

About Us

The Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC) is a community legal clinic set up under the laws of Ontario in 2017.

BLAC delivers legal aid services to low and no income Black Ontarians. We work to combat individual and systemic anti-Black racism by:

- providing legal representation, summary legal advice and brief services to individual clients
- engaging in test case litigation, law reform and community development to improve the laws that affect low income people
- giving public legal information sessions to members of the public and other community agencies

We can help you with education-related issues if you believe you were treated differently because you are Black.

For example, if

- you were bullied based on your race, colour or ancestry
- you were disproportionately disciplined because of your race
- you were consistently ignored, dismissed or disciplined for raising anti-Black racism issues
- any educator or staff acted inappropriately (e.g. racist language, behaviours)

All services are free to those who qualify.
Clients may be required to pay expenses associated with their case if they are able.

Education Act

The Education Act is the law that sets out the responsibilities, obligations and rules around government-funded schools in Ontario.

Suspension

A suspension is a form of punishment that means you are not permitted to attend school, classes or extra-curricular activities for a period of time. No suspension can be less than 1 school day and cannot exceed 20 school days.

A suspension will be considered whether the incident happens at school, at a school-related activity, or in any other circumstances where the behaviour has a negative impact on the school climate (e.g. cyberbullying).

Discretionary: Your principal has the choice to suspend (e.g. uttering a threat; bullying)

Mandatory: Your principal has no choice to suspend you (e.g. possession a weapon; sexual assault)

Notice of Suspension

You have the right to be given formal notice of your suspension. Your principal is required to make all reasonable efforts to inform your parent(s) or guardian(s) of the suspension **within 24 hours**.

Appeal of Suspension

You and/or your parent(s) or guardian(s) have the right to appeal your suspension. An appeal means you can ask for the school board to review your principal's decision and potentially overturn the suspension. You must give written notice of your intention to appeal within **10 school days** of the start of the suspension.

Expulsion

An expulsion is when your principal recommends to the school board that you should no longer attend your school on a permanent basis. This can be your school only or any school covered under your school board.

If your suspension is mandatory (your principal has no choice to suspend you), expulsion will be considered.

If a principal recommends to the board, after an investigation, that you should be expelled, the board has to hold an expulsion hearing.

Decisions

After completing the hearing, the board will decide whether to expel you from your school only or from all schools of the board.

The board cannot expel you if **more than 20 school days** have passed since you were suspended (unless everyone agrees on a later deadline)

You and/or your parent(s) or guardian(s) can appeal the board's decision to expel you.

Your Right to Challenge

Your right to review or challenge decisions made by the school system is time sensitive. Please contact BLAC for legal advice soon after receiving any information about disciplinary action.

Human Rights

Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario

If you believe that you were discriminated against in school because you are Black, please contact BLAC.

We can assist you by providing:

- advice if you wish to make a Human Rights complaint
- representation in appropriate circumstances

Anti-Black Racism

BLAC recognizes that the experiences of Black Canadians today are rooted in this country's history of colonialism, enslavement and segregation.

Our mandate is to challenge individual and systemic anti-Black racism in systems (e.g. education, criminal justice) and on behalf of individuals.

What this means is that we will be able to assist you if you qualify financially and the legal issue you are facing includes elements of anti-Black racism.

Confidentiality

All information you give us about your legal problem is confidential – whether we are providing you with advice, referring you to somewhere else for help, or representing you at a court or tribunal.

Contact:

Head Office: 720 Spadina Ave, Suite 221
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T9

Phone: 416-597-5831 / Toll Free: 1-877-736-9406

Fax: 416-925-3564 / Toll Free: 1-844-302-2694

Email: info@blacklegalactioncentre.ca

Website: www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca

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BLACK LEGAL ACTION CENTRE

Education Law Resource

