

Civil Rights and Section 504

Oxford Public Schools
Mandatory Training

What is the law?

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that: *"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of ...handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Who is protected under the law?

- A “handicapped person”
 - A handicapped person means “any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;
 - Has a record of such an impairment, or
 - Is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Who is protected

- Section 504 protects the civil rights of individuals who are qualified to participate and who have disabilities such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - Blindness or visual impairments
 - Cerebral palsy

Who is protected...

- chronic illnesses, such as AIDS, arthritis, cancer, cardiac disease, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, psychiatric disorders;
- deafness or hearing impairments;
- drug or alcohol addiction (Section 504 covers former users and those in recovery programs and not currently using drugs or alcohol.)

Who is protected...

- epilepsy or seizure disorders
- mental retardation
- orthopedic handicaps
- specific learning disability
- speech disorders
- spinal cord or traumatic brain injury, etc.

Impact of the law on education

- Schools or any entity receiving federal financial assistance must not discriminate in the admission or treatment of students/employees, considered to have disabling conditions.
- Any entity receiving federal financial assistance must not discriminate in any situation regarding employment practices

Impact of the law on education

- Students with documented disabilities, or their parents/guardians, may request modifications, accommodations, or auxiliary aids which will enable the student to participate in and benefit from all educational programs and activities.

Impact of the law on education

- The school must evaluate and determine eligibility for 504 services for students referred.
- It is the school's responsibility for making the determination. Parents/students may provide documentation, however are not required to.

Impact of the law on education

- If eligible, schools must make such changes to ensure that the academic program is accessible to the greatest extent possible, by all students with disabilities.

Who coordinates services?

- In Oxford, 504 accommodations for students are coordinated through each building via the adjustment/guidance staff.
- The Superintendent's Office oversees 504 related issues for personnel.

Impact on School Personnel

- Section 504 is a civil law
- Individuals discriminating against the civil rights of a student can be held personally responsible.