

# A Student's Guide to Title IX

## What Is Title IX?

Title IX is part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and makes it illegal for any school to discriminate (treat someone differently or worse) against you based on sex (which includes your gender identity or sexual orientation). Title IX protects your right to an education free from gender-based violence (sexual harassment, sexual assault) or discrimination.

## Your Rights Under Title IX

1. You have the right to know what your school's policies on gender-based violence are and have them be easy to find and understand.
2. If you report a sex-based discrimination under Title IX, you have the right to have that report investigated in a timely and fair way.
3. You have the right to finish your Title IX report in the way that feels best for you, whether that involves a formal investigation, an alternative solution, or supportive measures, and to be fully informed of any decision.
4. You have the right to talk about your experiences of sexual violence or discrimination and your experience with the Title IX process after the investigation is done.
5. You have the right not to be retaliated against (punished in exchange for speaking out) by the person who hurt you, your school, your school administrators, your teachers, or other students.

## The Title IX Process

### Step 1: Make a Report

Contact your school's Title IX Coordinator and set up a meeting.

### Step 2: Meet with Title IX Officer & Supportive Measures (1 week later)

Officer will explain process to you. Decide whether you want to make a formal complaint. The school will let you know what help is available for you. You can access this help even if you don't make a formal complaint.

### Step 3: Respondent is Notified (2-3 weeks later)

If you file a formal complaint, the Respondent (person who hurt you) will be notified about the complaint and investigation. They will receive a summary of your complaint.

### Step 4: Investigation (2-12 months)

An investigator talks to you and the respondent. You can suggest witnesses or questions. After your interview, a summary is made of your answers and the respondent's answers. You can review this and make corrections. After the interview and summary, the investigator makes a final report of what they found. You can decide to move forward with a hearing or try another way to solve things.

### Step 5: The Hearing (1-3 days)

A formal meeting in front of a hearing officer (person who is in charge of the hearing, like a judge) where you and the respondent talk about and answer questions about your experiences. An advocate/advisor is there to ask the questions for you and another asks the questions for the respondent. Witnesses share their stories.

### Step 6: Finding Issued (1-2 weeks later)

The hearing officer or panel decides whether or not the respondent is responsible (or guilty). If the respondent is responsible, they may be disciplined (punished). If the decision is not what you hoped for, you can appeal

Making a Title IX complaint can be hard. You may feel lonely or overwhelmed. It is important to know that you are not alone. Here are several ways you can connect with others who have similar experiences: attend a support group in your area, join an online forum, look into how to become an advocate and support others.



# Title IX

## Terms to Know

**Appeal**—The process of challenging Title IX decision to try to change the outcome.

**Complainant**—The person who files the Title IX complaint, usually you the survivor.

**Complaint**—The report or document that explains the harassment, assault, or other harmful behavior you are complaining about.

**Finding**—The decision in a Title IX case that finds the Respondent responsible or not responsible (guilty or not guilty) for your complaint.

**Hearing**—A formal meeting before a hearing officer or panel in where the Complainant and Respondent share their experiences and argue whether school policy was violated and if the Respondent is responsible.

**Hearing Officer**—The person who presides over a hearing like a judge would a courtroom.

**Respondent**—The person in who is accused of harming, assaulting, or harassing you, the Complainant.

**Retaliation**—Punishment for asserting your rights. It is illegal for your school to punish you for reporting or participating in a Title IX case.

**Sexual harassment**—A variety of unwanted or inappropriate behavior that may include unwanted touching, inappropriate jokes, comments, or gestures, teasing, or offers to do something nice for you (buy you gifts, give you a good grade, etc.) in exchange for a sexual act.

**Sexual assault**—Physical invasion of your body. This is a crime.

**Supportive measures**—Actions or changes made by your school to help you during and/or after the Title IX process, including transferring you to another class, giving you an extension on schoolwork, etc.

**Title IX Coordinator**—The person at your school whose job it is to make sure your school is following Title IX rules. They respond to complaints, start the investigation, and understand Title IX rules.