

# LAWSUIT: Kanye West's California private school is a code violation nightmare, engaged in racial discrimination

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, April 7, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- A copy of the lawsuit can be found in this Google Drive folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sC5nTPySMgKGid3HudNylMnLQ2AAm-BF?usp=sharing>

LAWSUIT: Kanye West's private Christian school violated education, health and safety codes, terminated educators based on race and retaliation, and failed to fully pay teachers

Doors locked from the outside. No forks or utensils. No chairs to sit on. Unsecured and expired medications. No cleaning services or school nurse. And one meal a day – sushi.

These are just a few of the peculiar — and in some instances illegal — rules in place at Kanye West's secretive Southern California private Christian school as alleged in a wrongful termination lawsuit filed Thursday in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

The controversial Grammy Award-winning artist, who legally changed his name to Ye, opened Simi Valley's Donda Academy — named after his late mother — in 2021. He now serves as the Chief Executive Officer, Secretary and Chief Financial Officer and is named as a defendant in the complaint along with the school and three of its directors.

Plaintiffs Cecilia Hailey and her daughter Chekarey Byers were employed as teachers at the school with Hailey being hired in 2022 and Byers in January 2023. The lawsuit alleges they were



fired in March 2023 in retaliation for reporting code violations, that they were discriminated against based on their race and illegally had wages withheld or were repeatedly improperly paid.

Shortly after taking the job, according to the lawsuit, Byers began noticing numerous health and safety violations, unlawful educational practices and extremely unusual rules. Nothing was ever done after she repeatedly took her complaints to a school director.

“No action was taken to remedy plaintiffs’ complaints regarding sanitation, health, safety or education standard pursuant to local and state law, which plaintiffs made throughout the entirety of their employment,” the lawsuit states.

Instead, according to the complaint, Byers and Hailey were met with pushback and called “aggressive,” behavior the plaintiffs believed “facilitates stereotypes about African American women as being confrontational simply for doing their job and voicing their legitimate concerns in order to provide a safe environment and proper education for their students.”

“I’m just tired of the rhetoric being that Black women who are competent are seen as aggressive,” Hailey said.

Byers and Hailey were the only two Black female teachers employed at the school, and when Hailey tried to take it further up the chain, directly to West, “she was threatened not to reach out to him,” according to the lawsuit.

The various issues the plaintiffs complained about included teachers not being trained to provide basic life support, no proper disciplinary procedures in place which led to assaults and bullying that went unaddressed, no janitorial services or nurse on staff, not following nutritional guidelines, and a lack of security, with students allowed to be picked up by strangers.

“In one incident, a student assaulted an eighth grade student by slapping her, then attempted to assault another teacher. The student had multiple accounts of bullying, both physically and verbally, that had gone without discipline,” according to the complaint.

Additionally, the plaintiffs protested that the school was “not following state regulations for students in need of educational services, additional testing, or individualized learning plans.”

According to the lawsuit, student medications were stored in a closet with other expired medications just scattered around unsecured. There was no cleaning staff as “West did not believe in cleaning products containing chemicals, so teachers were only allowed to clean with acid water and microfiber cloths,” the suit states.

Meanwhile, according to the complaint, West had other unusual rules. The lawsuit alleges West did not allow crossword puzzles or artwork to be hung on walls, wouldn’t allow kids on the

second floor because “he was reportedly afraid of stairs,” banned the use of forks and utensils, forbid the wearing of jewelry, and banished chairs in place of foam floor cushions. Kids didn’t even have tables to eat on. They consumed one meal a day of sushi sitting on the floor.

The facility also was locked from the outside with kids forced to remain indoors the entire school day, the suit alleges, creating a fire hazard.

“We’re standing up because it’s the right thing to do. This is not about trying to defame a celebrity. This is about the right thing to do for these children,” Hailey said.

In addition to being “terminated in retaliation for their complaints about defendants’ unlawful and unsafe educational practices,” as well as racial discrimination, Hailey and Byers allege that their paychecks were “untimely or inaccurate” with Byers never receiving her first check and ensuing checks often being short up to \$2,700, in violation of state and local labor laws.

The lawsuit aims to hold West and the school liable for the retaliatory wrongful termination and discrimination and each of the named individual defendants for unpaid wages.

“I’m extremely sad about all of this. It was such a huge honor and privilege to work at Donda Academy for Kanye West. I’m a huge Kanye fan. His first album was the first I ever purchased,” Byers said. “I still enjoy his music, and I’ll never deny his talent, but while his vision for the school sounds great on paper, it’s just pure chaos and mutiny. It’s like a mental hospital being run by the patients.”

The lawsuit was filed at the Los Angeles County Superior Court; Cecelia Hailey et al. v. Donda Academy Inc. et al., Case # 23STCV07583. (April 6, 2023)

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