

EDUCATION CRISIS

The First 24 Hours Checklist

A clear first-response plan for a school or college incident, discipline notice, assault, injury, or school-bus accident.



IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 911 or obtain emergency medical care first. Preserve evidence only when it is safe to do so.

Protect the student. Protect the record.

The goal of the first day is not to win the entire case. It is to stabilize the situation, preserve what can disappear, and avoid decisions that are difficult to undo.

1

Safety and immediate care

Do this first

Move the student to safety. For an emergency, call 911 or obtain medical care before dealing with school paperwork.

Document visible injuries and symptoms with dated photographs and notes. Keep discharge papers, bills, prescriptions, and provider instructions.

If the student is overwhelmed, avoid repeated interviews. Record the student's own words once, as accurately as possible, without coaching.

2

Freeze the evidence

Before video, messages, or records are overwritten

Send a short written preservation request identifying the date, time, location, people involved, cameras, bus route, and records that must be retained.

Save original photos, videos, emails, texts, portal messages, social posts, and voicemails. Export or screenshot them with dates and names visible.

Do not edit original files. Make a working copy and back everything up in a second location.

Write a witness list with names, contact information, what each person saw, and how you learned it.

3

Build a clean chronology

While details are still fresh

Create a minute-by-minute or event-by-event timeline. Separate what you personally observed from what someone else reported.

List every school or college contact, including calls, meetings, notices, threats, promises, and deadlines.

Download relevant handbooks, codes of conduct, policies, IEP/504 plans, accommodations, evaluations, and prior complaints.

What to preserve for the strongest cases

Use the track closest to the incident. A matter may fit more than one category.

Assault, sexual assault, hazing, or injury	Medical records; photographs; clothing or physical evidence; camera locations; incident reports; prior warnings; supervision schedules; names of witnesses; communications with administrators.	School-bus accident or assault	Bus number and route; driver and aide names; onboard and exterior video; GPS/telematics; seating chart; maintenance records; dispatch audio; police or EMS report; prior bus complaints.
College discipline or Title IX	Notice of allegations; interim restrictions; hearing and appeal deadlines; policies in effect on the incident date; evidence packet; witness communications; recordings; accommodation requests.	Private-school dispute	Enrollment contract; handbook; tuition and refund terms; disciplinary notices; accreditation materials; emails; safety policies; promised services; meeting notes; witness information.
IEP, 504, disability, or placement	Current and prior plans; evaluations; progress data; service logs; discipline records; attendance; parent requests; notices; meeting invitations; recordings where lawful; proposed placement documents.	Bullying or dangerous conditions	Every report to the institution; names of administrators notified; incident pattern; screenshots; witness names; safety plans; discipline responses; prior similar incidents; impact on attendance, health, or learning.

DO NOT

Do not sign, delete, surrender devices, post publicly, coach witnesses, or agree to a recorded statement before you understand the consequences. Do not assume the institution's deadline is the only deadline that matters.

Put the essentials in one place

A concise, organized file helps a lawyer identify urgency, deadlines, missing evidence, and the strongest next move.

01	Student and institution	Student name, age/program, school or college, campus, grade/year, and relevant disability or accommodation information.
02	The event	Date, time, location, what happened, who was involved, and what the institution has said or done.
03	Immediate harm	Injury, safety concern, removal, suspension, no-contact order, housing impact, lost services, reputational harm, or academic consequence.
04	Deadlines	Hearing, appeal, response, meeting, enrollment, tuition, insurance, and any court or agency deadlines you have been given.
05	Evidence at risk	Video, bus footage, swipe/access data, portal records, device data, social media, witness memories, physical evidence, or changing online policies.
06	Your goal	Safety, return to class, discipline defense, record correction, services, placement, accommodation, tuition relief, accountability, or compensation.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE FIRM DIRECTLY

For a serious injury, physical or sexual assault, hazing, dangerous condition, or school-bus accident, the matter may be reviewed without purchasing a LISS. For other matters, the LISS process can help organize the documents, deadlines, and legal questions before attorney review.

Request a case review: educationlawyers.com/liss | Call 888-959-5529

This material is educational and general. It is not legal advice, does not predict an outcome, and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Laws, policies, facts, and deadlines vary. Do not delay emergency care or rely on this checklist instead of advice about your specific situation.