

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES SECTION**



The Educational Opportunities Section enforces federal laws that protect students from harassment and discrimination based on sex. The Section is directly responsible for enforcing Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (as well as race, color, national origin, and religion) in public schools and colleges and universities. The Section also plays a significant role in enforcing Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex by recipients of federal funds. The following are examples of harassment and other forms of discrimination that could violate these federal laws:

- ✚ Female middle school students are discouraged by guidance counselors from applying to special high school programs focused on math and science. The students are advised that these classes and programs would be a waste of their time because career opportunities for women in math and science fields are limited.
- ✚ A female college student is sexually assaulted by a fellow student. When she informs college administrators of the assault, she is advised to utilize only the college's informal grievance procedure and discouraged from taking further actions to avoid jeopardizing her alleged attacker's ability to graduate and secure a job.
- ✚ An openly gay male high school student experiences ongoing verbal and physical harassment by his peers, including crude sexual comments and unwanted sexual contact. Teachers issue warnings to the harassers, but the harassment continues. The student feels humiliated and afraid to attend school.
- ✚ A female high school student with blond hair tries out for the basketball team. The coach tells her, "We prefer our blonds on the cheerleading squad," and a "Barbie doll" like her is "not cut out for real sports." When the student tells the athletics director, she tells the student that she cannot do anything because it is up to the basketball coach to decide who makes the team.
- ✚ A high school sports schedule limits girls' soccer and track to nontraditional seasons. This shortens their playing seasons and reduces opportunities for them to be recruited for college sports. The school responds to complaints by asserting that it has satisfied its legal obligations by giving girls the opportunity to play the same sports as boys.
- ✚ A male middle school student is called "sissy," "girly," gay slurs, and feminized versions of his name by fellow students because he wears nail polish and displays stereotypically feminine speech and mannerisms. When the student informs his teacher and principal that he is being harassed, they advise him to "act like a young man" in order to stop "inviting" the attacks.

If you have experienced situations like the ones described above, you may have a claim of sex-based harassment and discrimination. To file a complaint, please contact:

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