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LYCEUM

"Shirakatsy Lyceum" International Scientific-Educational Complex

COMPLEX PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN AND STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

ROUND SQUARE

WE ARE A CIS INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED SCHOOL

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1. Philosophy and Objectives

At Shirakatsy Lyceum, we are committed to fostering a culture of respectful and transparent communication with all stakeholders. Our aim is to build strong partnerships with parents, guardians, and students by providing a clear and supportive process for addressing concerns. All staff members uphold open dialogue, driven by a shared desire to continuously improve the quality of education and the school environment.

This policy outlines how to raise and resolve complaints related to academic honesty, instructional resources, teaching methods, discipline, school logistics or decisions connected to the Lyceum, the International Baccalaureate Programmes (PYP, MYP, DP, AP (High School Authorial Programme)), and other institutional policies.

2. Definitions

To ensure shared understanding and consistent application of the policy, the following terms are defined:

2.1. **Complaint** – An expression of dissatisfaction regarding a decision, action, behavior, or process that affects a member of the school community. A complaint may relate to academic, behavioral, procedural, or interpersonal matters and can be submitted either informally or formally.

2.2. **Informal complaint** -a concern, question, or misunderstanding that arises in everyday interactions—such as a miscommunication, classroom issue, or scheduling conflict—which is typically resolved through respectful dialogue without the need for written documentation or escalation.

2.3. **Formal complaint** – a written and structured expression of dissatisfaction about a matter that could not be resolved informally. Formal complaints follow a designated multi-level procedure and may require meetings, investigation, and written decisions or appeals.

2.4. **Safeguarding-Related Complaints** -a complaint involving the safety, well-being, or protection of a student, including issues such as bullying, harassment, abuse, neglect, or discrimination. These concerns must be reported directly to the Child Protection Officer

(CPO) and follow a separate, urgent protocol based on the school's Child Protection Policy and applicable legal requirements.

2.5. **Concern** – An informal expression of worry or dissatisfaction that may or may not escalate into a formal complaint if not resolved.

2.6. **Appeal** – A request for a review of a formal decision made in response to a complaint, typically addressed at Level 3.

2.7. **Complainant** – A person (student, parent, or staff member) who raises a concern or files a formal complaint.

2.8. **Resolution** – The agreed outcome or action taken to address the issue raised in the complaint.

2.9. **School Psychologist** - A qualified specialist who supports students' emotional and psychological well-being. The psychologist offers a confidential space for concerns and may help resolve complaints informally or refer them to appropriate staff when needed.

2.10. **Homeroom Teacher (PYP)** –A designated staff member who supports informal resolution of concerns for students and parents in the Primary Years Programme and serves as the initial point of contact for Level 1 complaints in the PYP section.

2.11. **Group Counselor (MYP)** – A designated staff member responsible for student well-being in the Middle Years Programme. The counselor supports students and parents in resolving concerns at Level 1.

2.12. **Student Leader (DP/AP)**– A designated staff member responsible for student well-being in the Diploma Programme (DP) or Authorial Programme (AP). The Student Leader supports students and parents in resolving concerns at Level 1.

2.13. **Programme Coordinator** – A school leader responsible for overseeing the implementation and compliance of a specific educational programme (e.g., PYP, MYP, DP, AP), and for resolving complaints related to that programme's requirements and academic processes.

2.14. **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** – A designated staff member responsible for application of the Child Protection Policy and children safeguarding, namely School Principals.

2.15. **School Principal** – The educational leader responsible for academic operations and resolving formal complaints at Level 2.

2.16. **Director General (Head of School)**. – The senior executive of Shirakatsy Lyceum, responsible for final appeals (Level 3) and ensuring compliance with school policy.

3. Student Voice and Participation

Shirakatsy Lyceum recognizes students as active stakeholders in the school community and upholds their right to express concerns, ask questions, and seek support when facing challenges related to their learning environment.

3.1. All students have the right to submit concerns or complaints independently, without the need for parental or staff mediation, unless they choose otherwise.

3.2. Complaint procedures are designed to be developmentally appropriate, ensuring that students across all programmes (PYP, MYP, DP, AP) can access support in ways suitable to their age and maturity.

3.3. Students in the PYP may seek guidance through a Homeroom Teacher; MYP students may approach a Group Counselor; while DP and AP students are encouraged to speak directly with a Student Leader or trusted faculty member.

3.4. The school commits to treating all student-submitted concerns with seriousness, respect, and confidentiality, fostering a safe and inclusive environment where students feel heard.

4. Submission Methods and Accessibility

Shirakatsy Lyceum provides multiple accessible channels for submitting complaints to ensure fairness, inclusion, and convenience for all members of the school community.

4.1. Complaints may be submitted in written form, either by:

4.1.1. Email to the relevant staff member or programme coordinator

4.1.2. Printed submission using the formal complaint template (Appendix B)

4.1.3. An anonymous complaint box (physical or digital) available for individuals who prefer to share concerns confidentially without disclosing identity.

4.1.4. Where necessary, students and families may request verbal submission, supported by a staff member who records the concern in writing on their behalf.

These varied pathways ensure that language barriers, technological limitations, or concerns over confidentiality do not prevent stakeholders from raising their voices.

5. Informal vs. Formal Complaints

Shirakatsy Lyceum encourages open and respectful dialogue as the foundation of its school culture. Not all concerns require formal action; in many cases, issues can be resolved effectively through informal conversations.

5.1. Informal Complaints

5.1.1. An **informal complaint** is a concern or misunderstanding that may arise in daily interactions—such as a perceived miscommunication, a classroom incident, or a logistical issue—and can typically be resolved quickly through direct discussion with the appropriate staff member. These are handled **without the need for written documentation.** However, the informal complaints are included in the Level 1 Contact Person written reports.

5.1.2. Most informal issues are resolved at the **point of origin**, such as with a Psychologist, Homeroom Teacher (PYP), Counselor (MYP), or Student Leader (DP/AP).

5.2. Formal Complaints

A **formal complaint** is a written statement of dissatisfaction regarding an issue that:

5.2.1. Remains **unresolved after informal attempts**,

5.2.2. Involves more serious allegations (e.g., academic integrity, discrimination, or discipline), or

5.2.3. Requires documentation, intervention by leadership, or investigation.

5.2.4. Formal complaints must follow the structured three-level procedure outlined in this policy and may lead to written decisions, meetings, or appeals.

6. Complaints Procedures

6.1. Level 1: Resolution with Homeroom Teacher/Group Counselor or Student Leader

6.1.1. The parent/guardian/student (hereafter 'the complainant') must initially contact the relevant Senior Teacher/Group Counselor or Student Leader via email or telephone.

6.1.2. The concern should be clearly described, including:

- The situation causing the complaint,
- The impact of the issue,
- Suggested resolutions.

6.1.3. **Homeroom Teacher**, Counselor or Student leader responds (orally or in writing) within 24 working hours (excluding weekends and public holidays).

6.1.4. The school psychologist may serve as a **first point of contact** for students or families experiencing emotional or interpersonal concerns. The psychologist provides a **confidential and supportive environment**, helps clarify the issue, and may guide informal resolution or refer the matter to relevant staff if necessary.

6.1.5. If unresolved, a formal meeting is arranged as soon as possible to explore solutions collaboratively.

6.2. Level 2: Formal Complaint to the School Principal

6.2.1. If unresolved at Level 1, the complainant escalates the matter to the School Principal and/or Programme Coordinator by submitting a written complaint via email within 5 working days.

6.2.2. The complaint must include a brief summary of the issue and actions taken at Level 1

6.2.3. The School Principal and/or Programme Coordinator organizes a phone call or meeting to explore the issue collaboratively.

6.2.4. A formal written decision are provided within 5 working days after the meeting.

6.2.5. In complex or sensitive cases, Shirakatsy Lyceum may appoint a **neutral staff member or mediator** to support dialogue and facilitate resolution between the parties involved. This ensures fairness, reduces conflict, and encourages a constructive outcome.

6.3. Level 3: Appeal to Director General (Head of School).

6.3.1. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Level 2 resolution, they may file a written appeal to the Head of School/General Director or their appointed delegate.

6.3.2. Within 5 working days of receiving the appeal, the Head of School (or delegate) investigates the complaint by any means deemed necessary including relevant staff meeting, meeting or phone call with the complainant etc.

6.3.3. A follow-up meeting may be organized if needed.

6.3.4. The final decision is issued by the Head of School/General Director or their appointed delegate and is formally communicated to the complainant within 5 working days.

6.3.5. This decision is binding and not subject to further appeal.

6.4. Right to Direct Appeal to the Director General

In accordance with the school-parent contract, **parents or legal guardians hold both the right and responsibility** to escalate serious or unresolved concerns directly to the **Director General (Head of School)**. This may occur if earlier resolution stages have not addressed the issue adequately, or if the concern requires immediate attention of the Director General.

7. Safeguarding-Related Complaints

Shirakatsy Lyceum treats all safeguarding concerns with the **highest priority and urgency**. Complaints involving:

- **Bullying or harassment**
- **Discrimination or exclusion**
- **Abuse or neglect**
- **Threats to physical or emotional safety**

follow a separate and expedited process outside the standard complaint levels.

7.1. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:

7.1.1. Concerns must be directed immediately to the school's **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** in person, via email, or through a trusted staff member.

7.1.2. Reports may be submitted by students, staff, or parents and may be made confidentially or anonymously if preferred.

7.1.3. The **CPO** responds within 24 hours and initiates follow-up procedures in accordance with:

- The school's Child Protection Policy
- Applicable national child protection laws
- CIS safeguarding guidelines and international standards

7.2. Handling and Escalation:

7.2.1. All safeguarding complaints are handled in collaboration with the Head of School, legal guardians (when appropriate), and external authorities if required by law.

7.2.2. The confidentiality and dignity of all individuals involved will be strictly protected.

7.2.3. In case of emergency or criminal concern, the school may contact local authorities without delay.

8. Escalation to External Bodies

Shirakatsy Lyceum encourages all complaints to be resolved internally through the procedures outlined in this policy. However, if a complainant has exhausted all levels of the school's internal process and remains dissatisfied—particularly in matters concerning **academic integrity**, **inclusion**, **safeguarding**, or **ethical conduct**—complaintants have the right to escalate the concern to external organizations.

8.1. For IB Programme-Related Complaints:

Complainants may contact the International Baccalaureate Organization through **IB Answers** if the issue involves the administration of an IB programme or a breach of IB rules.

- IB Complaints Process – Contact IB Answers

8.2. For Accreditation and Safeguarding Concerns:

If the complaint pertains to violations related to a systematic breach of the code of ethics or standards/guiding principles for membership to CIS the matter may be escalated to the **Council of International Schools (CIS)** via its official channels.

- CIS Contact – Concerns & Reporting

Escalation should occur only after all internal school procedures have been completed.

9. Monitoring/Review/Training

9.1. The **School Principals**, in collaboration with the **Head of School** and the **Programme Coordinators**, is responsible for reviewing this policy **annually** to ensure its relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with evolving school, community needs, IB and CIS standards.

9.2. Feedback from parents, students, and staff will be considered as part of the revision process.

9.3. Adjustments to this document are made with input from stakeholders, to support continuous improvement.

9.4. An annual feedback survey will be distributed to evaluate the clarity, accessibility, and responsiveness of the complaints process. The results will be reviewed by the leadership team.

9.5. Shirakatsy Lyceum provides annual training for staff on complaint procedures and ensures that students and parents are oriented each year on their rights and the steps for raising concerns.

10. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Shirakatsy Lyceum is committed to handling all complaints with **utmost confidentiality**, professionalism, and respect for the dignity of those involved.

10.1. Information related to complaints is shared only with those directly responsible for investigating or resolving the issue.

10.2. All complaint records, including written submissions, meeting notes, and resolutions, are securely stored in digital or physical formats accessible only to authorized personnel.

10.3. Complaint records are retained for a minimum of three years in accordance with international best practices and are protected in compliance with data protection and privacy standards.

10.4. Aggregated, anonymized data from complaints may be used to identify trends, inform school improvement, and support the annual review of the complaints policy.

10.5. Any complaints involving child protection or safeguarding are documented and retained in line with the school's Child Protection Policy and local legal requirements.

10.6. No student, parent, or staff member shall face retaliation for raising a concern in good faith. Acts of discrimination, intimidation, or disciplinary pressure related to complaint participation are strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate action by school leadership.

11. Approval and Implementation

11.1. This policy comes into effect following formal approval by the Head of School/General Director.

11.2. All members of the Shirakatsy Lyceum community will be informed through official communication channels (email, school portal, etc.).

12. Policy Accessibility and Language Support

12.1. To ensure inclusivity and clear communication, this policy is available in Armenian (the school's primary working language) and English.

12.2. Upon request, alternative formats are provided to accommodate individual accessibility needs.

12.3. Updates to this policy are communicated through the school portal, email bulletins, and during annual orientation sessions for students, parents, and staff. This ensures transparency and keeps all stakeholders informed of their rights and responsibilities.

13. Sources Used

Council of International Schools. *CIS International Accreditation Framework.* CIS, 2021.

Department for Education (UK). *Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures.* GOV.UK, 2019.

International Baccalaureate Organization. *Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Programme.* IBO, 2022.

International Baccalaureate Organization. *Programme Standards and Practices.* IBO, 2020.

International Baccalaureate Organization. *Rules for IB World Schools: Diploma Programme.* IBO, 2022.

Sources of Support note

The review committee acknowledges the use of AI-assisted tools (e.g., ChatGPT by OpenAI) during the review process, specifically to support language refinement and clarity. All substantive content and decisions were determined by the school's policy team.

14. Appendix A: Annual Complaints Policy Feedback Survey

The feedback survey includes questions evaluating:

- Ease of understanding the policy
- Accessibility of staff in Level 1 support
- Timeliness of responses at all levels
- Satisfaction with final decisions
- Suggestions for improvement

Survey results are collected annually and analyzed by the school leadership team to inform the policy review process.

15. Appendix B: Formal Complaint Submission Template

Shirakatsy Lyceum International Scientific-Educational Complex

This form should be completed when a concern or issue has not been resolved informally (Level 1) and the complainant wishes to proceed with a formal complaint. It may be submitted in hard copy or electronically to the School Principal or IB Coordinator.

1. Complainant Information

- **Full Name:** _____
- **Relationship to Student:** ☐ Parent / Guardian ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other: _____
- **Phone Number:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____
- **Date of Submission:** _____

2. Subject of Complaint

- **Involved Person(s):** _____
- **Level of Complaint:**
  ☐ Level 2 – To Principal and/or IB Coordinator
  ☐ Level 3 – Appeal to Head of School
- **Programme (if applicable):**
  ☐ PYP ☐ MYP ☐ DP ☐ AP Other: _____
- **Complaint Type:**
  ☐ Teaching and Learning
  ☐ Academic Honesty
  ☐ Disciplinary Action
  ☐ Staff Conduct
  ☐ Inclusion/Access
  ☐ Assessment/Grading
  ☐ Safeguarding (will be redirected to CPO)
  ☐ Other: _____

3. Details of the Complaint

Please clearly describe the nature of your complaint. Include relevant dates, actions already taken, communications made, and any evidence (attach separately if needed).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Proposed Resolution

Please describe what you consider to be a fair and appropriate resolution to your concern.

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5. Confidentiality Acknowledgment

☐ I understand that this complaint will be handled in accordance with the Shirakatsy Lyceum Complaints Policy and that confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

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6. Signature

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

📎 *Please attach any supporting documentation or evidence.*
📨 *Return completed form to the contact person listed in Appendix C.*

16. Appendix C: Contact Directory

Role	Name	Email Address
Psychologists, Homeroom Teacher, Counselor, Student Leader	The information is provided by the school administration at the beginning of each academic year or in case of changes in contact details.	
Child Protection Officer	Gayane Grigoryan Tatevik Arzumanyan Anna Stepanyan	cpo-primary@shirakatsy.am cpo-middle@shirakatsy.am cpo-high@shirakatsy.am
IB PYP Coordinator	Marina Sahakyan	marinasahakyan@shirakatsy.am
IB MYP Coordinator	Elina Shakaryan	elinashakaryan@shirakatsy.am
IB DP Coordinator	Anna Stepanyan	annastepanyan@shirakatsy.am
Primary School Principal	Gayane Grigoryan	gayanegrigoryan@shirakatsy.am
Middle School Principal	Tatevik Arzumanyan	tatevikarzumanyan@shirakatsy.am
High School Principal	Anna Stepanyan	annastepanyan@shirakatsy.am
Head of School / Director General	Ashor Alikhanyan	ashotalikhanyan@shirakatsy.am

17. Appendix D: Related Policy Framework

This Complaints Policy is part of a broader framework of policies that uphold the values, responsibilities, and expectations of Shirakatsy Lyceum. For clarity and alignment, this policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Student Code of Conduct**
- **Staff Internal Disciplinary Rules**
- **Inclusion Policy**
- **Assessment Policy**
- **Academic Integrity Policy**

These documents are available via the **school portal** or upon request from the administration office. Together, they form a cohesive foundation that ensures transparency, accountability, and the well-being of the school community

18. Version Control Log

Version	Date	Changes Made	Responsible Party
1.0	January 2024	Initial release of the Shirakatsy Lyceum Complaints Policy	Policy Development Committee
1.1	September 2025	Role of psychologist, escalation clause, Level 1 roles, safeguarding route, student voice inclusion, and accessibility measures	Policy Development Committee