



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

Combating Discrimination Against Jewish Students

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in public and federally funded schools at all educational levels. Title VI protects all students, including Jewish students, from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin (including language and actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics). Schools must take immediate and appropriate action to respond to complaints of discrimination, including harassment or bullying based on race, color, or national origin. The following are examples of action, or inaction, by school officials that could violate Title VI:

- *A Jewish student tells her principal that a few classmates routinely call her an anti-Semitic slur referencing poor hygiene and regularly vandalize her textbooks, locker, and desk with swastika graffiti. The principal tells her to ignore the other students and takes no other steps to respond.*
- *A foreign-born Jewish student wears a Star of David necklace to school. Other students express to her anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant sentiments in reaction to the necklace. When the student complains to a teacher, the teacher tells the student she needs to remove it for her own safety. The student declines to remove her necklace and is suspended as a result.*
- *A Jewish student from Israel receives an out-of-school suspension for violating the school's code of conduct. Before meeting with the assistant principal to discuss the suspension, the student's parents, who speak primarily Hebrew, request an interpreter, but school administrators do not arrange for one. When the parents arrive for the meeting, there is no interpreter and the assistant principal proceeds with the meeting.*
- *A university professor bars Jewish students from his seminar on the Middle East in the belief that their ties to Israel will polarize class discussion. A student complains to the dean, who affirms the decision and states his belief that Jewish students would feel uncomfortable in the class.*
- *A high school principal makes black and Latino but not white students provide proof of their Jewish identity before excusing their attendance on Jewish holidays.*
- *A group of Jewish students is hit and taunted every week in gym class by other students who say, "Jews are supposed to be good at math—not basketball." When they complain to the teacher, they are told that the best response is to ignore the other students and to focus on doing better in gym class.*

* Generally, if OCR determines that it lacks jurisdiction over some or all of the allegations of a complaint because it alleges purely religious discrimination, OCR will close the complaint or the relevant allegations and provide the complainant with information on how to file with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

Anyone with information about discrimination occurring in schools may file a complaint by contacting:

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

Email: ocr@ed.gov

Telephone: 202-453-6100 or 800-421-3481

TDD: 800-877-8339

Language Assistance: 800-USA-LEARN (800-872-5327)

OCR also offers technical assistance to the public and will respond to inquiries about schools' obligations and the rights of students and parents under the laws that OCR enforces. More information about Title VI and religion can be found [here](#) and at www.ed.gov/ocr/sharedancestry.html. For more information about the laws that OCR enforces, including those prohibiting discrimination based on disability and sex, please visit us at www.ed.gov/ocr.

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