

Frequently Asked Questions

Additional Resources



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What should I do if I believe my student has a disability and may require a 504 plan?

Contact your student's school and ask to speak with the 504 coordinator or a school administrator. Describe your concerns about your student's disability and the impact it is having on them within the school setting and ask to hold a 504 eligibility meeting. Bring any medical or other relevant documentation to this meeting.

My student has a 504 plan from a different school district or from a local charter or private school. Now that my student attends a DCPS school, will DCPS implement the previous 504 plan automatically?

No. Different school districts have different facilities, schedules, curricula, and expectations. The accommodations and related services in the previous 504 plan may not be appropriate in the student's new DCPS school. You should contact your student's new school to refer your student to the 504 process. Please provide the school with any supporting information, including the previous 504 plan, so that the 504 team can consider all relevant information in its evaluation. If any accommodations must be implemented immediately, particularly if your student has a serious medical condition, please notify the school as soon as possible.

Is Section 504 the same thing as special education or an IEP?

No. Special education and Section 504 both provide services and supports for students with disabilities, but they do so in different ways and have different eligibility criteria. If you believe your student has a disability, work with their school to determine the appropriate process for your student and their needs.

With questions or for additional information, please contact DCPS' Central Office Section 504 and Student Accommodations Team at 504@k12.dc.gov or (202) 442-5471.

For more information about Section 504, you may visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html.

If you believe that your student has been the subject of discrimination or if you believe that the 504 process has not occurred properly for your student, you may file a grievance with DCPS at <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/studentparentvisitor-grievance-process>.

Section 504 Program:

Services and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

**Information for Parents/
Guardians and Students**

Section 504 and Student Accommodations Team

Email: 504@k12.dc.gov

Phone: (202) 442-5471

Website: dcps.dc.gov/page/section-504

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What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that requires public schools to **provide eligible students with disabilities the accommodations and services they need to access the general education curriculum, opportunities for learning, and school activities to the same extent as their non-disabled peers.** In other words, the goal of Section 504 is to provide a level playing field for students with disabilities.

Unlike special education, Section 504 does not provide specialized instruction, and a 504 plan cannot alter the general education curricular requirements. DCPS students cannot have both a 504 plan and Individualized Education Program (IEP) at the same time. If a student with a 504 plan is found eligible for special education, they should be exited from Section 504 and any accommodations or services they need should be provided through their IEP.

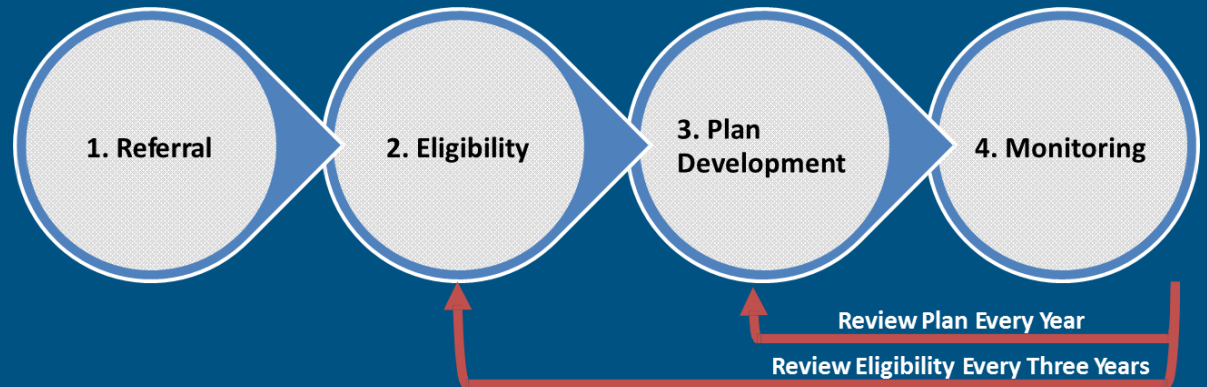
A student is eligible for a 504 plan if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. There is a broad range of impairments that *may* qualify a student for Section 504 including:

- Diabetes
- Severe asthma
- Juvenile arthritis
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Mobility or vision impairments

Examples of mental impairments that *may* qualify a student for Section 504 include:

- Anxiety disorder
- Depression
- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

The Section 504 Process in DCPS



1. Referral

Parents/guardians are invited to refer their student to the 504 process if they believe that their student has a physical or mental impairment that could make their student eligible for Section 504. Each school has a 504 coordinator who will facilitate the process. Other individuals may also make referrals, such as health care professionals, teachers, and other school staff members.

2. Eligibility Determination

At the eligibility meeting, the 504 team will review all available information to determine whether the student is eligible under Section 504. Note, a medical diagnosis is not required to be found eligible under Section 504, nor does a medical diagnosis automatically qualify a student under Section 504.

3. Plan Development

If the student found eligible, the 504 team will develop a 504 plan for the student, describing the personalized accommodations and services that the student needs in order to access the general education curriculum at the school. This 504 plan will be shared with the parent/guardian and all teachers and school staff who regularly work with the student.

4. Monitoring

The 504 team will meet annually to review the student's 504 plan and make any necessary updates or revisions. Parents/guardians can also request a meeting if they think that the 504 plan needs to be reviewed. In addition to reviewing the student's 504 plan each year, the 504 team will also review the student's eligibility for Section 504 every three years.

All decisions are made by the 504 team at the school. The team includes:

1. Someone knowledgeable about the student,
2. Someone knowledgeable about the evaluation data, and
3. Someone knowledgeable about the accommodations and curriculum.