date, solution and people involved will be recorded.

Resolution of complaints

In order to clarify a solution and / or find adequate means of solving the situation, a formal discussion may be required between the parents/students and the relevant Head of School (PS/SS) and/or the School Director. It will always be sought to find a positive solution for all sides that does not harm the interests of any of those involved.

More serious complaints against other pupils will be dealt with in the school by the relevant Head of School and all involved (students and members of staff that can offer support).

The solutions found, reasons, and decisions made regarding complaints shall be communicated in writing, by email or letter, to all concerned parties within one week of the decision having been reached. The outcome letter shall be written by the relevant Head of School.

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Stage 1 – Informal Compliant

An informal complaint may be raised with the Class Teacher (Primary School), Form Tutor, Subject Teacher (Secondary School), or any member of the Management Team. In the case of a complaint being sent via email to a staff member (other than a member of the Management Team), the parent must ensure that the relevant Head of School is included in the "CC" field of the email.

Additionally, in accordance with our school policy, any concern raised by a parent with a staff member (other than a member of the Management Team) will be discussed between the relevant staff member and the appropriate Head of School before a response to the complaint is formulated.

At BIST, we take informal complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter promptly. In some cases, the provision or clarification of information may be sufficient to resolve the issue.

BIST will acknowledge informal complaints within one school day, investigate, and provide a response within three school days. A written record of the complaint will be maintained, including the date received and the actions taken, where appropriate.

In the case of concerns or complaints raised by phone or email to the school office, the office personnel will direct the parent to the relevant staff member or member of the Management Team, based on the nature of the complaint, within one school day.

Possible outcomes (response to informal complaints), depending on the results of the investigation:

- An initial acknowledgment email will be sent to the parent making the complaint within one working day to confirm receipt and that the matter is being looked into.
- Feedback will be provided to the relevant parties within three school days. The relevant Head of School will be kept informed.
- If necessary, an opportunity to meet with the relevant parent to discuss the issue of concern will be offered.

If the parent is not satisfied with the response (whether via email or the outcome of a meeting) and wishes to pursue the matter further, they may escalate the issue to a formal complaint (Stage 2).

Stage 2 – Formal Compliant

A **Formal Complaint** refers to a complaint that is directed to the School Director, or one that arises as a result of an unsatisfactory outcome from an Informal Complaint.

The School Director should acknowledge the complaint in writing within one working day. In some cases, the School Director may have already been involved in reviewing the matter; in other cases, this will be their first involvement.

The School Director (or another person appointed by the School Director for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. In most cases, the School Director (or the designated investigator) will meet or speak with the parent to discuss the matter and, if possible, attempt to reach a resolution at this stage.

The written conclusion of the investigation will be sent to the parent within ten school days. A written record of the complaint, including the date received and the actions taken, will be maintained where appropriate.

If the parent is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should notify the President of the School Board in writing within twenty school days.

If the parent does not respond to the School Director or does not wish to escalate the matter to the next stage within 20 school days after the outcome of the investigation has been sent to them, the matter will be considered closed.

A written record of all stages of the complaint process, as considered by the School Leadership Team and the School Board, will be maintained in the Parent Complaint Register.

Complaints policy

Stage 3 – Complaint raised with the School Board (and the panel)

If your concern has been raised with the School Director and you feel that the resolution was not satisfactory, please contact the Chair of the School Board.

- The Chair should acknowledge your complaint in writing within two working days.
- The Chair should offer an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the complaint.
- If the complaint is against a member of staff (including the School Director), the Chair should speak with the staff member against whom the complaint has been made.
- If necessary, the Chair should interview relevant parties and keep accurate records.
- The Chair of the School Board will decide on whether or not a panel is required at this stage.
- A response will be sent in writing or communicated during a meeting within ten working days.
- The Chair will ask the School Director to update the Parent Complaint Register with the outcome and any relevant details.

It is hoped that parents will feel satisfied with the resolution offered by the Chair of the School Board, or at least have a clearer understanding of the situation, knowing that their concerns have been heard and that the school is working toward addressing the issues identified. However, should they wish to pursue the matter further, they may do so within seven working days from receiving the outcome letter. They can contact the Chair of the School Board in writing to request a panel hearing.

The Panel

The panel may be appointed by the Chair of the School Board as a result of the initial complaint (Stage 3) or as a final stage (part of Stage 3) if the outcome of the complaint to the Chair of the School Board is not deemed satisfactory by the parent(s) who made the complaint.

The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of the School Board and must consist of at least three individuals who were not directly involved in the matters outlined in the complaint. At least one panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel cannot be composed solely of Board members, as they are not independent of the school's management and operations.

If possible, the panel will aim to resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. If additional investigation is required, the panel will determine how it should be conducted. After due consideration, the panel will reach a decision and make recommendations within five working days of the hearing. The panel will have access to the existing records of the complaint's progress. The parent must be given reasonable notice of the date for the review panel. The School Board will aim to schedule a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible. If the parent rejects the offer of three proposed dates without good reason, the Board will set a date. The hearing will proceed using written submissions from both parties.

Parents may be accompanied by a translator at the hearing. The presence of any other individuals, apart from the parents, must be disclosed to the panel in advance by the parents.

The panel's findings and recommendations will be provided in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person the complaint was made against. Copies will also be shared with the School Director and the Chair of the School Board.

At the panel meeting

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are generally not permitted unless required due to a parent's disability or special needs. Prior knowledge and consent from all parties attending will be sought before any meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in the minutes.

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and appropriate representatives from the school will be present. Each party will have the opportunity to present written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

The parent must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied if they wish. Legal representation is typically not appropriate, and representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

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During the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to make statements and present evidence, and witnesses will be called, as necessary, to provide testimony.

The panel, the parent, and the school representative(s) will be given the opportunity to ask and respond to questions.

Once the parent and school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave, and the evidence will then be considered by the panel.

The panel will compile its findings and recommendations based on the case. Copies of the minutes from the hearing, as well as the findings and recommendations, will be provided to the parent and, where relevant, to the individual who is the subject of the complaint. A copy will also be made available for inspection by the Chair of the School Board and the School Director.

The outcome

The panel may:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Determine the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where applicable, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 5 school days.

The outcome of this final stage in the complaint procedure will be considered the final decision and will represent the conclusion of the entire process.

Confidentiality

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and restricted to the School Director and those directly involved, except where any other legal obligation prevails.

Abuse of the Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure is not meant to arrest the functioning of the school. For very serious and urgent concerns that fall under the scope of the Children Health and Safety Policy or the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, complaints shall be treated as threats to the safety of the child and immediate measures shall be taken to address the situation.

For all other concerns and issues, the Complaints procedure can be used.

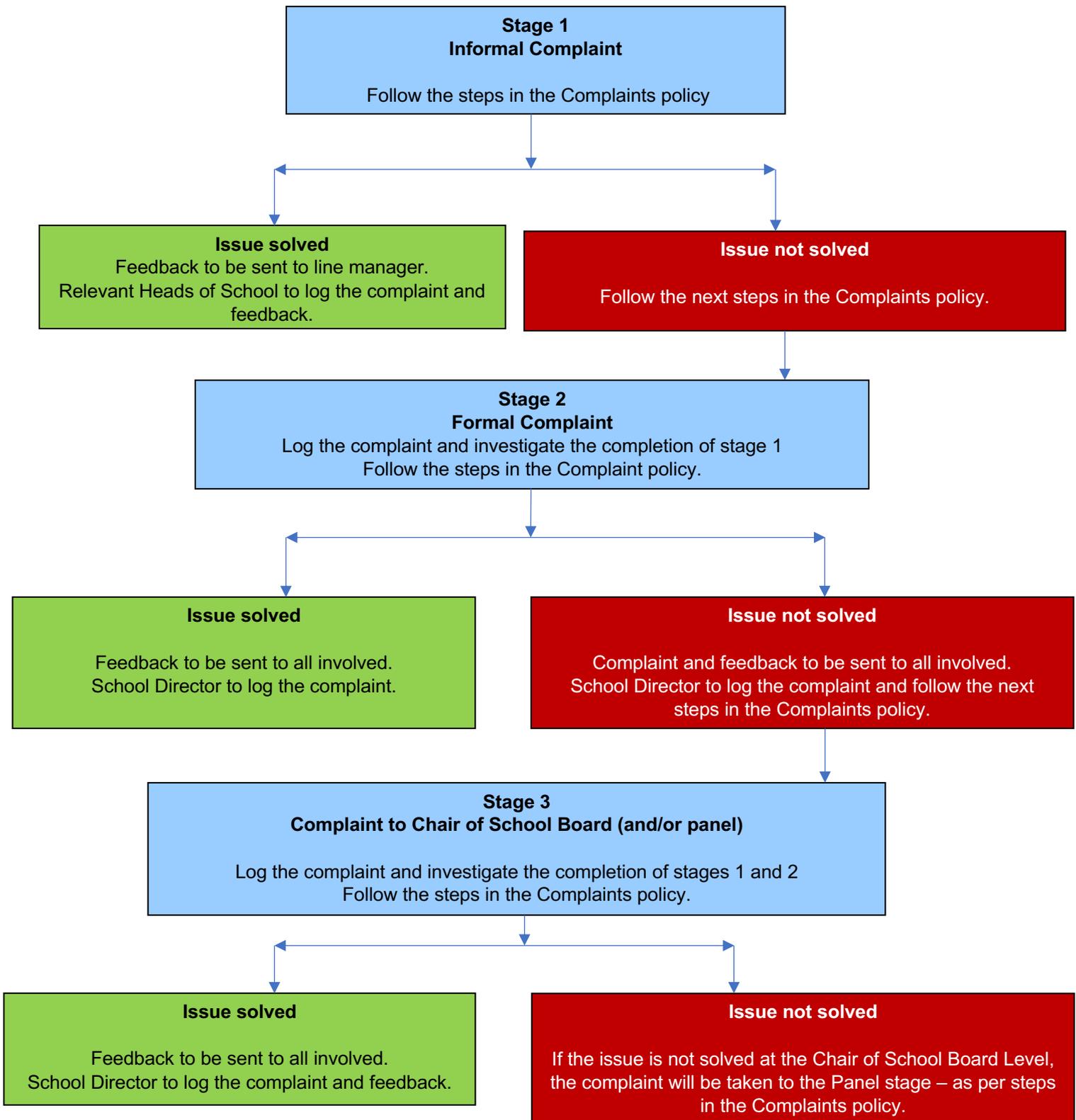
Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed on annual basis by the School Leadership team and School Board.

Complaints policy

Appendix 1

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



Final outcome – from Chair of School Board or panel, represents the end of the process.