

Section 504 Student and Parent Rights

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504,” is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your VCS Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Tracey Griffin at the following address: P.O. Box 5407, Valdosta, GA 31603, (229) 333-8505, or via email at tgriffin@gocats.org

The implementing regulations for Section 504, as set out in 34 CFR Part 104, provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system’s request to evaluate your child.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
12. You have the right to examine your child’s educational records.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system’s actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system’s impartial hearing procedure upon request.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system’s impartial hearing procedure.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights.