

504 Accommodations: Student & Family Guide

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act requires public schools to offer services and accommodations for eligible students with disabilities. These services help students with special health needs fully take part in school. This guide explains who qualifies for accommodations, how to apply, and how accommodation plans are developed.

Learn more about Section 504 on the Department of Education (DOE) website. You can also learn more 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 do not have an IEP.
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.

- **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

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

Does your child have an impairment that prevents him from doing 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 case is reviewed individually.

Which Accommodations are Available for Eligible Students under Section 504?

Your child may be eligible for health services, educational accommodations, or both.

- **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 breaks, or extra time to take tests. For these accommodations, please submit the [Request for Section 504 Accommodations, Medical Review for 504 Accommodations and the HIPAA form](#) to your school's 504 Coordinator.

How do I Request Accommodations?

Complete a [MAF, Medically Prescribed Treatment Form](#) and/or [Request for Section 504 Accommodations Forms](#). All forms are on the school health forms page on the DOE website. You may also ask your school's 504 Coordinator for the forms.

Return completed forms to your school's 504 Coordinator. Any medication or medical treatment forms will go to the school nurse/medical professional in the building. For Educational Accommodations, the 504 Coordinator will contact you to schedule a meeting within 30 days of your initial request. At the meeting, the school's 504 Team will review your request and other relevant information about your child. The 504 team will decide if your child is eligible for accommodations. They will also decide which accommodations are most appropriate.

Who Goes to the 504 Educational Accommodations Meeting?

The 504 meeting is attended by 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. Parents are always invited to take part in the meeting.

The 504 meeting must include at least two people who can:

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

What Information is Reviewed at the Meeting?

The 504 team will review information that describes your child's abilities and needs. The information will come from a few different sources. The team may review 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 Review for 504 Accommodations. The doctor may suggest that the school provide certain accommodations. The 504 Team will decide if the suggested accommodations are appropriate, and 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?

No. Your child can **not** get related services through a 504 plan. Examples of related services are physical therapy, speech therapy, and counseling services. If your child appears to need any of these services, 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 his ability to fully take part in school, then he does not need a 504 plan.

- **Example 1:** a student with diabetes checks his insulin levels two times per day in the nurse’s office. He does not need any other supports or accommodations.
 - **This student does not need a 504 Plan.**
- **Example 2:** a student with diabetes needs to take insulin at certain times during the school day. This overlaps with class time, so she sometimes needs to do make-up work. She also needs to take bathroom breaks, and have access to snacks.
 - **This student does need a 504 Plan.**

How are Accommodations Developed?

The 504 Team decides which accommodations will best meet your child’s needs. The team considers the type of condition your child has, and how severe it is. They will choose accommodations that will give your child an equal chance to take part in school.

Once my Child is determined to be Eligible, is my Child Always Eligible for Accommodations?

No. 504 Plans must be renewed each year by the 504 Team. This typically occurs at the end of each school year. During the yearly renewal, your child’s 504 Plan may be changed as needed.

If your child’s impairment continues to substantially limit your child’s participation in school, your child will remain eligible for accommodations. If it is decided that your child’s impairment no longer substantially limits his or her 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 NYC 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 and 504 Plan.** The 504 plan will tell you which accommodations your school recommends for your child. You will have ten days to review and agree to the 504 plan. If you do not agree with your school’s decision, talk to your school’s Field Support Center Health Director. Contact information will be provided by the school.
- **An Annual Notice of Reauthorization.** This letter will tell you the steps that you must take to have your child’s 504 plan renewed for the next school year.

Do you have Additional Questions?

- Reach out to your school’s 504 Coordinator.
- Learn more about accommodations on the DOE website.