



The Institute for Jewish Civil Rights

Legal Protections for Jewish Students: Title VI Primer

What Is Title VI?

Jewish students have important legal protections under federal law. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”) protects Jewish students in K-12 schools and universities from discrimination and harassment based on their Jewish identity.

Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin, which includes shared ancestry and ethnicity, in programs receiving federal funding. It is important to understand that Jews receive Title VI protections based on their shared ancestry and ethnicity, not based on their religious identity or practices.

What Is a "Hostile Environment"?

Under Title VI, harassment creates a "hostile environment" when the harassment is so **severe or pervasive** that it limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from their educational program.

An institution can be found liable for violating Title VI if it had: 1) **notice** of the hostile environment and (2) failed to take **prompt and effective** steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent the harassment from recurring.

What to Do if You Encounter Antisemitism

Document everything. Take photos, screenshots and videos where possible. Keep a log of what happened with dates, names and details. Promptly notify the school or university in writing, copying high-level administrators. Consider seeking legal assistance.

Identifying Antisemitism

Federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (“OCR”) that are charged with enforcing Title VI are required to consider the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition](#) of antisemitism and its contemporary examples when evaluating complaints of antisemitism.

Important Timelines

Complaints to OCR must be filed within 180 days of the discriminatory act. Deadlines for filing Title VI cases in federal court can vary by jurisdiction.

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The Institute is committed to protecting Jewish civil rights, and provides legal assistance to those who have experienced antisemitic discrimination and harassment. For more information, contact us at info@jcivilrights.org or visit jcivilrights.org.