

Residential Placement Education Complaint Form

Prepared by the Education Law Center-PA (ELC-PA) for complaints to the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding the education of children and youth in residential placements

This ELC-PA Residential Placement Education Complaint Form is provided to facilitate the filing of complaints to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on behalf of a student or students who are currently or have been “publicly placed” in a residential facility. This means that the child or youth was placed in the residential placement through the court system or a county children and youth agency. These students may be educated in schools, educational programs, or through virtual learning. Anyone can file a complaint to raise concerns regarding the quality of education students are receiving and/or denial of access to a public school in the school district where the residential placement is located. You can raise concerns regarding a specific student or policies and practices that impact many students. You also have the option of entering the names of students or identifying a group of students being harmed.

Background

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) launched a new [Complaint Form](#) in March 2025. This form can be submitted by anyone to report educational concerns on behalf of a “publicly placed” school-aged child or youth who is or has been educated in a school or program associated with a residential placement. A complaint can raise concerns regarding educational programs associated with “child residential facilities” (defined as any facility operated in a 24-hour living setting that provides care for one or more children), detention centers, state correctional facilities, and Private Residential Rehabilitative Institutions (PRRI). A publicly placed student is defined as any child or youth placed in a child residential facility through a court, the juvenile justice system, or a children and youth agency, including a PRRI, detention center, or state correctional facility. PDE has a clear legal obligation to ensure that students who are learning in these settings have access to a “[high-quality, safe, and appropriate education, regardless of location](#).”

The PDE complaint webpage redirects complainants to different forms to report [special education concerns](#), [educator misconduct](#), and [curriculum deficiencies](#). It also allows complainants to directly report “[other educational complaints](#)” relating to children directly to PDE. The [website](#) provides more information about how to choose the appropriate field or category and submit the appropriate form, depending on the type of concern being reported.

Many issues are intersectional — they fit in more than one category. Recognizing this, ELC-PA developed this new form to facilitate the filing of residential facility education complaints.

You can email it, along with any supporting documentation (which is not required), to the PDE Monitoring and Accountability Office at RA-EDPubPlacedCompl@pa.gov. Please copy (cc) ELC-PA on the email at residentialfacilitiescomplaint@elc-pa.org so that we can help track and follow up on your complaint. We also encourage you to follow up with PDE directly to confirm that your complaint was received.

1. Type of Educational Concern

Check all categories that describe your concern — you may check more than one box:

- ☐ Failure to receive appropriate special education services
- ☐ Failure to receive a grade-appropriate high-quality education
- ☐ Denied access to local public school in the absence of a court order requiring the child to be educated in the residential facility
- ☐ Educator/teacher misconduct

- ☐ Curriculum deficiencies (*e.g.*, failure to provide the required number of instruction hours or legally required courses in a subject area)
- ☐ Facility/program deficiencies (*e.g.*, no school is operating; staffing or support is inadequate)
- ☐ Safety concerns (*e.g.*, use of restraints, unsafe conditions or unsafe practices affecting education)
- ☐ Students struggling to learn through virtual program
- ☐ Other educational concern (*describe below*)

If "Other," briefly describe:

Note: PDE also maintains separate, dedicated complaint processes for special education, educator misconduct, and curriculum deficiency. If your concern involves only one of those categories, you may want to also file through that dedicated process. If you're not sure which process(es) apply, contact ELC-PA , and we can help guide you.

2. Preferred Method of Contact

My preferred method of contact by the investigator assigned to this complaint:

- ☐ By phone (*please provide number below*)

Phone Number: _____

Best time during normal business hours to call:

- ☐ By email (*please provide address below*)

Email Address: _____

3. Complainant Information

I am filing this complaint on behalf of:

- ☐ One specific student
- ☐ A group of students (*e.g.*, all or some students at a facility or in a program)
- ☐ A general concern not tied to a specific student

Please provide your contact information and relationship to the student(s)..

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Relationship to student(s):

☐ Parent ☐ Guardian ☐ Student ☐ Attorney ☐ Advocate ☐ Facility/Program Staff ☐ Other:

4. Student Information

If you are filing on behalf of **one specific student**, complete the fields below.

Student's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Home Address (residence): _____

County: _____

If you are filing on behalf of **a group of students**, complete this section instead (or in addition).Describe the group of students affected (*e.g.*, all students enrolled in a particular program, unit, or facility):

Approximate number of students affected:

5. Placement and Facility Information

Name of Facility/Program: _____

Type of facility:

☐ Child Residential Facility or Group Home ☐ Juvenile Justice Placement ☐ Detention Center
☐ State Correctional Facility ☐ PRRI ☐ Other: _____

Is the student(s) “publicly” placed, meaning that the student was placed through a court, the juvenile justice system, or a children and youth agency?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Name of Placing Authority (court, juvenile justice system, and/or county children and youth agency):

School District of Residence (if known):

Does the facility operate an on-grounds school or educational program?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
Name of School/Educational Program at the Residential Facility (*e.g.* Martin Luther School at Gemma Services RTF): _____

Facility Contact Person: _____

Facility Telephone: _____

6. Nature of the Complaint

Is the issue you are reporting currently occurring, or did it occur within the past year? On or about what date?

Please provide a statement about the violation(s) or issue(s) you believe have occurred. Include a description of the nature of the problem(s), the facts that support your statement, and, if known, a suggested solution. There is no length limit — attach additional pages if you need more space.

7. Witnesses (Optional)

To help clarify my allegations, I would like the reviewer to consider speaking with the following person(s):

Name	Occupation/Title	Phone Number / E-mail Address

8. Certification and Signature

By signing below, I certify that the information provided in this complaint is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Where to Send This Form

Please email the completed form, along with any supporting documentation, to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education – Monitoring and Accountability Office

Email: RA-EDPubPlacedCompl@pa.gov

And please cc: **Education Law Center – PA**
Email: residentialfacilitiescomplaint@elc-pa.org