



Parent or legal guardian and student complaints procedures

General Principles of Communication

The school community of Gymnasium Birkenfeld is committed to harmonious and constructive communication. Problems and conflicts which do not require immediate interaction are always initially addressed by those involved. Common solutions for concerns and issues are sought by the parties involved in a direct and open dialogue characterized by active listening, empathy and confidentiality. If further advice is necessary, support is provided by classmates, elected class representatives, mentors trained in conflict resolution, class teachers or heads of year, coordinators, liaison teachers, guidance counselors, parents and parents' representatives. Confidential meetings are also possible once a year during the parents' day. Communication via email, online and face-to-face communication between all members of the school community is expected to be respectful and prompt. Written communication is generally either answered within a week or the receipt is confirmed if further consultation or action is required. If clarification cannot be brought about or an issue or conflict cannot be resolved, the school principal can be consulted for further advice. If a formal written complaint is made, the principal will initiate an investigation which may require a hearing and the consultation or involvement of further members of the school community relevant to the issue. On receiving the school's decision, complainants have the option of appealing to the school authority in all matters concerning the National Programme.

The IB coordinator informs parents or legal guardians and students about the complaints procedures within the IB Diploma Programme during the first informative meetings concerning the IB Diploma Programme and students again during the annual "IB Days". This document is made available on the school's website alongside the general information about the IB Diploma Programme (Internationales Abitur).

Procedures within the IB Diploma Programme

The central point of contact for parents, guardians and their children regarding all issues concerning the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is the IB Coordinator. The heads of year and the coordinator for the Upper School Years are to be involved in all matters pertaining to the students' school career. Furthermore, the subject teachers are available for all matters concerning individual subjects. If possible, applications or appeals are prepared through joint discussions with all parties involved. For minors, the signature of a legal guardian is required for all appeals.

Appeals against decisions of the IB Organization

Enquiry upon results

The IB organization allows a one-time review of external assessment components after the issue of results which may result in a grade being lowered or raised. The fee incurred for this service is only refundable if a grade is changed. In addition, a corresponding report of the review may be requested if there is justification that describes in what specific way the marking is contested. An additional fee is incurred for this service which is not refundable. Furthermore, it is possible to request the return of material of external assessment components. However, this material may only show the marks allocated and not necessarily the examiner's comments. A request for the remoderation of internal assessment components is only possible under certain conditions. This service may lead to higher, but not to lower grades. The fee for this service is not refundable. Within two months of the issue of results an enquiry upon results can be requested by the school on behalf of the candidates. Before requesting one of the services the DP coordinator will give advice and share information about the fees involved. If a service is requested which may lead to a lower grade, the written consent of both the candidate and the parents or legal guardians is required.

Diploma Programme: Assessment appeals procedure¹

The IB Organization accepts appeals to re-evaluate a decision affecting a candidate for the Diploma Programme.

Appeals are possible against:

1. results—when a school has reason to believe that a candidate's result(s) are inaccurate after all appropriate enquiry upon results procedures have been completed
2. a decision upholding academic misconduct, but not the penalties imposed for misconduct
3. a decision in respect of adverse circumstances
4. a decision in respect of inclusive assessment arrangements after all appropriate procedures have been completed
5. an administrative decision not covered by one or more of the foregoing circumstances that affects the results of one or more candidates.

¹ General regulations: Diploma Programme <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/become-an-ib-school/pdfs/generalregulations-diploma-programme-en.pdf> "Diploma Programme: Assessment appeals procedure" for use from Sep. 2016

Permission to appeal will be granted where:

1. the procedures defined in the general regulations, and which led to the decision being appealed, were not followed
 2. the candidate found in breach of the general regulations is able to present new evidence.
- The appeals process is divided into two stages.

Each stage will usually require the payment of a fee. The fee will be refunded if the appeal is successful. A stage 1 appeal can only be requested by the head of school or by the Diploma Programme coordinator from the school at which the candidate (known as the appellant) was registered. This appeal stage consists in a review of the case by senior assessment officers of the IB. A stage 2 appeal can be requested directly by a candidate and/or his or her legal guardian/representative in addition to the head of school and Diploma Programme coordinator if the outcome of a stage 1 appeal is not satisfactory. This stage of appeal grants the candidate a formal hearing by a constituted panel with one member independent from the IB.

A request for appeal at either stage must be submitted with a completed appeal request form that can be obtained from the IB via the IB Answers service.

For any queries, the IB should be contacted at appeals@ibo.org.

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