

## **Student and Family Guide to Educational Accommodations**

### **Atlanta Girls' School Student/Family Guide to Educational Accommodations**

Atlanta Girls' School (AGS) 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 students with other challenges to learning will be documented on the **Student Learning Profile (SLP)**.

#### **This guide includes the following sections:**

1. Overview & Document Requirements
2. Procedure for Requesting Academic Accommodations
3. Guidelines for Maintaining Academic Accommodations on the 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, executive functioning 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 and learning specialist. Professional documentation of need must be current, and these evaluation recommendations inform the accommodations provided by AGS. Documentation includes a current psychoeducational evaluation report completed by a psychologist, neuropsychologist, or other medical professional who is trained and licensed to diagnose learning differences, attention disorders or other social-emotional disorders. The evaluation report should include a specific diagnosis based on DSM criteria, evidence of the impairment existing over time and specific recommendations regarding academic accommodations.

Additional documentation in the form of a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan will be reviewed for accommodations, but AGS may request additional documentation if necessary. Additionally, while an IEP or 504 Plan without a psychological evaluation may result in accommodations at AGS, we can not guarantee other institutions like the College Board will accept it without additional documentation.

**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 (examples include anxiety disorder, physical ailment, etc.). At least one of the following documents must be on file for the student:

- Current behavioral and/or academic evidence of student struggle
- Current note from a psychologist/psychiatrist or other medical doctor outlining the diagnosis and recommendations for school setting
- Current IEP or 504 Plan detailing needed accommodations

The strategies outlined in these documents will be provided in addition to the following “best teaching 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:**

- Multimodal (auditory/visual/tactile) strategies and methods for instruction
- Clear explanation of expectations and stated course/lesson objectives in order to guide study plans
- Electronic copies of teaching materials provided via Blackbaud
- Use of proximity control/cueing for attention
- Consideration of students’ processing speed/style to allow for wait time
- Frequent checks for understanding provided informally and formally
- Repetition and rewording of information and directions
- Encouragement of outlines/concept mapping/summarization/chunking strategies
- Providing frequent praise, support and encouraging self-talk
- Working with students to plan ahead and clarify assignments in office hours and flex time
- Probing for understanding and providing feedback
- Providing opportunities for additional proofing and editing during office hours or flex time
- 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

**Student Expectations**

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 when the student wants to access an accommodation
- When needed, make plans or execute teacher-led plan for using extended time outside of regular class so that any assessment or classwork is completed within 24 hours
- Keep a record of daily assignments and long-term assignments using a planner, calendar or other organizational tool
- Visit teachers or learning specialists during flex time or office hours to ask questions, review daily assignments, prepare for assessments or work on a large project or essay

- Set up regular tutorial visits with a teacher if average in class is a C or below
- Use online management system (Blackbaud) and online teacher-provided resources or notes to support learning, planning and organizing
- Choose a seat that limits distractions
- Use teacher or learning specialist recommended study strategies
- Communicate with teachers, learning specialist and advisor about learning needs or concerns
- Work with learning specialists for ongoing support when required or when requested

AGS will not provide accommodations that require significant additional support outside of the general classroom (for example, reading aloud of assessments, oral testing, etc.) AGS encourages the use of assistive technology to aid in student learning; however, the family must provide all assistive technology and audio books. AGS provides access to an online reading program called Bookshare and will add students with an SLP upon request.

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 or learning specialists for additional support when needed. However, the content of academic assignments will not be changed or modified in any way.

#### **Procedure for Requesting Accommodations:**

The procedure for requesting a support plan is as follows:

1. Contact the Learning Specialist office to provide a current copy of documentation (see Overview & Documentation Requirements section for details). If the documentation is not sufficient, the families will be notified and options will be discussed.
2. The Learning Specialist will develop a draft of accommodations (SLP) as appropriate and contact the family, student and advisor when the draft is completed.
3. The draft of accommodations will be finalized 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 will post the SLP to Blackbaud. The learning specialist will meet with the student and the teachers to review accommodations.
5. The document will remain on file in the Learning Specialists office.

#### **Guidelines for Maintaining the Accommodations:**

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

- 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 is current

- Due to student development often seen between the 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 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**

**NWEA MAP Growth:** Students in grades 6-9 take the MAP Growth digitally in the fall and spring semesters each year. Students will receive corresponding testing accommodations as documented in their SLP. 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 Guidance Counselor, informing him/her 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 Guidance Counselor will complete the Special Testing Application for SSAT (typically digitally) 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 only valid 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 those accommodations on all College Board assessments for the student's 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 at the time of the application. Students wishing to seek accommodations on the College Board tests should return a signed consent form to the Guidance Counselor in order to begin the application process. It is the families 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://accommodations.collegeboard.org/>.

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 accommodations for the ACT. The ACT governing body itself is solely responsible for the acceptance or denial of accommodations requests pertaining to the ACT.

The process for families requesting accommodations for the ACT is as follows:

1. Create an account on the ACT website and register for a test.  
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>
2. Use the accommodations guide to determine which accommodations the student might be eligible for and what the required documentation is to access these accommodations.
3. Indicate during the registration process that the student will be requesting accommodations.
4. Provide the Guidance Counselor with a signed consent form, the ID number associated with the student's ACT account, and a list of the desired accommodations.
5. The Guidance Counselor will complete the request process. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that the Guidance Counselor has on file the required supporting documents. The ACT program requires that psychoeducational evaluations must be current.
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/registration/accommodations.html>

### **After Graduation: Accessing Accommodations in College**

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 post-secondary institution. In general, colleges and universities require that supporting documentation (school records and psychoeducational assessments) be current in order to approve accommodations. Please contact the office of College Counseling or the Learning Specialist for more information.

**Important Contacts:**

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