

U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights & New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Present: Addressing Discrimination and Bias-Based Harassment in New Jersey Public Schools

RESOURCES

January 25, 2024

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office enforces a broad array of federal civil rights statutes addressing, among other things, education-related discrimination, disability rights, national origin discrimination and language access issues, housing discrimination, servicemembers' rights, police misconduct, voting rights, and hate crimes. With respect to civil rights issues in education, our office enforces Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Collectively these prohibit discrimination and/or denials of equal protection on the basis of race, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficient status), religion, and disability in school settings.

Contact Information:

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey welcomes information from the public regarding possible violations of our nation's civil rights laws. Civil rights complaints can be submitted by email, mail, or phone. You do not need a special form to submit a complaint, but you can use this [Civil Rights Complaint Form](#). You can send your complaint by U.S. Postal Service mail or email to: USANJ.Civilrightscomplaint@usdoj.gov

or

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey
Civil Rights Complaints, Civil Rights Division
970 Broad Street, Suite 700
Newark, New Jersey 07102

- To submit a complaint by telephone, dial (855) 281-3339, or by fax, dial (973) 297-2010.
- *To learn more about the right to a public education regardless of immigration status, click [here](#).*
- *To learn more about DOJ's work to coordinate and expand enforcement, outreach, and training efforts on behalf of servicemembers, veterans, and their families, click [here](#).*

Resources:

- Civil Rights Division Brochure (attached)
- [Confronting Anti-LGBTQI+ Harassment in Schools A Resource for Students and Families](#)

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

The Office for Civil Rights enforces several Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin is prohibited by [Title VI](#) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; sex discrimination is prohibited by [Title IX](#) of the Education Amendments of 1972; discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited by [Section 504](#) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and age discrimination is prohibited by the [Age Discrimination Act](#) of 1975. These civil rights laws enforced by OCR extend to all state education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, libraries, and museums that receive U.S. Department of Education funds. Areas covered may include, but are not limited to: admissions, recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student treatment and services, counseling and guidance, discipline, classroom assignment, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, athletics, housing, and employment. OCR also has responsibilities under Title II of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) of 1990 (prohibiting disability discrimination by public entities, whether or not they receive federal financial assistance). To view OCR's guidance please visit the [Policy Guidance Portal](#). In addition, as of January 8, 2002, OCR enforces the [Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act](#) (Section 9525 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). Under the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, no public elementary school or State or local education agency that provides an opportunity for one or more outside youth or community groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities before or after school hours shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.

Contact Information:

Call the **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** at **1-800-421-3481** to report any educational discrimination on the basis of race, sex, disability, etc., request information on civil rights compliance programs, procedures for filing discrimination complaints, or access to civil rights regulatory and policy documents.

- The local number in Washington, D.C. is **202-453-6100**. [Federal Relay Service](#). Email: ocr@ed.gov.
- See the [OCR Contact Us](#) page to find the enforcement office serving your area or use the [OCR Electronic Complaint Form](#).

Resources:

OCR Reading Room Resource: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/readingroom.html>

Resolved Complaints Involving Harassment

- [Beecher Community Unit School](#)
- [Peoria Unified School District Press Release](#)
- [Kyrene School District Press Release](#)
- [Val Verde Unified School District Press Release](#)

NJ Office of the Attorney General, Division on Civil Rights

The [New Jersey Division on Civil Rights \(DCR\)](#) is the state agency charged with enforcing New Jersey's civil rights laws, including the [New Jersey Law Against Discrimination \(LAD\)](#), the [New Jersey Family Leave Act \(NJFLA\)](#), and the [Fair Chance in Housing Act \(FCHA\)](#) effective January 1, 2022. The mission of DCR is to protect the people of New Jersey from discrimination and bias-based harassment in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The LAD, one of the most comprehensive anti-discrimination laws in the country, prohibits discrimination and harassment based on actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability and other protected characteristics. The law applies in [employment](#), [housing](#), and [places of public accommodation](#) (places open to the public, including businesses, restaurants, schools, summer camps, medical providers, government offices and agencies, etc.).

Contact Information:

In order to file a complaint with DCR, you must first submit an intake form. You can submit the intake form:

- Online by creating an account and using the [NJ Bias Investigation Access System](#) (NJBIAS) By calling 1. 833.NJDCR4U and asking a DCR receptionist to assist you in filling out the form on the [NJ Bias Investigation Access System](#) (NJBIAS)
- NJBIAS is available in English and Spanish. DCR also offers translation services for people with limited English proficiency who speak other languages. Call 1. 833.NJDCR4U (833-653-2748) or email at NJDCR4U@njcivilrights.gov to request assistance with NJBIAS in a language other than English or Spanish.
- To request a disability-related accommodation, please call 1. 833.NJDCR4U (833-653-2748) (voice), call the Relay Service at 711, or email NJDCR4U@njcivilrights.gov.

Resources:

- [Youth Bias Task Force Full Report | Recommendations Summary](#)
- [DCR's Education and Training Unit's Training Schedule](#)

The Division on Civil Rights Fact Sheets offer brief overviews of different areas covered by the LAD.

- [The New Jersey Law Against Discrimination](#)
- [Protections Against Discrimination and Harassment in School Under the Law Against Discrimination](#)
- [Race Discrimination in Places of Public Accommodation](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Student Rights in School](#)
- [How to File a Complaint with New Jersey Division on Civil Rights](#)

[Addressing Bias in K-12 Schools](#). These three handouts focus on preventing, intervening in, and responding to bias as a whole-campus response that includes the individuals involved in an incident and the broader community of students, faculty, and staff.

DCR and DOE have also issued a [Joint Statement](#) to offer guidance to students, parents, schools, school boards, educators, and the public.

DCR and DOE released the "[Guidance on Discrimination in Student Discipline](#)." To make the document more accessible to administrators, DCR has published a 3-page packet of [Administrator Resources](#), including an Administrator Cheat Sheet and a Compliance Checklist that administrators throughout your county can use to proactively cultivate a culture of compliance among all staff empowered to discipline students. DCR has also published accompanying [Community Resources](#) for the parents, caregivers, students, and community members.

Disclaimer: Views are not endorsed by DCR and do not constitute a sponsorship or endorsement of any particular organization, company, school, institution, agency, party, person, book, author, article, newsgroup, podcast, training, toolkit, guide, website, talk, conference, webinar, fundraiser, presentation, film, event, or any other resource. They are also not a substitute for seeking medical/mental health attention, if needed.