

1. Title IX a landmark federal civil right that prohibits gender discrimination in education.

Title IX is not just about sports; it is a prohibition against gender-based discrimination in education. It addresses discrimination against pregnant and parenting students and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs. It also addresses sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence. Sexual violence includes attempted or completed rape or sexual assault, as well as sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, exhibitionism, verbal or physical sexuality-based threats or abuse, and intimate partner violence.

2. Title IX does not apply to female students only. Title IX protects any person from gender-based discrimination. Female, male and gender non-conforming students, faculty, and staff are protected from any gender-based discrimination harassment or violence.

3. Schools must be proactive in ensuring that your campus is free of sex discrimination.

You are protected under Title IX, even if you do not experience sex discrimination directly. Schools must take immediate steps to address any sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence happening on campus to prevent it from affecting students further. If the school knows or reasonably should know about this discrimination, harassment or violence that is creating a "hostile environment" for any student, it must be asked to eliminate it, remedy the harm caused and prevent its recurrence.

4. Schools must have an established procedure for handling complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence. Every school must have a Title IX Coordinator who manages complaints. The Coordinator's contact information should be accessible on the school's website. If you decide to file a complaint, your school must promptly investigate it, regardless of whether you report to the police, though the police investigation may very briefly delay the school's investigation if they are gathering evidence. The school may not wait for the conclusion of a criminal proceeding and should conclude its own investigation within a semester's time (the 2011 Title IX Guidance proposes 60 days as an appropriate timeframe). The school should use a "preponderance of the evidence" standard to determine the outcome of a complaint, meaning discipline should result if it is more likely than not discrimination, harassment or violence occurred. The final decision should be provided to you and the accused in writing and both of you should have the right to appeal the decision.

5. Schools must take immediate action to ensure a complainant-victim can continue his or her education free of ongoing sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence.

Along with issuing a no-contact directive to the accused, a school must ensure any reasonable changes to your housing, class or sports schedule, campus job, or extracurricular activity and clubs are made to ensure you can continue your education free from any ongoing sex discrimination, sexual violence or sexual harassment. These arrangements can occur BEFORE a formal complaint, investigation, hearing, or final decision is made regarding your complaint. It can also CONTINUE after the entire process, since you have a right to an education free of sex-based discrimination, harassment or violence. Additionally, these accommodations should not over-burden complainant-victims or limit your educational opportunities. Instead, schools can require the accused to likewise change some school activities or classes to ensure there is not ongoing hostile educational environment.

6. Schools may not retaliate against someone filing a complaint and must keep a complainant-victim safe from other retaliatory harassment or behavior. Schools must address complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence. As part of this obligation, they can issue a no contact directive or make other accommodations to ensure the accused or third party does not retaliate for any complaints. Additionally, the school may not take adverse action against the complainant-victim for his or her complaint.

7. Schools can issue a no-contact directive under Title IX to prevent the accused student from approaching or interacting with you. When necessary for student safety, schools can issue a no-contact directive preventing an accused student from directly or indirectly contacting or interacting with you. Campus Security or police can and should enforce such directives. This is not a court issued restraining order but the school should provide you with information on how to obtain such an order and facilitate the process if you should to pursue it.

8. In cases of sexual violence, schools are prohibited from encouraging or allowing mediation (rather than a formal hearing) of the complaint. The 2011 Title IX Guidance clearly prohibits schools from allowing mediation between an accused student and the complainant-victim in sexual violence cases. However they may still offer such an alternative process for other types of complaints, such as sexual harassment. Realize it is your choice and you can and should seek a disciplinary hearing if you desire such a formal process. Schools are discouraged from allowing the accused to question you during the hearing. If your school allows that, consider getting a non-profit attorney or other legal advocate to help you through the process and/or file a Title IX complaint with the US Department of Education about that schools hearing process.

9. Schools cannot discourage you from continuing your education. Title IX is a positive right to be free of hostile environment in order to protect your access to education. You have a right to remain on campus and have every educational program and opportunity available to you. Schools must not discourage you from continuing your education, such as telling you to "take time off" or force you to quit a team, club or class.