

# Rivers International School

## Strengthening policy management and enhancing student feedback

At Rivers, continuous improvement is at the heart of everything we do. Regular IB Evaluation Visits, which occur every five years, provide excellent opportunities to reflect on our progress, celebrate our strengths, and identify areas where we could further refine our practices.

## Thorough preparation

Such an evaluation, with the latest taking place in April 2024, requires about a year of thorough preparation. It can be split roughly into three parts. Part one, a preliminary review, part two, a detailed self-evaluation including staff, students and parents, and the actual 3-day visit including discussions with staff, students, and parents as well as plenty of lesson visits.

Spoiler alert: we were found to be a very good, partially excellent school with “pockets of brilliance.” Our main aim now is to standardize the excellence across the entire school.

## Smart policy management: the digital way

As part of the preliminary review, we were required to submit approximately 80 documents, including unit plans and policy documents. Whilst all unit plans were fine, we were asked to update two of our policies. Bummer!

Since we had been approached by Quadraam earlier to set up our digital square, we took this opportunity to accelerate the process. We placed special emphasis on designing our ‘weten en regelen’ section, or The Barn as we baptized it.

## The Barn

The Barn serves as a central repository for all policies and procedure documents, ensuring easy access and clear ownership. By assigning personal responsibility for each policy and integrating automated notifications for required reviews, we have streamlined the entire process, eliminating the risk of outdated documents. This initiative has turned our policy management into a proactive approach, ensuring that our school always remains compliant and forward-thinking.

If you have not set up your digital square yet, do so – it is well worth the time it takes you.

## Enhancing student learning through targeted feedback development

During the actual IB review visit, a major component was an assessment of our developmental goals. Our chosen focus was feedback, a fundamental element in student learning. The evaluators were particularly interested in how we identified this area for improvement, the data-driven approach we employed to do so, and the potential impact on students.

## Identify and define

After identifying our need through numerous work sessions with staff, questionnaires to students and interviews with students and parents, we defined how we want feedback to impact on student learning in our school. We then conducted extensive research on best practices in feedback mechanisms, ensuring our approach was rooted in proven educational strategies whilst guarding teachers' sanity. From there, we followed a rigorous PDCA cycle, testing, refining, and implementing feedback strategies to maximize impact.

The evaluation team recognized our structured approach and saw great potential in our work. Their feedback confirmed that we are on the path to a highly effective feedback system that could significantly enhance student learning.