



Student and Parent/Guardian Guide to The Office of Student Protections and Title IX

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The Office of Student Protections and Title IX's Mission

To provide an equitable, inclusive, safe, supportive, and secure learning and working environment, in every school and neighborhood, in a District that is free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and retaliation, ensuring that all students, faculty, staff, vendors, and visitors can thrive.

Every student has the right to a safe and supportive environment free of sex/gender-based discrimination, sex/gender based harassment, sexual harassment, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation. Title IX is a federal civil rights law that does not allow discrimination on the basis of sex in schools and school activities including all of Chicago Public Schools. Additionally, our office ensures that schools are safe from all sexual misconduct.

What is discrimination based on sex?

This is when you are treated differently because of your sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical condition, or childbirth.

What is sex/gender-based harassment?

This is when someone says something or touches you, creating an unfriendly and uncomfortable situation. Such as when someone says something about how you look, your body, your gender, your sexual orientation, or your private parts that makes you feel uncomfortable. This can include inappropriate staring, inappropriate jokes, showing or sending sexual pictures, demanding hugs, dates or sexual contact, saying things that put you down due to your gender, or spreading sexual rumors.

What is sexual harassment?

This is defined under Title IX regulations as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of the recipient conditions the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- Unwelcome conduct, determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the educational program or activity; or
- Sexual assault as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v) (the Clery Act), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 1229(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 1229(a)(30).

What are other types of sexual misconduct that you are protected from?

- **Grooming:** When someone shows you special attention in an attempt to build a relationship, trust and/or emotional connection with you so they can manipulate, exploit and/or abuse you.
- **Inappropriate Touching:** When someone makes or tries to make physical contact of genitals (private parts), anus, groin, or breasts, whether directly on your body or indirect through clothes or with an object or any other intentional bodily contact in a sexual manner that you did not want.
- **Sexual Electronic Communication:** This is intentionally viewing, making, having, or sharing sexual language or pictures/recordings without the consent of one or more parties.
- **Sexual Bullying:** This is severe (very serious), pervasive (widespread), or persistent (ongoing) unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature or based on a person's sexuality or gender that is based on an imbalance of power or power and control with an intent to cause harm. Such behavior has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:
 - placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
 - causing a large damaging effect on the student's physical or mental health;
 - substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
 - substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or enjoy the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Taking non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another person for their own enjoyment (e.g. for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage), or any other non-legitimate purpose.
- **Exposure/Voyeurism/Masturbation:** Non-consensually exposing one's genitals, anus, buttocks, or breasts in a sexual nature; watching others when their body parts are exposed without their consent; or touching one's own genitals for sexual pleasure.

What is consent?

Consent: When you agree, give permission, or say "yes" to do something and your agreement is informed, active, voluntary, specific, and ongoing. A person cannot consent if they are not able to function normally due to drug or alcohol use, if they are not awake, if they have a physical, cognitive, or developmental difference that prevents them from understanding what is happening, if they are under the age required by law to legally consent or they are with another person who is in a position of authority or trust.

- **Informed.** A person must understand the who, what, when, where and nature of the activity;
- **Active.** Verbal or nonverbal actions that clearly show willingness to participate in the activity. The absence of no does not mean yes; No means No. Stop means Stop;
- **Voluntary.** Freely given without the use of force, coercion, manipulation, or threats;
- **Specific.** Consent must be present every time, for every action. Consent to engage in one type of activity is not consent to engage in a different type of activity; and
- **Ongoing.** A person can take back consent at any time. Once consent is taken back, all activity must stop.

How do I report and get help?

If anything like this is happening to you or anyone you know at school or outside of school, you can report this at school so that we can help. You can also report this [online](#), to the Student Protections School Representative at your school which you can find in a [Student Protections School Representative Directory](#) at www.cps.edu/osp, to the Office of Student Protections and Title IX by calling 773-535-4400, or to the District's Title IX Coordinator, Chief Title IX Officer Camie C. Pratt, by emailing her at osp@cps.edu. Once you report something to us, we will help to make sure that you are safe and supported.

What happens when I report this?

Once a report is received, we will decide what type of investigation, if any, will happen. We will *always* provide you with support even if there is no investigation. If it is determined that an investigation should happen, then we talk with students and other people involved to hear their side of the story and what happened. After that, we decide if something was “more likely than not” to have happened, and if it did, we let your school know and they will respond.

Who conducts the investigation?

If the accused person is another student, the Office of Student Protections and Title IX, your Student Protections School Representative, or your Principal will conduct the investigation.

If the accused person is an employee, vendor or volunteer for your school, then the Office of the Inspector General will conduct the investigation. In either case, the Office of Student Protections and Title IX will ensure that you are supported throughout the investigation.

What are my rights in an investigation?

- You have the right to have a prompt, thorough, fair and impartial investigation being conducted.
- You have a right to be heard and to share your experience.
- You have the right to an advisor of your choice present during the process.
- You have a right to have a support person you choose in the room with you.
- You have a right to let us know if you do not feel safe.
- You have a right to receive individualized supportive services at your school.
- You have a right to meet somewhere private.
- You have a right for us to keep what you tell us as private as possible.
- You have a right to not answer any questions or be part of the investigation.
- You have a right to share with us any evidence, names of witnesses, or information you know connected to the case.
- You have a right to ask for an update on your case.
- You have a right to access the information gathered during the investigation and the evidence that will be used to make a determination.
- You have a right to know the outcome of the investigation.
- You have a right to ask for a review of the outcome of the investigation.
- You have a right to be free from retaliation.

What is retaliation?

When someone takes action against you for reporting your complaint or being involved in an investigation. If this happens, you should report this to us as we do not allow retaliation.

How can we support you?

We can provide you with the support that you need so that you can continue learning in school. Depending on your situation, as needed, we can provide you with someone at school to check-in/check-out with, counseling inside and/or outside of school, a plan to keep you safe, more time to do your schoolwork, a change in schedule, and also direct people not to contact you. Each situation is different and we will work with you to determine what you need.

How long will the investigation take?

We try our best to complete investigations as fast as we can and within ninety (90) calendar days. Sometimes investigations are complicated and take more time.

What happens when the investigation is over?

Once the investigation is over, you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation determines that someone broke the rules, then they will receive consequences according to either the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or staff policies. All parties will have timely and equal access to the information that will be used during disciplinary meetings and hearings. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, the District will take steps to prevent the recurrence of sex/gender-based discrimination, sex/gender based harassment, sexual harassment, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation. The District will also correct any discriminatory effects on all impacted students as appropriate.

What if I am unhappy with the outcome of the investigation?

If you are not happy with the outcome of a Title IX investigation and feel that we did not follow our procedures, you have new information that changes the outcome, you feel that someone involved in conducting the investigation or making a decision was biased, or you feel that the punishment was not appropriate for the violation, you have the right to appeal the decision within five (5) calendar days of receiving the outcome letter.

If you are not happy with the discipline in a sexual misconduct investigation, you have the right to an appeal in accordance with the [Student Code of Conduct](#). The information on how to file an appeal is found in the outcome letter that you receive. Additionally, you can email your appeal to ospappeals@cps.edu or call (773) 535-4400. You will receive our decision within five (5) calendar days of us receiving your appeal request.

What if I want to report and do not want an investigation?

You can let us know if you do not wish for us to conduct an investigation at the time you report or at any time during the investigation. We will do our best to stop the investigation when you let us know, but we may have to continue the investigation if we believe there is a threat to you or others. We will never force you to participate in the investigation process if you are not comfortable. Supportive measures and services are still available to you, even if you do not want an investigation.

What if I wish to make an anonymous report?

You can make an [anonymous report online](#) if you are a student, parent or guardian, or member of the public, but be sure to provide enough information for us to investigate. If there is not enough information we will not be able to fully investigate.

What if I want to receive confidential support?

For confidential support, you can contact the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline at 888-293-2080. It provides survivors of sexual violence and their caregivers with immediate support, crisis intervention and referrals for the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs.

Who is the Title IX Coordinator?

Camie Pratt
Chief Title IX Officer & Title IX Coordinator
Office of Student Protections and Title IX
110 N. Paulina Street
Chicago, IL 60612
773-535-4400
osp@cps.edu

For any further questions, please contact us at 773-535-4400 or osp@cps.edu.