

Avenues to Justice: Asserting LGBTQ+ Rights at School

Harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in education settings is against the law, and both students and educators can assert their rights if they face unlawful discrimination at school. GLSEN's [National School Climate Survey](#) shows an alarming trend of underreporting, with 62% of LGBTQ+ students who face harassment never reporting an incident to their school. This guide outlines how students, families, educators, and community members can seek support to address anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at school.

Even if a school fails to respond to a complaint, LGBTQ+ students and educators still have rights, and there are multiple avenues to pursue justice and hold school officials accountable. Every student and educator deserves a school environment that is safe, inclusive, and free from harassment and discrimination.

How are LGBTQ+ people protected from discrimination?

LGBTQ+ students and educators are protected by federal laws and constitutional guarantees, as well as state policies in as many as 26 states. These overlapping policies may offer different remedies to someone facing discrimination and may also contradict hostile policies adopted at the federal, state, or even local level that may foster discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

The most inclusive protections for LGBTQ+ people in schools include federal nondiscrimination laws like Title IX and Title VII, as well as provisions of the U.S. Constitution such as the Equal Protection Clause and the First Amendment's free speech clause. Other federal laws can protect elements of the LGBTQ+ school experience, including privacy of student records and access to student-led clubs, such as gay-straight alliances or gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs). For more information, view the [student rights resource](#) and [educator rights resource](#).

State governments may add to – but cannot fall short of – federal protections. Whereas some states have passed specific state laws recognizing LGBTQ+ protections in schools even beyond what is outlined in federal policy, other states have extended protections through more broadly applicable public accommodations, human rights, or public services laws. Even if a state has enacted openly hostile policies, LGBTQ+ people can still assert their rights under federal law and the U.S. Constitution.

What could constitute discrimination against LGBTQ+ students or educators?

LGBTQ+ students and educators could face discrimination in different ways, and many cases depend on the individual facts. Some fact patterns that may suggest unlawful discrimination include:

Targeted policies or restrictions impacting LGBTQ+ people, such as a state law that denies transgender students access to bathrooms that match their gender identity;

Broader policies or disciplinary actions that disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ people, such as enforcing dress codes differently for LGBTQ+ students or based on sex stereotypes (e.g., a male student being disciplined for wearing an earring when female students are allowed to wear jewelry);

Failure to respond to complaints of harassment, such as indifference to complaints – either formal or informal – from a student who has been repeatedly misgendered or called slurs by peers, without any action from school staff to address the verbal harassment or ensure the student's safety from further harm; and

Retaliation for complaining about discrimination, such as when an educator is fired for having submitted a complaint about treatment of LGBTQ+ students by the school district.

What do I do if I faced discrimination at school?

There are multiple avenues to assert your legal rights and pursue justice. As different processes operate on different timelines and may serve different purposes, it is often helpful to consult with a LGBTQ+ rights organization or legal helpline before taking any formal action. All of these actions take some time and would not be responsive to an immediate safety, mental health, or other crisis concern.

Local, informal engagement may be the quickest way to address a concern or alert school leadership to ongoing harassment or discrimination. This could involve requesting a meeting with a teacher or principal, asking questions of the school district's Title IX coordinator, speaking with members of the school board or the district superintendent, or reaching out to a teachers' union representative for guidance or support. Even if school leadership has the best intentions, this step may not be the most effective if there are state-level policies that complicate the district's response.

Filing a local, state, or federal civil rights complaint will formally document the discrimination and could result in an investigation of the school district and a resolution process to ensure that the school district is in compliance with civil rights requirements. Formal complaints can also result in school districts reassessing discriminatory policies or behaviors that impact more than one student - meaning that filing a complaint can ultimately improve school climate in the district for all LGBTQ+ students.

Filing a lawsuit in court can challenge the validity of state and local policies or practices, assessing whether they are in accordance with federal civil rights law and constitutional guarantees. Litigation can be an effective strategy when discriminatory state policies are interfering with a school district's attempt to support LGBTQ+ people. While litigation often takes time, there are specific mechanisms to force quick decisions when there is a risk of immediate harm. For employment-related concerns under Title VII, litigation may require prior filing of a federal civil rights complaint.

Where can I reach out to for help in planning next steps?

GLSEN and other organizations are here to help as you determine the appropriate steps to report discrimination in your school district. For questions or to learn more about the options available to you, reach out to policy@glsen.org. For legal advice or assistance, reach out to one of the following legal helplines:

ACLU's National LGBTQ Project
helpgbtq@aclu.org

Lambda Legal Help Desk
www.lambdalegal.org/helpdesk

National Women's Law Center Fund's Legal Network for Gender Equity
www.nwlc.org/legal-assistance

National Center for Lesbian Rights Legal Help Line
800-528-6257
www.nclrights.org/get-help

Reporting discrimination takes time and is not responsive to an emergency scenario or immediate safety, mental health, or crisis concern. For immediate support, reach out to a crisis hotline, including:

LGBT+ National Hotline
888-843-4564
www.LGBThotline.org

LGBT National Youth Talkline
800-246-7743

How do I file a local civil rights complaint with my school district?

If you or someone you know is experiencing harassment, bullying, or discrimination at school for being LGBTQ+, one action that you can take to get support is to file a complaint with your school or school district. Schools are required to provide information about their grievance process to students and families, often through the school website or student handbook. Districts typically offer both a general grievance process and a complaint process specific to Title IX, which you can file directly with [your school district's Title IX Coordinator](#).

While Title IX complaint procedures at the school and district level include privacy and retaliation protections for complainants, some students and families may be concerned about enforcement of protections locally. If that is the case in your school district, you may consider filing a complaint directly at the state or federal level. Some states may require a local complaint to be filed before a state-level complaint can be filed; there is no similar requirement at the federal level and a federal Title IX complaint can be filed at any time within 180 days of the last discriminatory act.

How do I prepare or write a civil rights complaint?

Civil rights complaints generally take the form of a letter. In order to write a complaint, you should first gather information about what happened. When a student or educator experiences harassment or discrimination, it is important to document each incident for reporting. Complaints must be submitted in writing and should answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how. Include as much information as you know about each instance of discrimination. At a minimum, your complaint should include your name and contact information, the dates of the incidents, whether any witnesses exist and what their relationship to the incident was, the school where the incident took place, specific statements or actions that were made, and what steps you believe the school should take to resolve the problem. It is also helpful to document any attempts to seek assistance or report the harassment; sometimes, inaction from school staff can be an indicator of a civil rights violation. If you have copies of emails, reports, notes, or other documents that support your allegations, you may submit them alongside your complaint. Most school districts also have policies that allow anonymous complaints, though anonymous complaints can be more challenging to investigate.

If you believe that the incident was discrimination on the basis of a protected class (such as sexual orientation or gender identity), it is important to name the behavior as discrimination and explain why you think so. If the school or district has a nondiscrimination or anti-bullying policy that was violated, you can reference the policy in your letter. The ACLU of Oklahoma has produced a [template letter for school discrimination complaints](#) that can serve as an example.

Your school and school district should provide information about how to submit your written complaint. School districts may offer an online form that you can use to submit your complaint, accept physical copies of the letter in person at a central office, or accept complaints by email. Be sure to keep a copy of the complaint for your own records. While the specifics vary by state, school districts have a set time period in which they must respond to your complaint in writing. If the school does not comply with this timeline or fails to appropriately address your concerns, you have the right to appeal to the school district or your state's education agency.

Can someone file a complaint on my behalf?

There are many reasons that you may not want to sign your name onto a civil rights complaint. Even with strong privacy protections, some people who have faced discrimination may be concerned that personally identifiable information could be shared directly with the school or even be made public during the course of the investigation. Both Title IX and Title VII complaints allow other individuals - and even organizations - to file a complaint on your behalf so that any directly personal information can be more closely managed by a trusted partner. State processes likely mirror what is available at the federal level and should generally offer this option as well. GLSEN has worked with state equality groups to file complaints across the country on behalf of LGBTQ+ students who did not wish to be directly identified in the complaint. If you want to discuss finding an organization to file a complaint on your behalf, reach out to policy@glsen.org.

What remedies are available at the federal level?

Most school-based discrimination complaints will fall under Title IX, a federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools that receive federal funding. Under Title IX, “no person” may be subjected to sex-based discrimination in school, including students, staff, families, and other visitors to the school. Schools are required to prohibit verbal and physical harassment, while ensuring that students are not excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of school programs and activities. The U.S. Department of Education has recognized that Title IX extends to LGBTQ+ students since 2001, with federal courts independently finding that Title IX extends to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Title IX covers all public school districts and any private schools that receive federal funding, including grants or student loans. However, some private schools that do not receive any federal financial assistance are not covered by Title IX. There are also some exemptions for educational institutions operated by religious organizations.

At the local level, each school district is required to designate at least one employee as the Title IX coordinator for the district. Title IX coordinators are responsible for ensuring district compliance with Title IX and carrying out the school’s responsibilities under the law, including processing district-level Title IX complaints. Title IX coordinator contact information must be posted publicly to the school or district’s website and/or the student handbook. If you or someone you know is experiencing sex-based discrimination at school, you can file a Title IX complaint with the school or consider filing a federal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

Title IX is federally enforced by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Anyone can file a Title IX complaint against a school or school district, including students, parents, teachers, community members, and advocacy groups. Third parties may file a complaint on behalf of another person. Complaints may also be filed anonymously. Complaints can be filed using the Department’s [online form](#) or can be submitted through email, mail, or fax. Find more information about how to file a Title IX complaint at [OCR’s website](#).

For educators navigating employment-related claims, complaints may also be filed under Title VII with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC is an independent federal agency that enforces other federal nondiscrimination laws, including laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, pregnancy, race, disability, and sex. In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court expressly ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that Title VII’s prohibition on sex-based employment discrimination extends to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Unlike Title IX, Title VII requires that a complaint is filed with the EEOC and an investigation takes place before you can file a lawsuit. EEOC investigations may include subpoenas to your employer and could result in an offer for the EEOC to mediate your claim or even file a lawsuit on your behalf. If the EEOC chooses not to follow up on your complaint, they will let you know and you will then have 90 days to file a lawsuit. Complaints can be filed through the EEOC’s [online public portal](#) or by mail. For more information on how to file a complaint with the EEOC, visit the [EEOC website](#).

How quickly should I file a civil rights complaint?

Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after an incident of discrimination occurs, but it may be beneficial to take time to work with a LGBTQ+ rights organization or legal aid group to craft your complaint letter and assess your options. For Title IX complaints, OCR requires that complaints must be submitted within 180 days of the latest discriminatory action, unless OCR grants the complainant a waiver. If you opt to file a complaint at the local level and are unhappy with the outcome of that resolution process, you can file a complaint with OCR within 60 days of completing the district grievance process. It’s important to note that you cannot file a complaint with OCR and with the school or school district simultaneously. OCR will defer to the local education agency for the initial investigation unless you decide to appeal the district’s decision after that process is complete.

For Title VII complaints for educators navigating employment-related claims, complaints must also be submitted within 180 days of the latest discriminatory action. Some complainants may have 300 days to file if there is also a state or local anti-discrimination law that covers their claim.

What privacy protections are put in place to protect complainants?

There are strong federal privacy protections in place for individuals who file discrimination complaints. While OCR may receive personally identifiable information, including a complainant's name, in the process of investigating a Title IX complaint, OCR generally does not disclose that information without consent. If OCR opens a case for investigation, OCR will notify the school and request information from the school for the investigation. OCR typically does not share a complainant's name or other personally identifiable information outside of OCR for cases that focus on systemic issues or relate to another individual. OCR may request information from the school relating to the complainant if the complaint includes individually specific allegations, such as a report of particular instances of harassment.

For educators pursuing employment-related claims under Title VII, the EEOC is legally required to provide a copy of the charge of discrimination (e.g., complaint) to the employer within 10 days of it being filed. The EEOC is not required to share additional information with an employer that they have learned during the intake process.

After filing with either the U.S. Department of Education's OCR or the EEOC, complainants gain legal protection against retaliation for reporting discrimination. School districts are legally prohibited from taking adverse action to punish complainants for reporting discrimination, and any adverse action that is taken can be considered within the investigation or subsequent litigation. If potential complainants are still not comfortable with directly engaging with a federal civil rights agency, both OCR and the EEOC allow for organizations or other third parties to file claims of discrimination on their behalf, providing an additional layer of protection for personally identifiable information.

Which states have civil rights processes for LGBTQ+ people in schools?

State governments may establish complaint procedures under different state laws and regulations that protect people from discrimination in school on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. If you live in a state that offers specific protections for LGBTQ+ students, you have the option to file a discrimination complaint with a state entity, often the state Education Department or Human Rights Commission. Filing a state-level complaint can sometimes be a more strategic option than filing a federal Title IX complaint in states that have existing remedies for discrimination against LGBTQ+ students, and the federal Education Department will likely defer to the state complaint process for an initial investigation. Some states also have more comprehensive protections for LGBTQ+ students than those required by federal law.

Currently, twenty states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws expressly prohibiting discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Three states (Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah) have state regulations that expressly prohibit discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Two states (Delaware and Wisconsin) have laws expressly prohibiting discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation only. However, in Delaware, schools may be covered under a state law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in public accommodations. In one state (North Dakota), the state government interprets existing nondiscrimination law to prohibit discrimination in schools on the basis of sex, including sexual orientation or gender identity.

How are state civil rights complaint processes different from each other?

Some states use a local control model of education, meaning that more responsibility for management of public schools is assigned to local government (including district school boards) rather than a state education agency. States that rely on local control are more likely to defer to individual schools and districts to handle grievance processes internally. In these cases, you may be required to file a discrimination complaint with your local education agency (LEA) and complete that process before filing a state-level complaint. Some state agencies only accept state-level complaints as appeals of district decisions.

States may also have multiple departments that accept and process discrimination complaints in education, especially if the state clearly defines anti-discrimination protections for public accommodations to include K-12 schools. More information about each state's rules is outlined below.

Where to File Federal Civil Rights Complaints

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights investigates complaints of sex-based harassment under Title IX, including harassment against LGBTQ+ students.

Submit a complaint through the electronic complaint form at ocrcas.ed.gov or by emailing ocr@ed.gov. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action. Complaints can be filed against any institution that receives federal financial assistance, which covers nearly all public schools and many private schools as well. [This webpage](#) has more information on how to submit a federal civil rights complaint.

For educators facing employment-related discrimination, complaints of sex-based harassment under Title VII can be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action and must be filed with the EEOC in order to eventually file a lawsuit in court. Complaints can be filed through the [EEOC's public portal](#). More information can be found on the [EEOC's website](#).

Where to File State Civil Rights Complaints

California

The California Department of Education investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, the California Education Code §§ 200-220, and the School Success and Opportunity Act of 2013. Complaints are handled by the Department's Education Equity Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) Office.

Submit a complaint in California by email to eeucpo@cde.ca.gov or by mail to the California Department of Education, Education Equity UCP Office, 1430 N Street, Suite 5319, Sacramento, CA 95814. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action and may require prior filing of a complaint with the local education agency (e.g., school district). If you have questions, consult [CDE's website](#) or call the CDE-EEUCP Office at 916-319-8239.

Colorado

The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Civil Rights Division, investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in House Bill 21-1108 (2021) and Regulatory Rule 3 CCR 708-1.

Submit a complaint in Colorado through the electronic complaint form at [CaseConnect](#). Complaints must generally be filed within 60 days of the last discriminatory act. More information about legal protections is available on the [Colorado Department of Education's website](#) and more information about how to file a complaint is available at the [Civil Rights Division's website](#). For additional information, reach out to the Civil Rights Division at dora_ccrd@state.co.us or 303-894-2997.

Connecticut

The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in Public Act 11-55 (2011) and Section 10-15c(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Submit a complaint in Connecticut through the electronic complaint form at the [CHRO website](#). Complaints must generally be filed within 300 days of the last discriminatory act. Complaints are initially handled by intake officers at one of the Commission's regional offices. For more information, consult [CHRO's website](#).

Delaware

Both the Delaware Public Education Ombudsperson Program (DPEOP) and the Delaware Human and Civil Rights Commission investigate complaints of discrimination under state law. DPEOP investigates complaints of discrimination in schools on the basis of sexual orientation under Title 14, Section 225 of the Delaware Administrative Code. The Delaware Human and Civil Rights Commission investigates complaints based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations under Title 6, Section 4502 of the Delaware Code.

Submit a complaint in Delaware through electronic complaint forms. To request a parent/family consultation with DPEOP, use the referral form on the [DPEOP website](#). For additional support, you can call DPEOP at 302-327-1088 or visit [their website](#). To file a public accommodations complaint with the Commission, use the [intake form](#) on [their website](#). Complaints filed with the Commission must generally be submitted within 180 days of the last discriminatory act.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under District Code § 2-1402.41. Both the DC Public Schools Comprehensive Alternative Resolution & Equity Team (CARE) and the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR) investigate complaints of discrimination.

Submit a complaint in the District of Columbia through electronic complaint forms. Complaints can be filed with the DC Public Schools CARE team through an [online grievance form](#), with more information available on the [DCPS website](#). Complaints can be filed with the DC Office of Human Rights through an [online educational institutions questionnaire form](#), with more information available on [OHR's website](#). Complaints filed with OHR must be filed within one year of the last discriminatory act.

Hawai'i

The Hawai'i Department of Education's Civil Rights Compliance Branch (CRCB) investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in HB1489 (2018). Student protections are outlined in State Board of Education Policy 305-10 and school staff protections are outlined in State Board of Education Policy 900-1.

Submit a complaint in Hawai'i by emailing a complaint intake form to crcb@k12.hi.us. Intake forms for both student and school staff complaints are available on [CRCB's website](#). For assistance or more information, call 808-784-6325 or reach out to the appropriate regional equity specialist identified on CRCB's website.

Illinois

The Illinois Department of Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in Public Act 093-1078 (2006).

Submit a complaint in Illinois through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Department of Human Rights by completing the [complainant information sheet](#), saving the form, and submitting via email to IDHR.Intake@illinois.gov. More information can be found on [IDHR's website](#).

Iowa

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in Iowa Code § 216.9.

File a complaint in Iowa through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Civil Rights Commission through a [DocuSign intake form](#). Alternatively, you can fill out the [paper complaint form](#) and mail it to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50321-1270. Complaints must generally be filed within 300 day of the last discriminatory action. For more information, visit the [Commission's website](#) or call the Commission at 515-281-4121.

Maine

The Maine Human Rights Commission investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in 5 M.R.S. § 4552.

File a complaint in Maine through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Maine Human Rights Commission through an [electronic intake questionnaire](#). The [full form](#) is accessible on the [Commission's website](#). Complaints must generally be filed within 300 days of the last discriminatory act.

Maryland

The Maryland State Department of Education investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in HB 850/SB 666 (2022).

File a complaint in Maryland by emailing the State Department of Education. Complaints can be filed with the Department's Ombudsman, currently at teresa.dantzler1@maryland.gov. There is no specific complaint form. Complaints must generally be filed within 60 days of the last discriminatory action. For more information, visit the [Department's website](#) or call the Ombudsman's office at 410-767-0480.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in Mass. Gen. Laws, chapter 76, § 5.

File a complaint in Massachusetts through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Attorney General's Office's [Consumer Complaint intake form](#); be sure to select a "Discrimination or Civil Rights Violation" when filling out the form. For more information, visit the [Attorney General Office's website](#) or call the Civil Rights Division at 617-963-2917.

Michigan

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in SB4 (2023).

File a complaint in Michigan through an electronic form or by emailing MDCRservicecenter@michigan.gov. Complaints can be filed through the [online service request form](#). Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action. For more information, call 1-800-482-3604 or visit the [Department's website](#).

Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in Minn. Stat. § 363A.13.

File a complaint in Minnesota through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Department of Human Rights through the [online consultation inquiry form](#) and must generally be filed within one year of the last discriminatory action. For more information, call 1-833-454-0148 or visit the [Department's website](#).

Nevada

The Nevada Equal Rights Commission investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in NRS 651.050.3(k).

File a complaint in Nevada through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Nevada Equal Rights Commission through their [online intake form](#) as a public accommodations complaint and must generally be filed within 300 days of the last discriminatory action. For more information, visit the [Commission's website](#).

New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Commission for Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in SB263 (2019).

File a complaint in New Hampshire by email or calling 603-271-2767 to speak with an intake investigator. A [full complaint form](#) is available on the [Commission's website](#), which can be completed and submitted through email to humanrights@hrc.nh.gov. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), N.J.S.A. 10:5-12(11)(f).

File a complaint in New Jersey through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Division on Civil Rights through the [New Jersey Bias Investigation Access System](#) or by calling 862-350-5150. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory act. For more information, call 1-833-653-2748 or visit the [Division's website](#).

New Mexico

The New Mexico Human Rights Bureau investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in HB207 (2023).

File a complaint in New Mexico through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Human Rights Bureau through their [online inquiry form](#) as a public accommodations complaint. Complaints must generally be filed within 300 days of the last discriminatory act. For more information, visit the [Bureau's website](#).

New York

The New York State Division of Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in AB3661 (2010).

File a complaint in New York through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Division of Human Rights through their [online complaint form](#) or by filling out the [full complaint form](#) and mailing to a regional office listed on the document. Complaints must generally be filed within three years of the last discriminatory action. For more information, visit the [Division's website](#).

North Dakota

The North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights investigates complaints of discrimination in public services (including schools) based on sex. In 2020, the Department [issued an interpretation](#) that the *Bostock v. Clayton County* decision applies to North Dakota law and that the Department will investigate complaints related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

File a complaint in North Dakota through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can be filed with the Department of Labor and Human Rights through their [online complaint form](#) as a public services complaint. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminatory action. For more information, visit the [Department's website](#).

Oregon

The Oregon Department of Education investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in ORS § 659.850.

File a complaint in Oregon through an electronic complaint form. Complaints can only be filed if a formal complaint has already been filed with the individual school or school district. The [online intake form](#) for complaints and appeals can be found on the [Department's website](#).

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission investigates complaints of discrimination under the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act. In 2018, the Department [issued guidance](#) on sex-based discrimination clarifying that the Commission will investigate complaints related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

File a complaint in Pennsylvania by emailing the Commission. After filling out the [full complaint form](#), it can be sent to the Commission by email at phrc@pa.gov. Complaints must generally be filed within 180 days of the last discriminator action. For more information, visit the [Commission's website](#).

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Department of Education investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Protections are enshrined in state regulations at 200-RICR-30-10-1 (2018).

File a complaint in Rhode Island by emailing the Department. Complaints can only be filed if a formal complaint has already been filed with the individual school or school district. When an appeal is appropriate, fill out this [complaint form](#) and send it to the Department at legal@ride.ri.gov. For more information, consult [this resource](#) or visit the [Department's website](#).

Utah

The Utah State Board of Education's Internal Audit Department evaluates school compliance with regulatory requirements, including prohibitions on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state policy. State protections are enshrined in Utah Administrative Code Rule R277-217 (2020).

File a complaint in Utah through an electronic complaint form or email. Complaints can only be filed if a formal complaint has already been filed with the individual school or school district. If the local complaint cannot be resolved, complainants can contact the Internal Audit Department's Utah Public Education Hotline through their [online complaint form](#) or by emailing audit@schools.utah.gov. For more information, call 801-538-7813 or visit [their website](#).

Vermont

The Vermont Human Rights Commission investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined at 9 VSA § 4502.

File a complaint in Vermont by emailing the Commission. After filling out the [questionnaire for school complaints](#), it can be sent to human.rights@vermont.gov or mailed to 14-16 Baldwin Street, Montpelier, VT 05633. For more information, call the Commission at 802-828-2480 or visit the [Commission's website](#).

Virginia

The Virginia Office of Civil Rights investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in SB 868 (2020).

File a complaint in Virginia through an electronic complaint form or by email. Complaints can be submitted through the Office of Civil Rights [online complaint form](#) or by filling out the [full complaint form](#) and emailing it to CivilRights@oag.state.va.us. For more information, visit the [Office of Civil Rights website](#).

Washington

The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under state law. State protections are enshrined in RCW 49.60.040, RCW 28A.642.010, and RCW 28A.642.080.

File a complaint in Washington by email. Complaints can only be filed after a local complaint has been reviewed by the school district. Within 20 days of receiving the district's decision, complaints can be filed with OSPI by emailing equity@k12.wa.us. For more information, including contact information for district civil rights coordinators, visit [OSPI's website](#).

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction investigates complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation under state law. State protections are enshrined in Wis. Stat. § 118.13 (2001). For complaints related to gender identity, consult a legal helpline. Since 2017, federal courts in Wisconsin have recognized legal protections on the basis of gender identity.

File a complaint in Wisconsin by mailing a complaint to the Department. Complaints can only be filed after a local complaint has been reviewed by the school district. When an appeal is appropriate, mail your complaint to the Department of Public Instruction, Pupil Nondiscrimination Program, PO Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707. For more information, review [this resource](#) or visit the [Department's website](#).