

Q&A: Section 504 Coordinators, Notice of Non-discrimination, and Grievance Procedures

What is the purpose of Section 504 in schools¹?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity operated by recipients of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Recipients with 15 or more employees **must** designate at least one person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504. This person is often referred to as a “Section 504 coordinator.”

What is a notice of non-discrimination?

Schools employing 15 or more persons **must** take appropriate and continuing steps to notify students, parents and guardians, employees, etc. that the school does not discriminate based on disability.

What is a Section 504 coordinator?

Section 504 coordinators manage efforts to comply with Section 504. Common responsibilities of Section 504 coordinators include distributing Section 504-related forms, documents, and information to parents, guardians and staff. They also include training staff regarding Section 504 and responding to disability-related complaints from students, parents, guardians, and other visitors to the school.

Examples of common methods of providing both notice of non-discrimination and the Section 504 coordinator’s contact information include postings in prominent places within the building, such as the front office, and including them on websites/webpages, in handbooks, and in mass emails.

How do I know who my Section 504 coordinator is?

Schools employing 15 or more persons **must** take appropriate and continuing steps to notify students, parents and guardians, employees, etc. of the identity and contact information for the Section 504 coordinator.

What are the requirements for a school’s Section 504 grievance procedures? ?

Schools employing 15 or more persons **must adopt grievance procedures** that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging disability discrimination.

Examples of factors to determine whether procedures provide for a prompt and equitable resolution are whether:

- notice of the procedures has been provided to students, parents, and employees;
- the procedures afford an opportunity for an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation;
- reasonably prompt timeframes have been established for the stages of the complaint process;

Examples of Section 504 grievances:

- Not evaluating a student for eligibility under Section 504 (or delaying an evaluation)
- Disability-based harassment or bullying
- School is not physically accessible
- School denying a service animal
- Retaliation

¹ In this document, “school” is a term used to describe recipients of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education. This includes entities such as public schools, charter schools, colleges, and universities.

- notice of the outcomes of the complaint will be provided to the parties;
- there is an assurance that any violations will be addressed; and
- there is an assurance that steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence.

What can I do if my school is not complying with the requirements related to having a Section 504 coordinator, notice of non-discrimination, and/or Section 504 grievance procedures?

If your school is not complying with these requirements, you may bring this to the attention of the school's Section 504 coordinator (if the school has one), the superintendent, the school board, or other school leadership.

If you need help or have questions about your rights, you can contact [Disability Law Colorado](#).

You also have a right to file a complaint with the [U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights](#) (within 180 days of the alleged discrimination) or the [U.S. Department of Justice](#).

Where can I go for more information?

- See [34 C.F.R. Sections 104.7 and 104.8](#)
- Visit [OCR's Policy Guidance Portal](#)