

How to get help

You may request to meet with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss their rights, learn about accommodations, or file a complaint.

You should keep detailed notes about requests for accommodations, meetings with school staff or administrators, and comments made about your pregnancy or parenting status. This could include copies of emails, texts, or summaries of in person or phone meetings.

How to file a complaint

Check your student handbook and district website for more information on how to file a Title IX complaint.

If you believe you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, a Connecticut state agency. To file a complaint with the CHRO, you may fill out an online complaint inquiry form, submit a notarized complaint to the corresponding regional office either on your own or with the help of an attorney, or call your regional office for assistance.

<https://portal.ct.gov/chro/>

To file a complaint under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you may fill out an online form on the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division website.

<https://civilrights.justice.gov/>

You can file a complaint with the federal Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Education. If you have also filed a Title IX complaint, you must submit your OCR complaint within 60 days of the end of that process.

<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/file-complaint>

While in school, your rights are protected by state and federal laws.

You have the right to protection from harassment.

You have the right to excused absences and make-up work.

You have the right to breastfeed at school.

You have the right to stay in class.



Where can I get help?

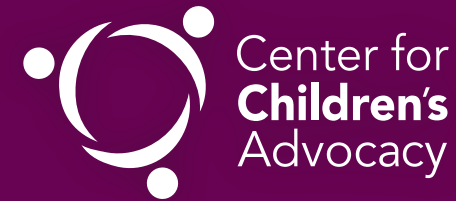
Information about your legal rights:

CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY

cca-ct.org • speakupteens.org

Hartford: 860-570-5327

Bridgeport: 203-335-0719



The information in this brochure is intended as reference only and should not be interpreted as legal advice in an individual case. If you need specific information about the law, please call us at 860-570-5327 or 203-335-0719.

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Pregnant or Parenting

What are my rights in school?

What laws protect the rights of pregnant and parenting students?

If you are pregnant or parenting while in school, your rights are protected by state and federal laws. Federal (United States) laws apply to students in every state. Connecticut's state laws provide extra protections for students here in Connecticut.

Chapter 814c is Connecticut's state law against identity-based discrimination. It bans discrimination based on pregnancy. CGS 10-15c also bans discrimination in school. The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) enforces both of these state laws. You can find more information about the CHRO at the end of this brochure.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the United States law against disability-based discrimination. The ADA doesn't specifically define pregnancy as a disability, but it applies to pregnancy-related disabilities like gestational diabetes or preeclampsia.

Title IX is the United States law against sex-based discrimination. It covers all public schools and private schools that receive federal money. It includes specific protections for students who are pregnant. Most of this brochure is about your rights under Title IX.

When in my pregnancy does Title IX apply to me?

The protections in Title IX apply when you are experiencing or recovering from:

- pregnancy
- childbirth
- termination of pregnancy
- lactation, or
- related medical conditions.



You have the right to protection from harassment.

Title IX protects pregnant students from harassment by school staff or peers. Under Title IX, schools must protect students from sexual harassment, including harassment based on pregnancy or parenthood. Sexual harassment is illegal if it is serious enough that it harms your ability to benefit from or participate in your education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, some examples of prohibited harassment include:

- making sexual comments or jokes about your pregnancy
- calling you sexually charged names

- spreading rumors about your sexual activity, or
- making sexual propositions or gestures.

You have the right to stay in class.

Throughout pregnancy, your school must let you stay in class and extracurriculars. This includes AP and honors classes, clubs, sports, honor societies, leadership opportunities, and other activities, like after-school programs operated at the school. If your school asks for a doctor's note to let you go to class, they must also ask for a note from every student who is being treated by a doctor. If your school has a separate class or program for pregnant students, it must be optional for you to join, and it must offer the same quality of education as your regular class.

You have the right to get reasonable accommodations.

Throughout pregnancy, your school must make reasonable accommodations to help you access learning. Example accommodations include:

- a larger desk
- frequent access to the bathroom
- elevator access
- schedule changes, or
- permission to stand or take breaks during class.

You may have the right to learn from home.

Under Title IX, if schools allow temporarily disabled students to learn from home, they must also offer this option to pregnant students. In Connecticut, the school board must consider your individualized needs and offer at-home learning and other options to help you access education.

For example, you could attend morning classes online and afternoon classes in person. As another example, you could mainly learn at home but have the option of attending in person on days when you feel well enough to be at school.

You have the right to excused absences and make-up work.

Your school must excuse absences for as long as your doctor deems medically necessary, and must offer make up work upon return. You should be allowed to choose how to make up missed work.

You also have the right to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before your medical leave began. Your school must also make sure that teachers' policies and practices do not discriminate against students due to pregnancy or related conditions. For instance, a teacher may not refuse to accept late work that was missed because of absences due to pregnancy or childbirth.

You have the right to breastfeed at school.

Lactating students are protected by both Title IX and Connecticut state law. Under Title IX, lactation is a pregnancy-related condition. Under Connecticut law schools cannot restrict your ability to breastfeed.

Reasonable accommodations related to lactation could include breaks during class or exams to eat, drink, use the restroom, or pump milk.

Additionally, negative comments about lactation or breastfeeding may constitute sexual harassment under both Title IX and Connecticut state law.