



Student and Family Guide to Educational Accommodation



Inspiring Girls to Lead Lives of Purpose

Atlanta Girls' School

Student/Family Guide to Educational Accommodations

Atlanta Girls' School is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that fosters the full potential of each student. In keeping with this mission, approved accommodations for students diagnosed with learning differences or identified as having other challenges to learning will be documented on the **Student Learning Profile (SLP)**.

This Guide includes the following sections:

1. Overview & Documentation Requirements
2. Procedure for Requesting Academic Accommodations
3. Guidelines for Maintaining Academic Accommodations on Your SLP
4. Accommodations & Standardized Testing
5. College & Post-AGS Needs

OVERVIEW & DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Academic accommodations are designed to provide accommodations for those students meeting the following criteria:

- Students with a diagnosed learning difference
- Students with a medical diagnosis that requires flexibility in the learning environment
- Students being evaluated for a long-term plan for accommodations if deemed necessary by a professional clinician

Diagnosed Learning Differences: Atlanta Girls' School will offer academic, physical, and social/emotional/behavioral accommodations within the bounds of what is possible in our classrooms and what can be delivered by the student's teachers. Professional documentation of need must be current within the past five (5) years, and evaluation recommendations inform the accommodations provided by AGS. Documentation includes a current (within the last five years) psychoeducational evaluation report completed by a psychologist, neuropsychologist, or other medical professional who is trained and licensed to

diagnose learning disabilities/attention disorders. The evaluation report should include a specific diagnosis based on DSM criteria, evidence of the impairment existing since childhood and in at least two different settings, evidence of symptoms presenting for at least the last six months, and specific recommendations regarding academic accommodation.

Additional documentation in the form of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan will be reviewed but must be part of a more comprehensive evaluation report. Doctors' notes or an IEP/504 Plan without an additional evaluation report are not sufficient evidence for accommodations to be provided to a student.

Medical Conditions: Students with medical diagnoses that require academic accommodations are considered if a student has a diagnosis that teachers need to be aware of and accommodate for (for example, anxiety disorder, physical ailment, etc.). At least one of the following documents must be on file for the student:

- Recent (within the last year) behavioral and/or academic evidence of student struggle
- Current (within the last five years) note from a psychologist/psychiatrist or other medical doctor outlining the diagnosis and recommendations for school setting
- Current (within the last five years) Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan detailing needed accommodations

Temporary Accommodations: The accommodation plans are also considered if a student is struggling and interventions and/or

accommodations are to be put in place temporarily while the family considers the need for a professional evaluation. Temporary accommodations will be implemented for no more than one (1) school year; additional documentation will then be required for accommodations to continue.

Students who are eligible to receive extended time accommodations must make every effort to complete assessments, with the extended time, on the same day that the assessment is given to their classmates. Students have 24 hours to complete an assessment with extended time.

The strategies outlined in these documents will be provided in addition to the following "best practices" that are used by our teachers, provided to all students in our program, and therefore are not specifically noted in the student's plan.

Best Teaching Practices include:

- Methods which allow teachers to teach using multi-modal (auditory/visual/tactile) strategies
- Clear explanation of expectations and state course/lesson objectives in order to guide study plans
- Provision of electronic copies of teaching materials
- Use of proximity control/cueing for attention
- Consideration of students' processing speed/style to allow for wait time
- Frequent check for understanding formally and informally
- Repetition or rewording of information
- Encouragement of the use of outlines/concept mapping/summarization/chunking strategies
- Providing frequent praise/support and encouraging positive self-talk
- Working with students to plan ahead and clarify assignments in office hours/tutorial
- Probing for understanding and provide feedback
- Providing opportunities for additional proofing and editing of work in office hours
- Use of a variety of strategies to keep students engaged and support good attention
- Work with students to develop plans for making up work due to absences

Expectations for all students with academic accommodations on their SLP include taking an active role in the learning process and utilizing the accommodations provided to them. As such, the following student requirements, though not directly outlined in the SLP, are considered to be part of the SLP process, and teachers and advisors will expect them of students:

- Inform teachers of accommodations
- Make plans for using extended time outside of regular class time as needed
- Keep a record of daily assignments and long-term projects using a planner, calendar, or other organizational tool
- Visit teachers during tutorial/office hours to ask questions, review daily assignments, prepare for tests/quizzes, or work on a large project
- Set up regular tutorial visits with a teacher if average in a class is a C or below
- Use online Learning Management System (Blackboard) and online teacher-provided resources or notes to support learning, planning, and organizing
- Choose a seat that limits distractions
- Use teacher recommended study strategies
- Communicate with teachers and advisor about learning needs or concerns

AGS will not provide accommodations that require additional support outside of the general classroom (for example, reading aloud of assessments, oral testing, etc.). AGS encourages the use of assistive technologies to aid in student learning; however, the family must provide all assistive technologies and audio books. AGS does not provide additional technologies beyond what

is part of the technology package for the general population of students.

Atlanta Girls' School does not offer modification of our curriculum. Students receiving academic accommodations are expected to utilize all of the accommodations provided to them when completing academic assignments and are encouraged to seek out teachers for additional support as needed. However, the content of academic assignments will not be changed or modified in any way.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The procedure for requesting an initial support plan follows:

1. Contact the School Counselor and Learning Specialist (gpeters@atlantagirlsschool.org) and provide her with a copy of current documentation (see Overview & Documentation Requirements).
2. The academic team will develop a draft of accommodations as appropriate and contact the family, student, and advisor to set up a meeting. If the documentation is not sufficient or does not support the need for a support plan, the families will be notified and options discussed.
3. The draft of accommodations will be discussed, edited, and signed/accepted by all parties. Families who wish to decline offered services may do so at any time.
4. After the document has been approved, the Learning Specialist will distribute an electronic copy to the student's teachers and families and assist the student in arranging a meeting with the teachers to

review the document. During this meeting, the student should discuss the procedures involved in each class necessary to take advantage of the stated accommodations.

5. The documents will remain on file in the office of the Learning Specialist.

GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING ACCOMMODATIONS

After the initial plan is accepted, accommodations will be maintained according to the following guidelines:

- For accommodations considered "temporary," the plan will expire at the end of the school year in which it was implemented. Additional documentation will be needed in order for accommodations to continue in the future under a long-term plan.
- Continuing accommodations on the SLP will be re-implemented for each school year that a student is enrolled at AGS, as long as the psychoeducational evaluation and/or supporting documentation remains current (within the last five years).
- Due to student development often seen between Middle and Upper School years, accommodation plans will be reviewed and updated between 8th and 9th grade years so that accommodations made in Upper School are developmentally appropriate.
- Outside of the Middle School/Upper School transition, plans will be reviewed each year but updated only upon request

or in the event of an updated evaluation/diagnosis.

- Families and students will be notified one year prior to expiration of the documentation on file so that they have sufficient time to update testing.

ACCOMMODATIONS & STANDARDIZED TESTING

ERB: All Middle School students take the ERB electronically in the fall semester each year. Students will receive the same accommodations they receive under testing circumstances in their regular AGS class schedules. No additional application is needed in order to receive these accommodations.

SSAT: An application is required in order to seek accommodations on the SSAT. After registering for a specific test date, the family should contact the Learning Specialist, informing her/him of the test date and the specific accommodations that the student is seeking. The family should indicate that accommodations are being requested during the SSAT online registration process. The Learning Specialist will complete the Special Testing Application for the SSAT (typically by e-mail/fax) and submit it directly to the SSAT Board on the student's behalf. Requested accommodations must be consistent with those accommodations that the student is currently receiving in the AGS classroom setting. Approved accommodations are valid only for the academic year in which they are requested.

College Board: A separate application is required in order to seek accommodations on College Board assessments, which include the PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams. The College

Board agency itself is solely responsible for the acceptance or denial of accommodation requests, and Atlanta Girls' School is required as an agency of the College Board to uphold those decisions when administering College Board assessments on the AGS campus. If approved for accommodations on College Board assessments, an Upper School student remains eligible to receive these accommodations on all College Board assessments for her Upper School career. Families must provide consent before school personnel are able to process an application to the College Board. School personnel typically complete and electronically submit applications to the College Board during the student's 8th grade year or the summer before the student begins Upper School classes. The application process must be completed before the published deadline for the intended exam as listed on the College Board website. The College Board requires that psychoeducational evaluations be current (within the last five years) at the time of the application. Students wishing to seek accommodations on the College Board tests should return a signed consent form to the Learning Specialist in order to begin the application process. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that all evaluation documents are current. In general, the College Board requires that school-based accommodations must have been in place and regularly utilized in the classroom environment. For more information, visit <https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities/eligibility>.

When a student is approved for standardized testing accommodations by the College Board, AGS will honor these accommodations in the following ways:

- **Extended Time:** AGS will provide equivalent extended time on all AGS timed tests. A student must complete AGS assessments using the extended time on the same day that the assessment is completed by her classmates (at most, the student has 24 hours to complete the assessment).
- **Preferential Seating:** AGS will provide equivalent preferential seating at AGS; however, given small class sizes, student-centered teaching styles, and “pod” seating in many classrooms, there may not be a specific “back of the room or front of the room” location. The teacher will work with the student to identify the preferred seat.
- **Small Group Testing:** Given the small class sizes at AGS, all assessments given at AGS fall within the limits of “small group testing;” therefore, no special arrangements are made to provide small group testing as students will already receive this within their normal classroom setting.
- **Permission to write in the test booklet:** AGS will provide an equivalent accommodation and allow students to write directly on their testing materials, as opposed to using an answer sheet.
- **Reader:** AGS does not provide a reader for AGS assessments. Students who require a reader for testing must provide an aide to read the assessments at the expense of the family. All assessments should be read to the student and completed on the same day that the assessment is completed by classmates.
- **Enlarged font test booklet:** AGS will provide an equivalent accommodation

and enlarge the font of testing materials for those students who qualify for this accommodation.

Students who are granted extended time in the AGS classroom but who are denied accommodations by the College Board will not be eligible to receive extended time on any assessments in AP classes. All assessments in an AP course are designed to directly prepare a student for the AP exam. If a student will not be granted extended time on the AP exam by the College Board, then AGS will prepare the student for this exam by requiring that the student complete class assessments under unextended, normal time limits.

ACT: A separate application is required in order to seek accommodation on the ACT. The ACT governing body itself is solely responsible for the acceptance or denial of accommodations requests pertaining to the ACT.

The ACT launched an online application process in July of 2016. Students who received approval before July of 2016 are encouraged to go online to confirm that previously approved accommodations are still valid. A new request may be needed. The process for families requesting accommodations for the ACT as of July 2016 is as follows:

1. Create an account on the ACT website and register for a test.
https://services.actstudent.org/OA_HTML/actibeCAcdLogin.jsp
2. Use the accommodations guide to determine the accommodations for which the student might be eligible and the documentation required.

3. Indicate during the registration process that the student will be requesting accommodations.
4. Provide the Learning Specialist with a signed consent form, the ID number associated with the student's ACT account, and a list of the desired accommodations.
5. The Learning Specialist will complete the request process. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that the Learning Specialist has on file the required supporting documents. The ACT program requires that psychoeducational assessments must be current (completed within three years of application).
6. The ACT will provide notification of the decision via email.

For more information, go to
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test/services-for-examinees-with-disabilities.html>

WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE AFTER GRADUATION FROM AGS?

All colleges are different and provide different levels of support to students with learning differences. It is important to check with the office charged with handling student accommodations before your final decision. It is not necessary for students to identify themselves as in need of accommodations during the admissions process, but students must self-identify and manage their own accommodations after enrolling in a post-secondary institution. In general, colleges and universities require that supporting documentation (school records and psychoeducational assessments) be current within three years in order to approve accommodations. Please contact the offices of College Counseling or the School Counselor and Learning Specialist for more information.

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