

If It Happens

What to do in the first 24 hours when your son calls.

Parent Edition

If your son remembers nothing else, he must remember this sentence:

"I need to speak with my attorney before I answer any questions."

Do not allow him to provide statements to anyone – campus police, Title IX staff, administrators, or university officials – without an attorney present.

SECTION 1

When He Calls – The First Conversation

Stay calm. The goal of this call is to gather information and stop any further statements.

Ask in this order:

Ask	What to do with the answer
"Have you already talked to anyone?"	If yes: ask who, and what he said exactly. This affects your attorney's strategy.
"Are campus police or local police physically there now?"	If yes: tell him to say "I need to speak with my attorney before I answer any questions," then call you back from somewhere private.
"Where are you? Are you safe?"	Confirm he is in a private location and not in the middle of an interview or confrontation.

Tell him:

"Do not leave your room. Do not answer the door. Do not respond to any emails or texts. Do not post anything. I am calling our attorney right now and I will call you back within 20 minutes."

SECTION 2

Your First Hour

Contact your Title IX defense attorney immediately.

When you reach the attorney, provide:

Your son's name and the university.

A brief factual description of what he has been accused of.

Whether he has already spoken with anyone, and if so, what he said.

Whether law enforcement is currently present.

If you do not yet have an attorney identified: search "[city near campus] Title IX defense attorney" or contact FACE (facecampusequality.org) for referrals. The Family Readiness Checklist covers identifying an attorney before this moment arises.

SECTION 3

First 24 Hours — What to Coordinate

Once the attorney is involved, they will direct most next steps. In parallel, coordinate the following:

Tell your son — or confirm the attorney has told him:

- Make no statements to Title IX staff, campus police, or local police.
- Do not meet with anyone from the university without the attorney present.
- Do not contact the accuser or anyone close to her.
- Do not post about the situation on any platform.
- Do not discuss the situation with friends — friends can be interviewed.
- Do not delete anything from his phone.

Begin preserving evidence (coordinate with attorney before sharing anything):

- Text messages between your son and the accuser
- Text messages with friends who were present
- Photos or videos from that night with timestamps
- Uber/Lyft receipts or any location history from his phone
- Keycard or building access records, if applicable
- Names and contact information of any witnesses
- Your son's written account of events — for the attorney's eyes only

Determine whether criminal charges have also been filed:

Title IX proceedings and criminal proceedings are separate processes with separate standards. If both are active, you may need both a Title IX defense attorney and a criminal defense attorney. Your attorneys can coordinate to avoid inadvertent self-incrimination across both proceedings.

SECTION 4

Removing Your Son from Campus

Discuss this option with the attorney early. Removing your son from campus can:

- Reduce the likelihood of further incidental contact with the accuser or her friend group.
- Reduce the risk of additional statements made under social pressure.

Allow him to continue coursework remotely while the process proceeds, if the university permits it.

This is not automatic and carries its own implications. Let the attorney advise on timing and approach.

SECTION 5

Support Resources

Families Advocating for Campus Equality (FACE)

FACE maintains a support network for families navigating campus conduct proceedings. They can provide guidance, connect you with others who have been through this process, and offer referrals to experienced Title IX defense attorneys.

Website: facecampusequality.org

Mental health support for your son:

An accusation is an acute stressor. Seek support from an off-campus therapist — not from university counseling services, as those staff may be mandatory reporters under your school's Title IX policy.

Mental health support for your family:

Parents and siblings are also affected. This is an appropriate time to identify your own support resources.

Quick Reference — Key Phrases

Situation	Say this
Campus police contact him	"I need to speak with my attorney before I answer any questions."
Title IX office contacts him	"I've been advised not to discuss this without my attorney present."
He calls you	"I need you to call me right now. Someone is accusing me of something and I haven't talked to anyone yet."

See the Essential Scripts & Protocols — Parent Edition for the complete pre-college conversation framework, handling objections, and the location sharing agreement.