

# Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Complaints

## WHAT IS A OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS (OCR) COMPLAINT?

OCR complaints ask the federal government to investigate acts of discrimination or retaliation at K-12 schools.

## WHAT CAN A OCR COMPLAINT BE FILED ABOUT?

Illegal discrimination at any public school & private schools that receive federal funds.

This includes discrimination about:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation
- Disability

Additional reasons for OCR complaints are listed on the OCR website at <https://tinyurl.com/Other-Laws-OCR-Follows>

## WHO CAN FILE AN OCR COMPLAINT?

Anyone can file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights. You do not need to be the victim of discrimination; you may do it on behalf of someone else.

## WHEN DO I NEED TO FILE AN OCR COMPLAINT?

**Within 180 days of the last act of discrimination.**

If it has been more than 180 days, you may request a waiver but will be asked to show “good cause” (a valid reason for why it was not filed earlier) such as:

- you did not know the conduct was discriminatory
- you could not file the complaint sooner because of illness/circumstances that made it hard to file
- you filed a complaint with the school district first



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**FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN ALAMEDA COUNTY  
PLEASE CALL (510) 982-7695 OR  
EMAIL [EDJINTAKE@EBCLC.ORG](mailto:EDJINTAKE@EBCLC.ORG)**

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## WHAT SHOULD MY OCR COMPLAINT INCLUDE?

If you want to file a complaint, you need to provide:

- Your name, address, and email
- Name and address of the person discriminated against
- Name and district/school address of the person, school, or district you believe discriminated (examples: a teacher, principal, coach, etc)
- Type of discrimination (examples: race, sexuality, gender, disability)
- A description of the behavior you believe was/is discriminatory
- The solution you want for the student that was discriminated against (examples: change in policy; district paying for services they didn't provide)
- If you are filing the complaint on behalf of someone else: a signed consent form from that person. This should be submitted with the complaint form.

## HOW CAN I FILE A OCR COMPLAINT?

File an electronic copy of the Complaint Form on the Department of Education website (<https://ocrcas.ed.gov/>) OR fill out the fillable PDF version of the form (linked on the same website) and email or mail it to:

U.S. Department of Education  
50 United Nations Plaza  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
OCR.SanFrancisco@ed.gov.

[for complaints of discrimination occurring in California schools only]

The Complaint Form is available in English and eight other languages. You can submit the form in your native language and OCR will translate it.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I FILE A OCR COMPLAINT?

1. OCR receives your complaint and decides whether or not to open an investigation.
2. OCR phones or emails you & the school/district.
3. OCR conducts its investigation.
4. OCR decides if the school/district broke the law.
5. OCR notifies you & the school/district of their decision in a Letter Of Findings.
6. OCR contacts you & the school/district to implement a solution if the law was broken.



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