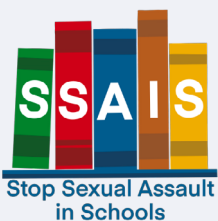


Guide

# Supportive Measures for Students Experiencing Sexual Harassment and Harm

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[www.ssais.org](http://www.ssais.org)

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## ➤ What are supportive measures?

Supportive measures (or “accommodations”) are free services and adjustments your school is required to give you if you experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other sexual harm.

They are meant to help you feel safe and keep learning at school during and after you report sexual harm.

Supportive measures are not punishment. They are accommodations the school provides to protect the reporting student so that they can continue participating in classes, activities, and school life. Supportive measures are also available to the student who committed harm to ensure a fair process that does not punish them before an investigation is complete.

## ➤ When must supportive measures be offered?

Your school must promptly offer supportive measures once it learns about possible sexual harassment or sexual violence (some harassing behaviors may also fall under school bullying policies). The goal is to help you stay safe and continue your education.

Even if the school determines that the reported conduct does not meet the federal definition of sexual harassment (conduct that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive enough to deny equal access to education), the school must still consider and offer supportive measures to help you maintain access to your education. Schools may also provide supportive measures when the sexual harm occurred off campus or outside school hours, if there is a connection to the school (for example, if the person who caused the harm is a student or otherwise part of the school community).



The district or school's Title IX Coordinator should reach out to talk with you about what support you need and what options are available.

Supportive measures should be available:

- As soon as the school learns about possible sexual harassment or assault (and other types of discrimination, for example based on race, religion, or disability)
- Before, during, or after a Title IX complaint or investigation
- Even if you decide not to file a formal complaint
- Even if you do not want the school to investigate

This includes situations where:

- You report harassment or assault to a teacher or other school employee
- A parent, friend, or another student tells the school
- The school learns about the situation in another way

## ➤ What are some examples of supportive measures?

Supportive measures should be based on what you need and what the school can reasonably provide. Your school can offer these supports for as long as you need them to feel safe and keep learning.

Supporting safety (sometimes called a safety plan):

- Changing class schedules so you can avoid the person who caused harm. Their schedule can be changed so that the reporting student's schedule remains the same.
- No-contact orders between you and the other student
- Changes to seating, lunch periods, or extracurricular activities
- Staff escorts between classes or other safety planning
- Increased supervision in certain areas of the school

Supporting health and well-being:

- Allow you to select a support person of your choosing
- Permit you take a break or leave the classroom to visit your guidance counselor or school nurse, therapist, or psychologist whenever you are feeling anxious or afraid
- Arrange for counseling, mental health services, or medical care
- Permit flexible attendance or temporary leave if needed

Supporting academic performance:

- Grant extensions on your assignments or deadlines
- Arrange for you to take classes online
- Arrange for tutoring or extra academic help
- Adjust grades or allow for make-up work
- Allow you to stay in school activities, leadership roles, or honors programs if GPA, credit, or attendance rules would otherwise disqualify you from participation



- How does the school keep track of the supportive measures that it provides?
  - Your school must keep a written record of the supportive measures.
  - You can ask for a written copy of your supportive measures.
  - Your school should share this information only with school staff who need to know so they can help carry out the supports.
  - The student who caused harm should only be told about supportive measures that directly involve them (for example, a no-contact order).
  
- What kinds of supportive measures are available to students who do not want to disclose details about the harm caused and want to protect their privacy?

Students who want support but do not feel comfortable sharing details about what happened still have options.



Most school staff and many other adults are mandated reporters. They are legally required to report suspected child abuse or sexual misconduct to police or child protective services. You might want to first speak with a confidential advocate (someone who is not a mandated reporter), such as a staff member from a sexual assault response agency. A confidential advocate can talk with you about your options and, if you choose, communicate with the school on your behalf without making a mandatory report.

If you want to avoid a mandated report, you can ask for advice using a hypothetical situation—for example, saying you are asking for a friend. Describe the situation without naming people. Do not share identifying details. This allows adults to explain options without making a mandatory report.

You should never be forced to share details of an incident (sometimes called “disclosing”) to receive help. If the school asks you questions, having an advocate present can make a big difference. They can help you assert your right not to disclose and remind school staff that your safety and ability to learn should come first.

If your sense of safety at school (or school events) or your academic performance has been affected by harassment or violence and you do not want to report to the school, you may still be able to request supportive measures without making a formal report. These supports may be more limited, but they can still help. You can:

- Tell the school that you have experienced something that is affecting you, without sharing details that would allow an investigation. For example, do not disclose details about what happened, when, where, or who harmed you.
- Refuse to share details. You are not required to answer questions, even if asked by school staff, police, or child protective services. It's possible that a mandatory report could still be made, but if you do not provide details the case will likely be closed.
- Ask the school to treat your request as a need for mental health support or safety accommodations, rather than a report against a specific person.
- Focus on the impact that you are experiencing and the accommodations that will help you, rather than describing what happened.
- Explain how long you may need accommodations and who can help you determine the length of time you need them (for example, a school counselor or a private therapist). If you do not want to participate in an investigation you do not have to disclose details to the people helping you. If they are required to make a mandatory report, you still have the right to refuse to provide information.

Understanding what behaviors are considered sexual harassment or sexual assault will help you feel more confident asking for supportive measures. Explore the resources below, as well as others in the “Learn” menu on the Stop Sexual Assault in Schools website. You can also find examples of safety plans for targeted students online.

Remember, if you experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other types of harm, you have the right to supportive measures at school.

## More resources:

- [Sexual Harassment Defined](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Defined and Its Impact on Students](#)
- [Access sexual assault service providers for confidential advocates](#)
- [Limits to Confidentiality When Reporting Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Know What to Do When Sexually Assaulted](#)
- [Sexual Harassment and Assault of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Sexual Harassment and Assault Happen to Males Too](#)
- [Sexual Harassment and Students of Color](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct by School Employees](#)
- [How Schools Can Take Steps to Effectively Address Sexual Harassment While Complying with the Trump Title IX Rule](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on Title IX and Supportive Measures for K-12 Students](#)

## Stop Sexual Assault in Schools

- [Stop Sexual Assault in Schools Website](#)
- [SSAIS YouTube](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- Email [info@stopsexualassaultinschools.org](mailto:info@stopsexualassaultinschools.org)

