

Academic Accommodations Guide & Sample 504 Plan

A comprehensive menu of medical accommodations for students with chronic, invisible, or complex illnesses (e.g., Dysautonomia, POTS, hEDS, IBD, Endometriosis, Chronic Fatigue).

This guide helps students, parents, and medical advocates establish academic support plans.

Public vs. Private School Frameworks

- **Public Schools (Section 504 Plan / IEP):** Legally binding under federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act). Requires formal medical documentation from a physician detailing how a chronic condition impacts a major life activity (e.g., learning, stamina, bowel/bladder function, walking, or standing).
- **Private Schools (Formal Accommodations Plan):** Private institutions receiving no federal funding are not governed by Section 504. However, they utilize identical accommodation frameworks written into a formal **Student Support Agreement** or **Medical Accommodation Plan**.

Section 1: Accommodations Menu by Symptom Category

1. Gastrointestinal, Bladder & Hydration Needs

- **Unrestricted Hall Passes:** Permanent, year-long pass for immediate restroom access without requiring individual permission or waiting.
- **Hydration & Electrolytes:** Permission to keep a water bottle and salt/electrolyte supplements at the desk at all times.
- **Nurse's Office Access:** Permanent pass for scheduled or emergency medication administration and symptom monitoring.
- **Outdoor & Field Trip Access:** Pre-planned mapping of accessible restrooms for all outdoor activities, physical education, and off-campus trips.

2. Physical Stamina & Environmental Adaptations

- **Preferential Seating:** Desk located near the classroom door (for quick, quiet exits to the restroom/nurse) or near climate controls.
- **Orthostatic / Postural Support:** Elevator access passes and permission to sit/elevate legs during prolonged assemblies or standing lectures.
- **Modified Physical Education:** Ability to self-pace, rest as needed during symptom flares, or substitute non-contact physical activities upon physician recommendation.
- **Nutritional & Dietary Accommodations:** Permission to eat snacks during class to maintain blood glucose/sodium levels and accommodate dietary modifications.

3. Academic Workload & Attendance Flexibility

- **Extended Deadlines:** Automatic deadline extensions for coursework missed due to medical appointments, procedures, hospitalizations, or chronic fatigue/flare.
- **Alternative Assignments:** Option for take-home or modified assignments in lieu of time-sensitive, in-class activities missed during illness.
- **Priority Class Registration:** Scheduling flexibility to optimize class times, reduce daily walking distance, or balance cognitive workload.
- **Testing Modifications:** Extra time on exams and the ability to pause testing clocks during symptom flare-ups or emergency restroom breaks.

Section 2: Sample 504 / Medical Accommodations Matrix

Identified Condition	504 / Academic Accommodation	Starting Date	Person Responsible	Effectiveness Monitoring
Autoimmune / Chronic Illness	Preferential seating near the classroom door	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Teacher, Student	Quarterly Review
Chronic Illness / IBD / Dysautonomia	Unlimited and immediate use of the restroom without penalty	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Teacher, Student	As Needed
Autonomic / Gastrointestinal	Excused, self-initiated breaks to the nurse's office or restroom	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Teacher, Student, Nurse	Monthly Review

Identified Condition	504 / Academic Accommodation	Starting Date	Person Responsible	Effectiveness Monitoring
Fatigue / Flare-Ups	Extended deadlines for make-up work due to illness, appointments, or medical absence	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Teacher, Student, Parent	Term Review
Physical Stamina / PE	Student-managed exertion during PE; ability to rest or perform alternate non-contact tasks	(MM/DD/YYYY)	PE Instructor, Student, Parent	Quarterly Review
Workload Management	Priority class scheduling to balance daily physical/cognitive demands	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Guidance Counselor, Parent	Annual Review
Academic Flexibility	Alternate /take-home assignments provided in lieu of missed in-class participation	(MM/DD/YYYY)	Teacher, Student, Parent	Monthly Review

Section 3: Doctor's Accommodations Request Letter (Template)

Give this template to your physician to sign and submit to the school's 504 Coordinator or Administration.

To: (School Name) 504 Coordinator / Administration

Re: Medical Accommodation Request for (Student Name) (DOB: MM/DD/YYYY)

To Whom It May Concern,

(Student Name) is currently under my care for a chronic medical condition that affects her stamina, autonomic nervous system, and daily physiological functioning. To ensure equal access to her education and prevent medical complications during the school day, the following accommodations are medically necessary:

1. **Restroom & Hydration:** Immediate, unrestricted access to the restroom and permission to carry water/electrolytes at all times.
2. **Physical Exertion:** Permission to rest as needed during Physical Education or physical activities, with modified or non-contact alternatives.
3. **Academic Workload:** Extended deadlines and alternative make-up assignments for schoolwork missed due to medical appointments, procedures, or symptom flares. Extra time on exams and the ability to pause testing clocks.

Please incorporate these accommodations into her formal 504 Plan / Student Support Plan. Feel free to contact my office with any clinical questions.

Sincerely,

(Physician Name, MD/DO)

(Clinic / Specialty Name) / (Phone Number)