

Guidelines on the procedure for addressing criticism of teachers

I Basic principles

Members of the Literargymnasium Rämibühl are committed to an open culture characterised by mutual respect, communication and feedback as set out in the school's mission statement. On the one hand, this includes the capacity to criticise objectively and constructively, and on the other hand the readiness to deal with this criticism in a way that is geared towards finding solutions. Teachers are sometimes faced with criticism on account of their role, e.g. assessing students' performance. This document describes the principles and basic procedures that should be followed in the event that students or parents criticise teachers. The document is aimed at ensuring *transparency and reliability* for school members with respect to the process and *commitment* to the outcome of the conflict resolution.¹

The guidelines are consistent with the principle that substantive criticism should be taken at face value and that conflicts should be approached constructively and discussed and resolved with as little impediment as possible, i.e. directly between the teacher concerned and the party making the criticism. These guidelines are an internal school document adopted by the Convention and reflect the consensus of the college.

II Legal and regulatory foundations

- Personnel Act (177.10) and Personnel Ordinance (177.11) of the Canton of Zurich
- Secondary School Act (413.21) and Secondary School Ordinance (413.211) of the Canton of Zurich
- Employee appraisal guidelines; employee appraisal and performance review for teachers and staff at Zurich secondary schools. Canton of Zurich: Secondary and Vocational Education and Training Office, September 2016
- Cantonal framework concept for quality development and assurance at upper secondary level. Department of Education of the Canton of Zurich, August 1st, 2021

III Step-by-step model

3.1. Procedure in the event of criticism by students

1. Students should express criticism directly to the teacher concerned and endeavour to resolve any conflicts directly with the teacher. In doing so, they take note of the following requirements for a successful conflict resolution dialogue:
 - The conversation is not held without preparation and "in passing". An appointment will be scheduled outside of lesson times.

¹ The purpose of the document is to deal with criticism and conflict resolution in cases where teachers are criticised by students and parents. Shortcomings identified by the school commission and school management in the course of employee appraisals are not covered by this document. These are handled in accordance with cantonal regulations.

- If the criticism is voiced by an entire class, it is generally not the teacher on one side and the class on the other. A better approach is for a class delegation to act on behalf of the class.
 - Both sides - the teacher and the students - must be given the opportunity to calmly outline points of criticism and their perception of the conflict.
 - The two sides then discuss possible solutions. Steps towards a solution are finally agreed and, where necessary, recorded in writing.
2. If students criticise a member of teaching staff, the class teacher adopts a non-judgemental attitude in relation to the member of teaching staff concerned, i.e. they do not comment on the points of criticism or the conflict, but rather check whether a conflict resolution discussion has taken place. If this is not the case, the class teacher invites the students to have a discussion with the member of teaching staff. The class teacher then informs the member of school management concerned about the discussion.²
- The member of teaching staff and the students give feedback to the class teacher once the discussion has taken place.
3. The case is closed once the points of criticism have been clarified and the conflict resolved. If this is not the case, those involved should contact the member of the school management responsible for the relevant subject. They shall hear both sides and decide on how to proceed in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework.

3.2. Procedure for criticism by parents

Criticism of teachers by parents is dealt with in the same way as criticism by pupils:

1. Parents should express criticism directly to the teacher concerned and endeavour to resolve any conflicts directly with the teacher.
If the parents approach the *class teacher* or the *school management*, they will ask the parents to contact the teaching staff directly and will inform the colleague concerned.
2. The requirements listed in section 3.1, number 1 are applicable to the subsequent discussion between the teacher and the parents.
The teacher and the parents give feedback to the responsible school management member when the discussion has taken place.
3. The case is closed once the points of criticism have been clarified and the conflict resolved. If this is not possible, those involved should contact the relevant member of the school management. They shall hear both sides and decide on how to proceed in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework.

Adopted by the Convention dated 21.6.23.

Goes to: Teaching staff
File on the intranet (Teaching staff > File plan > 8 Quality management > 84 Other)
Copy to: Secretary's office

² Should students express criticism of a member of teaching staff to the school management, they will proceed in the same way as the class teacher (see section 3.1, number 2).

IV IB Programme

4.1. Procedure in the event of criticism by students or parents

1. In general, the procedures given above in “III Step-by-step model” apply. The admission to the IB programme is regulated by the admission policy of the school based on the “Regulations for admission to a Bilingual Secondary School Diploma programme at secondary schools in the Canton of Zurich”
2. In the case of complaints towards the IB diploma programme students and/or parents should contact the IB coordination in order to resolve any conflicts directly with the IB coordination. The case is closed once the points of criticism have been clarified and the conflict resolved.
3. In the case of requests for appeals against IB programme decisions taken by the IB coordination students and/or parents should contact the responsible member of the school management. They shall hear both sides and decide on how to proceed in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework.

This document is evaluated on a regular basis and will be reviewed no later than 5 years from the date of publication or whenever necessary.

IV IB Programme: January 2025, IB coordination (AN, KH), Literargymnasium Rämibühl