



## 504 Accommodations: Student & Family Guide

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to offer accommodations for eligible students with disabilities. These accommodations help students with special health needs to participate in New York City Department of Education (DOE) programs and activities on an equal basis with their peers who do not have disabilities. This guide explains who qualifies for accommodations, how to apply, and how accommodation plans are developed.

Learn more about Section 504 on the DOE [504 Accommodations webpage](#) or by reaching out to your school’s 504 Coordinator.

### Which students qualify for 504 accommodations?

Students qualify if:

1. They have a physical or mental impairment; and
2. The impairment substantially limits at least one major life activity.

#### 1. Physical or Mental Impairments

Some examples of physical or mental impairments are physical disabilities, health conditions, mental disorders, and learning disabilities.

What about short term or episodic impairments?

- **Short term impairments** (like a broken leg) may qualify a student for 504 accommodations. This depends on the type of the impairment, how long it lasts, and how severe it is.
- **Episodic impairments** (like asthma) may qualify a student for 504 accommodations. Students are qualified if the impairment substantially limits a major life activity when it is active.

#### 2. Examples of Major Life Activities

- |                      |            |                               |
|----------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| • Caring for oneself | • Eating   | • Focusing                    |
| • Walking            | • Sleeping | • Thinking                    |
| • Seeing             | • Standing | • Communicating               |
| • Hearing            | • Lifting  | • Learning                    |
| • Speaking           | • Bending  | • Working                     |
| • Breathing          | • Reading  | • Doing tasks with one’s hand |

Does your child have an impairment that substantially limits them in any of the life activities listed above? If so, your child may qualify for accommodations under Section 504. Once the correct forms are submitted to the school, each student’s case is reviewed individually.

## Which accommodations are available for eligible students under Section 504?

Your child may be eligible for health services and/or other types of accommodations.

- **Health services** are for students who need to take medicine (like insulin) or receive a special nursing treatment at school. For these services, please submit the relevant [Medication Administration Form \(MAF\)](#) or [Medically Prescribed Treatment Form](#) to your child's school.
- **Educational accommodations** are for students who need building, classroom, or testing accommodations. For example, students with trouble hearing may need to be seated close to the blackboard. Other students may need a barrier-free building, assistive technology, or breaks or extra time to take tests. For these accommodations, please submit the [Request for Section 504 Accommodations Form with HIPAA](#), and [Medical Accommodations Request Form](#) to your school's 504 Coordinator.

Additional examples of accommodations include:

- **Paraprofessionals** are assigned to students who require support with tasks due to their disability in order to access DOE programs and activities. For example: a student with diabetes who is not able to monitor their blood glucose levels on their own or a student who may need assistance with toileting due to a physical or physiological disability.
- **Transportation Accommodations**, such as for limited travel time or paraprofessional support (to provide one-to-one supervision on the school bus), are reviewed by the DOE Office of Pupil Transportation, who makes a recommendation to the school's 504 Team. Ask your 504 Coordinator for more information.

## How do I request accommodations?

Complete the forms as described above. All forms can be found on the DOE [Health Services](#) or 504 Accommodations webpages. You may also ask your school's 504 Coordinator for the forms.

Return completed medication/medical treatment forms to the school nurse/medical professional in the school building, and the Request for Section 504 Accommodations and Medical Accommodations Request forms to your school's 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator will contact you within 5 school days of your initial request to schedule a meeting that will occur within 30 school days of your initial request. You will be part of the school-based 504 Team that meets to discuss your request and other relevant information about your child and decides if your child is eligible for accommodations and if so, which accommodations are most appropriate.

## Who goes to the 504 accommodations meeting ("504 Team meeting")?

The 504 Team meeting is attended by you and people who know your child's abilities. They understand the information that is being reviewed and know the types of accommodations that may meet your child's needs. The 504 Team meeting must include at least two people who can:

- **Talk about your child's abilities and skills.** (For example, your child's teacher or guidance counselor may attend.)
- **Interpret reports or evaluations.** (For example, the school social worker or nurse may attend.)
- **Share information about the accommodations that may meet your child's needs.** (For example, the 504 Coordinator should attend.)

## What information is reviewed at the meeting?

The 504 Team will review information from different sources, such as your child's tests, observations, work samples, report cards, and medical records. This will help the Team understand your child's abilities, achievement, behaviors, and health needs. Parents and school staff may bring any information they believe best describes the child's abilities and needs.

## Diagnosis and Suggestions from Your Child's Doctor

Your child's doctor must complete the Medical Accommodations Request Form. The doctor may suggest that the school provide certain accommodations. The 504 Team will decide if the suggested accommodations are appropriate, and if so, how to provide them at school.

## How is eligibility determined?

The 504 Team will consider if your child's impairment substantially limits a major life activity. They will make this decision based on information reviewed at the meeting. The 504 Team will consider if your child's impairment has a significant impact on your child's performance or participation in school.

## Can my child receive related services with a 504 Plan?

Typically at the DOE, students who require related services receive them through an IEP, and not a 504 Plan. Eligibility for related services is determined on an individualized basis. Examples of related services are physical therapy, speech therapy, and mandated counseling services. If your child appears to need any of these services, generally the 504 Team will refer your child to the school or district Committee on Special Education.

## Does my child need a 504 Plan for health/medical accommodations?

Not all students who need health services at school need a 504 Plan. If your child's health service does not affect their ability to participate in school and other DOE programs and activities on an equal basis with their peers who do not have disabilities, then they do not need a 504 Plan. Contact your school's 504 Coordinator for guidance.

- **Example 1:** A student visits the nurse's office periodically for pain relievers for headaches. They do not need any other supports or accommodations.
  - **This student does not need a 504 Plan.**
- **Example 2:** During the school day, a student with diabetes must have their blood glucose levels monitored throughout the day, takes insulin at certain times, and needs bathroom breaks and access to glucagon and snacks to manage their diabetes care.
  - **This student does need a 504 Plan.**

## How are accommodations developed?

The 504 Team decides which accommodations will best meet your child's individual needs. The Team considers the type of condition your child has, and how significant its impact on the student's ability to participate. They will choose accommodations that will give your child an equal opportunity to take part in school.

Students are provided necessary accommodations in the **least restrictive environment** in order to interact to the greatest extent possible with their peers who do not have disabilities. This means each 504 Team develops an individual student's 504 Plan with the goal of limiting missed instruction time and separation from classmates.

- **For example:** A student with diabetes who cannot yet independently manage their health condition at school may be assigned a paraprofessional to monitor their blood glucose in the classroom, or wherever the student is throughout the school day, such as the gymnasium or hallways.

## Once my child is determined to be eligible, is my child always eligible for accommodations?

504 Plans must be reviewed before the end of each school year or more often if necessary, and amended at the time of the review, if necessary.

If your child's impairment continues to substantially limit their participation in school, your child will remain eligible for accommodations. The 504 Team will meet before the end of the school year, to the extent possible, to create a new Plan for the upcoming school year.

If it is decided that your child's impairment no longer substantially limits their ability in a major life activity, your child is no longer eligible for accommodations (the 504 Plan is ended).

### What types of communications will I receive?

Schools will communicate with you about DOE Section 504 policies. All schools post and share the Notice of Non-Discrimination under Section 504.

If the 504 Team decides that your child qualifies for 504 accommodations, you will **receive**:

- **A Notice of Eligibility.** If you do not agree with the eligibility determination, talk to your school's Borough/Citywide Office Health Director. Contact information will be provided by the school or can be found on the Section 504 webpage. You may also request an Impartial Hearing to challenge the determination of the Health Director and must submit the written request within 10 days of receiving the determination.
- **504 Plan.** If your child is determined eligible for accommodations, the 504 Coordinator completes the 504 Plan with the 504 Team's input and based upon the relevant documentation. No 504 Plan may be implemented without written parental consent, which is typically provided at the 504 Team meeting where the Plan is completed or soon thereafter.
- **An Annual Notice of Reauthorization.** This letter will tell you the steps that you must take to have your child's 504 accommodations renewed for the next school year.

See [Chancellor's Regulation A-710](#) and the Section 504 Accommodations webpage for more information.

### Do I have the right to language access services during the Section 504 process?

Upon request, parents whose preferred language is one of the nine most common languages other than English spoken by NYC residents as identified by the DOE ("covered languages") have the right to interpretation at 504 meetings, and translation of 504 Plans and notices. You can request language access services by speaking with your school's 504 Coordinator. Parents, who prefer a language other than English or one of the covered languages, may also request language access services.

If you have concerns regarding language access services, please follow the escalation process described on the DOE's website (at [schools.nyc.gov/connect-with-us](https://schools.nyc.gov/connect-with-us)). If your concern is not resolved at the school or district level, you may file a complaint. Details on how to file a complaint are explained on the DOE's website (at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/school-environment/get-help/parent-complaints-and-appeals>).

### Do you have additional questions?

- Reach out to your school's 504 Coordinator or [Health Director](#). The DOE Section 504 Program Manager can also be reached at [504Questions@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:504Questions@schools.nyc.gov).
- Learn more about accommodations on the DOE's webpages mentioned above.