

Filing a PRS (Problem Resolution System)

If you believe your child's school district is not following special education laws, you have the right to file a Problem Resolution System (PRS) complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This process helps parents and guardians resolve violations related to special education services, IEP implementation, and students' rights.

Why File a PRS Complaint?

You should file a PRS complaint if:

- Your child's IEP is not being followed (e.g., services, accommodations, and modifications listed in the IEP are not being provided).
- Your child is not receiving required special education services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, transportation).
- Your child is not receiving services from a qualified professional as required by law.
- The district refuses to evaluate your child for special education after a written request.
- Your child was found ineligible for an IEP, or their IEP is being removed, and you disagree with the evaluation data, its interpretation, or the decision.
- The school is not following timelines or procedures in the IEP process (e.g., delayed meetings, missing progress reports).
- Your child is experiencing bullying or discrimination, and the school is failing to take appropriate action.
- Your child is being denied a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) due to procedural violations or lack of support.

This process ensures schools comply with state and federal special education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Massachusetts special education regulations (603 CMR 28.00).

How to File a PRS Complaint

Filing a complaint is free and can be done online by email, mail, or fax. Follow these steps:

Step 1: Gather Information

Before filing, collect:

- A copy of your child's IEP or 504 Plan (if applicable).
- Emails, letters, or communication with the school regarding the issue.
- Evaluation reports or data if you disagree with an eligibility decision.
- Documentation that supports your claim (e.g., service logs, progress reports, incident reports).
- Notes from meetings or discussions with school personnel.

Step 2: Access the PRS Complaint Portal

To file your complaint online:

- Visit the DESE Website: Open your web browser and go to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) homepage.
- Find the Problem Resolution System (PRS) Page: On the DESE homepage, click on 'Special Education' in the top menu. Scroll down and find the 'Problem Resolution System (PRS)' section, or use the site's search bar to type 'PRS complaint' and select the first result.
- Access the Online Complaint Form: On the PRS page, look for the 'File a Complaint' section and click on 'File a Complaint Online' to open the submission form.

- You can also access the complaint form directly at:
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/intake/default.html>

Step 3: Complete the Complaint Form

When filling out the form, include:

- **Your Information:** Name, address, phone number, and relationship to the student.
- **Student's Information:** Full name, date of birth, school, and district.
- **Description of the Issue:** Clearly explain the problem, including what happened, when, and how it violates special education laws.
- **Attempts to Resolve:** Describe any steps you have taken to address the issue with the school or district.
- **Requested Resolution:** Explain what action you believe would resolve the issue for your child.
- Attach supporting documents directly to the form.

Step 4: Submit Your Complaint

After completing the form:

- Review your responses to ensure accuracy.
- Click 'Submit' to send your complaint electronically.
- If you prefer to file by mail, email, or fax, you can download the complaint form and send it to:

****Email:**** DESECompliance@mass.gov

****Mail:****

Problem Resolution System Office

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

135 Santilli Highway

Everett, MA 02149

****Fax:**** (781) 338-3710

What Happens Next?

Once you submit your complaint:

- **Acknowledgment**— You will receive receipt of your complaint within 3-5 business days.
- **Investigation** – A PRS investigator may contact you and the district for more information. This may involve reviewing documents and conducting interviews.
- **Decision** – DESE will issue a written decision within 60 days, explaining whether the school district violated laws and what actions must be taken.
- **Corrective Action (if needed)** – If DESE finds a violation, the district must create a corrective action plan, and DESE will follow up to ensure compliance.

Your Rights: No Retaliation

****The school district cannot retaliate against you or your child for filing a PRS complaint.**** This means:

- The school cannot treat your child unfairly because you filed a complaint.
- The district cannot take negative action against you, such as limiting your participation in meetings or making it harder for you to communicate with school staff.
- If you experience retaliation, you can file an additional complaint with DESE.