



Deerfield Beach High School Complaints Procedures for IB Students & Parents

Revised December 2023

Purpose & Scope

As an IB world school, Deerfield Beach High School regularly updates students, and parents about both of the IB programs offered at the school. This involves published program material, email communications, information on the school's website and annual parent meetings on the nature and curriculum of the MYP and DP programs and assessment practices. In the event that changes in structure or offering to either of the programs is planned, Deerfield Beach High School is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders are consulted, informed and actively participate in the decision-making process.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Deerfield Beach High School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure document. We take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

This document outlines procedures arising specifically in relation to complaints and students' requests for appeals against IB program decisions taken by the school. These procedures do not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal already in place.

Concerns vs Complaints

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, by contacting the IB coordinator, IB school counselor, IB assistant principal, or the principal (head of school) without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure outlined below.

Clarifying Definitions

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 **formal complaint** may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

An **appeal** may be defined as 'a request for the review of a decision or action taken'.

Procedure to Address Concerns

Anyone with a concern is encouraged to discuss the matter with the person or people involved as soon as possible to prevent issues from escalating.

- A concern related to subject teaching such as IB content or assessment, should be firstly discussed with the class teacher.
- A concern with course placement or admittance to/status in either the MYP or DP programs should be discussed with the IB coordinator and IB school counselor.
- A concern with courses or subjects offered by the school, scheduling or hours of teaching should be discussed with the IB coordinator and/or IB assistant principal.
- A concern related to either one of the IB programs overall should be discussed with the IB coordinator, IB assistant principal, and/or the principal, as head of school.

If the matter is not resolved in a manner that fully addresses your concern, you may wish to take the matter further by following the procedures for making a formal complaint.

Procedure for a Formal Complaint

In some cases, such as when your concern cannot be resolved, you may wish to make a formal complaint. The following procedure must be followed.

1. Write down your complaint related to the IB program decision made by the school, giving details of the issue, including details of efforts that have been made to resolve the matter. Include your name and contact phone number.
2. Address your written complaint to the IB assistant principal. Ask for assistance at the school office if you are unsure how to go about delivering your complaint.
3. Complaints will be acknowledged immediately upon receipt or, if that is not possible, within 48 hours, giving assurance to the complainant that the issue will be investigated.
4. When a formal written complaint is received the IB assistant principal will discuss the matter with you before deciding what further action should be taken. You may have a support person with you when you discuss the complaint, if you wish. This meeting will be documented.
5. Your complaint will generally be treated in confidence and investigated. However, in the interests of resolving the complaint, other personnel such as program coordinators, school counselors, or heads of department may be involved.
6. The IB assistant principal or the school principal will decide what steps will be taken as a result of the investigation including communicating with the IB for further clarification and will ensure that a record of the process is kept.
7. You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation after sufficient time has elapsed for investigations to take place.

8. The IB assistant principal or school principal will determine a remedy or resolution for the complaint within 5 days from receipt. If additional time is required, you will be informed and provided with an estimated resolution date.

9. The IB assistant principal or principal will communicate the resolution to you.

Procedure for Appeals

If the resolution for the formal complaint is not satisfactory, the following steps may be taken:

1. An additional written statement must be presented to the principal within five (5) school days after the last conference. The statement must explain with as much detail as possible the reason why the resolution is believed to be unsatisfactory and how the parent/student would like the problem resolved. A copy of the statement should be filed and maintained as an educational record. The principal or the administrator with the most knowledge of the case has 5 school days to respond in writing.

2. If the problem still has not been resolved within five (5) school days from receipt of the school's written response, the parent/student may request in writing, an appointment with the Director/Designee of the Office of Service Quality at Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). The letter asking for the appointment must include a copy of the formal complaint along with the additional written statement and the school's resolution/responses. BCPS district personnel, in accordance with School Board policy, will provide final resolution on the matter.

DP World Exam Appeals

IB MYP Students' appeals are generally associated with assessments and subject grades. The MYP requires all subject teachers to use standardization of assessment that ensures fair and transparent grading processes, hence scope for appealing MYP grades is limited.

IB DP summative assessments may carry the potential for a retake in cases where a student wishes to appeal the results. The opportunity for retakes is at the discretion of the teacher and/or DP coordinator. This decision will be determined after a conference with the IB coordinator, school counselor, parent, and student.

For appeals on formal DP examination results (those assessed externally by the IB) The IB Organization accepts appeals in relation to four areas of decision-making during an examination session. Appeals are possible against:

- 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. This is the most common appeal, known as an 'Enquiry Upon Results (EUR)'
- a decision upholding academic misconduct, but not against the severity of a penalty
- a decision in respect of special consideration—following a decision not to give special consideration to a candidate as a consequence of alleged adverse circumstances
- an administrative decision not covered by one or more of the foregoing circumstances that affects the results of one or more candidates.

Appeals Process

The appeals process is divided into two stages. Each stage requires the payment of a fee by the candidate or their legal guardian(s). The fee applicable to the relevant stage of appeal will be refunded in the event that the appeal at that stage is upheld (i.e. the appeal is successful).

- A **stage one appeal** can only be requested by the Head of School or by the DP Coordinator from the school at which the candidate, known as the appellant during the appeals process, was registered for the examination session.
- A **stage two appeal** can be requested directly by a candidate or their legal guardian(s) in addition to the Head of School and DP Coordinator if the outcome of a stage one appeal is not satisfactory. A request for appeal at either stage must be submitted with a completed appeal request form that can be obtained from the IB Organization via the IB Answers service.

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents and students lodging a concern, complaint, or appeal with Deerfield Beach High School can expect to:

- be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration
- have their complaint dealt with in an efficient and timely manner
- have personal information treated as confidential
- have their complaint considered impartially and in accordance with due process

In return, Deerfield Beach High School requests that parents and students making a complaint will:

- treat all parties with respect and courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- ask for assistance or further information as needed
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

Policy Distribution & Review

All Deerfield Beach High School IB policies are posted on the Deerfield Beach High School website, available for download in easy printing format.

All policies and procedures are reviewed annually and are subject to change. This procedure was reviewed in December 2023.

References and Resources

Broward County Public Schools, Code of Conduct – Right to Appeal Process (2019-2022)

International Baccalaureate Organization, General Regulations MYP (En)

International School Dhaka, Complaints Procedure on Academic/IB Programme Decisions (2020)

Karapiro School, Complaints Policy and Procedures (n.d.)

Mt Pleasant Primary School, Parent Complaint Policy and Procedures: Issue 1 (2012)

New Renaissance Middle School, New Renaissance Middle School Complaint Procedure (2023)

Deerfield Beach Middle School, Deerfield Beach Middle School Complaint Procedure (2023)