



Tips for Advocates: Safety at School

Help Staying in School

- [Title IX](#) is a federal law that gives protection to middle school, high school, and college sexual assault and dating violence survivors. Each school must have a designated Title IX Coordinator who can provide accommodations even if the assault or dating violence is still under investigation or not reported.
- [Texas Education Code §37.0831](#) requires school districts to enforce protective orders, have school-based alternatives for protective orders, and counseling for affected students.
- Student safety plans should incorporate changes to schedule or extracurricular practice times, on-campus escorts, change of locker or housing, etc. At each of these levels, accommodations should burden the offender rather than the survivor (i.e. change the offender's schedule instead of the survivor's). [Love is Respect](#) has a sample teen safety plan. Safety plans can also include: protective orders, stay-away agreements or school-based alternatives to protective orders.
- Students can choose to make a report to law enforcement, campus officials, both, or neither.

Help with Administration

- Basic student rights under [Title IX include](#):
 - The school must have a clearly stated grievance procedure that provides prompt and equitable response to discrimination.
 - The school must provide both parties equal rights during the disciplinary process. (i.e. if offender is given the right to legal counsel, then the school must allow the victim that right as well).
 - During the disciplinary process, students have the right to have an advisor present, and can present evidence and testimony. Sexual assault survivors cannot be forced to participate in a mediation as part of the disciplinary process.
 - Law enforcement investigations do not relieve a school of its duties under Title IX, and investigations should not take more than 60 calendar days to complete.
- If at any point in the process, the school is not following their Title IX responsibilities, a student can file a complaint with the [Office of Civil Rights](#).
- Some consequences schools can face for not following Title IX responsibilities include loss of federal funding, a non-compliance finding, a voluntary resolution agreement, or a civil lawsuit for money damages.



Issues specific to Middle School and High School Students

- If you work with a student experiencing homelessness, know that each school district should have a homeless education liaison who helps students remain in their school of origin when facing homelessness as an unaccompanied minor. Find your district's liaison [here](#).
- A family violence program can provide emergency shelter services to minors without parental consent for 15 days. After 15 days, they can continue shelter services if they meet the requirements [Texas Family Code §32.201 and §32.202](#).
- A program can provide counseling services to minors without parental consent if those minors meet the criteria covered in [Texas Family Code §32.004](#).
- Check out TCFV's [Young Hearts Matter](#) resource for more information about how to connect with middle school and high school students.

Issues specific to College Students

- Ask the survivor if they would like help to connect to on-campus support, if available. Check out TAASA's [TX Safety U app](#) that connects college students, faculty, and staff with sexual assault victim assistance.
- If the survivor lives in student housing, they have the right under Title IX to change dorm rooms.

Additional Resources

- [Love is respect](#) – 24/7 helpline: 1-866-331-9474, Text: LOVEIS to 22522, or Chat: www.loveisrespect.org
- [Dating Matters](#) – CDC's online accredited training for administrators, educators, and teens working to improve the health of teen dating relationships
- [Young Hearts Matter](#) – TCFV's teen dating abuse prevention toolkit and campaign
- [Jane's Due Process](#) – provides legal rights and pregnancy options for Texas minors, Call: 1-866-999-5263, Text: 512-739-6292 M-F 7:00 am – 4:00 pm
- [Texas Advocacy Project Teen Justice Initiative](#) – get legal assistance and help applying for dating violence protective orders, Call: 1-800-374-5770
- [Texas Runaway Hotline](#) – 24/7 helpline: 1 (888) 580-4357 (HELP)