

From: Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights <AssistantSecretaryCivilRights@ed.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 4, 2023 2:46 PM
To: Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights <AssistantSecretaryCivilRights@ed.gov>
Subject: OCR Releases New Fact Sheet on Title VI Protection from Discrimination Based on Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics

Today, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released a fact sheet, [Protecting Students from Discrimination Based on Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics](#), explaining ways that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which protects students from race, color, and national origin discrimination, covers students who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or of another religious group.

The rise in reports of anti-Semitic incidents, including at schools, underscores the critical importance of addressing discrimination based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. For decades, OCR has investigated and resolved complaints of discrimination, including harassment, based on a student's shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity under our Title VI jurisdiction. For example, OCR recently resolved complaints involving allegations of anti-Semitism and opened several new investigations related to shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. Information about OCR's recent case resolutions under Title VI is available [here](#). In addition, OCR's Civil Rights Data Collection gathers information from schools and school districts about incidents of student harassment based on religion.

Today's fact sheet is just one of several resources that OCR has released to inform schools of their obligations under Title VI to address discrimination against students, including discrimination based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. Additional resources, including a Questions and Answers guide released in January 2021 that affirms OCR's commitment to complying with Executive Order 13899 on Combating Anti-Semitism, are available on the Shared Ancestry or Ethnic Characteristics page of OCR's website.

Each of us has a role to play in protecting students from discrimination based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. Thank you for your commitment to providing students a safe learning environment that is free from discrimination.

Sincerely,

Catherine E. Lhamon
Assistant Secretary
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education