

ACCESS Parent Guide

ACCESS Parent Guide

Welcome to Collin College! We are honored that you have entrusted us with assisting your child through this very exciting stage of life. College life poses different challenges for students with disabilities. When students enroll in college, the expectations are that they will assume responsibilities for meeting their class requirements.

Whereas high school is a very structured environment with a set schedule, college schedules can vary dramatically. With time in between classes, frequently students need to use this time wisely. Students must understand attendance policies and their personal consequences of not attending class.

We hope this handbook will help you better understand some of those distinctions and provide tips on how best to support your son or daughter at Collin College.

Mission Statement

The mission of the ACCESS Office is to assist, support, and enhance the college experience for students with disabilities through appropriate accommodations in compliance with applicable laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Amendments Act of 2008 (the “ADA”).

Note to Parents

While the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s education records, these rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 **or** begin attendance at Collin College, either on site, through distance learning, or in high school as a dual enrollment student (regardless of age).

Parents can obtain directory information only at the discretion of the institution. Parents can obtain non-directory information if listed as an authorized representative by the student. ACCESS students can also give authorization to parents through the ACCESS Office. Collin College has designated the Office of the Registrar as the records official for all student academic records and transcripts. If you have questions regarding the disclosure of student records, please send an email to [registrar@collin.edu](mailto:registrar@collin.edu).

Differences Between High School & College

There are many differences between how disability services are provided at the K-12 level and at the post-secondary level. While it is not practical to list them all, there are some key points to understand. The changes reflect the fact that the student taking college coursework is responsible for making decisions as to his or her education.

When students take college level coursework, the law that follows them is the ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act and the Amendments Act of 2008). When students are in high school the law that follows them is IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). IDEA states that student with disabilities must be successful in class. Under ADAAA, we provide access and success is up to the student.

**Applicable Laws**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) | A.D.A.A.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) |
| Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 | Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 |
| I.D.E.A. is about SUCCESS. | A.D.A.A.A. is about ACCESS. |

**Required Documentation**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan and/or 504 Plan. | High School I.E.P. and 504 are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category of disability. |
| School provides evaluation at no cost to student. | Student must get evaluation at own expense. |
| Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in I.D.E.A. | Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations. |

**Self-Advocacy**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers. | Student must self-identify to the Office of Disability Services. |
| Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school. | Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student. |
| Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance. | Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. |

**Parental Role**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process. | Parent does not have access to student records without student’s written consent. |
| Parent advocates for student. | Student advocates for self. |

**Instruction**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| Teachers may modify curriculum and/or alter pace of assignments. | Professors are not required to modify curriculum design or alter assignment deadlines. |
| You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. | You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class. |
| You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough. | You need to review class notes and text material regularly. |
| Teachers remind you of your incomplete work of assignments. | Professors may not remind you of incomplete work design or alter assignment deadlines. |
| Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent. | Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed. |
| Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance. | Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. |

**Grades and Tests**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| I.E.P. or 504 plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading. | Grading and test format changes (i.e. multiple choice vs. essay) are generally not available. Accommodations to HOW tests are given (extended time, test proctors) are available when supported by disability documentation. |
| Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. | Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. |
| Makeup tests are often available. | Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them. |
| Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. | Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded. |
| You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher. | You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard. |
| Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts. | Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions. |
| Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low. | Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. |

**Study Responsibilities**

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| **HIGH SCHOOL** | **COLLEGE** |
| Tutoring and study support may be a service provided as part of an I.E.P. or 504 plan. | Tutoring DOES NOT fall under Disability Services. Students with disabilities must seek out tutoring resources as they are available to all students. |
| Your time and assignments are structured by Others. | You manage your own time and complete assignments independently. |
| You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation. | You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. |
| Personal services for medical/physical disabilities are required. | No personal services are required. |
| Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. | Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class. |
| Students are not responsible for knowing what is required to graduate or tracking their own progress. | Students are expected to select their own majors and/or minors and are expected to learn the graduation requirements for their programs of study. |

Additional Helpful Information

* In college, students are responsible for requesting services. Students must self-identify to the ACCESS office as having a disability and present appropriate documentation. Students must contact the office at the beginning of every semester that they wish to receive accommodations. Students will use their AIM Portal to request their letters of accommodation for the current semester. Students will do this every semester they use services.
* Even if ACCESS and an instructor know that a student has a disability and is eligible for an accommodation, if the student does not request and provide letters to their faculty, then they will not receive any accommodations.
* College students must notify their faculty directly as to their accommodation needs. ACCESS will not, as a general rule, contact instructors for students. ACCESS can provide accommodations, but it is the student’s responsibility to request the accommodation letter to his or her instructors and to discuss the accommodations.
* Accommodations are not retroactive, and it is the student’s responsibility to send their accommodation letters as soon as possible to their instructors.
* Colleges are not obligated to provide the exact same accommodations as were given at any point from K-12. Even if an accommodation is listed on a 504 Plan or other documents, the ACCESS office may determine that is not reasonable at the college level.

Communication

While students may sign a release of information with the ACCESS Office as well as a FERPA form, the ACCESS staff still communicates primarily with the student. In the past, parents may have communicated on the student’s behalf in high school, but college is a different environment in which each student needs to grow and develop their self-advocacy skills. We recommend that you discuss college life with your student if you are interested in knowing about his/her experiences.

If you contact ACCESS and would like to discuss concerns about your child, you are welcome to do so, but arrangements must be made with ACCESS staff for the student to be present in order to discuss any specific information regarding the student. The ACCESS staff will be happy to speak with parents and answer any basic questions but will not share specific information about their student unless the student is present or has specifically requested the information be shared once a release of information is signed.

How Parents Can Help

The following are some important ways parents can help:

* Encourage your son or daughter to take advantage of available services. While services cannot be forced upon a student, it is in the student’s best interest to know what services he or she is eligible for.
* Encourage your son or daughter to meet with ACCESS staff and let us know if they need any additional services or assistance. Some good times to check in are a few weeks before mid-term exams and a few weeks before finals and end-of-the-semester. Students are welcome anytime.
* Encourage your son or daughter to familiarize themselves with the contents of the ACCESS webpage and have them check their Collin College email daily.
* Encourage your son or daughter to speak up for him or herself and to be on his or her own best advocate.
* Encourage your son or daughter to meet regularly with his or her instructors to get feedback as to their progress in class.

Contact Information

ACCESS (Accommodations at Collin College for Equal Support Services)

Phone: (972) 881-5898

Fax: (972) 881-5896

ACCESS@collin.edu

**Hours of Operation:**

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Friday

(Late hours are available at various offices through the week)

**Locations:**

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| Plano Campus (Main Office)  2800 E. Spring Creek Parkway  Plano, TX 75074  Frisco Campus  9700 Wade Boulevard  Frisco, TX 75035 | McKinney Campus  2200 W. University Drive  McKinney, TX 75071  Technical Campus  2550 Bending Branch Way  Allen, TX 75013 | Wylie Campus  391 Country Club Road  Wylie, TX 75098 |

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| **Academic Accommodations may include but are not limited to:**   * Alternative Testing (i.e., extended time, less distracted area, proctor, reader, scribe) * Alternative Format of Text * Assistive technology (i.e., Jaws, Dragon, ZoomText, CCTVs) * Alternative formats (i.e., Braille, texts) * Adaptive Classroom furniture and equipment * Course material accommodations (i.e., class notes, computer) * In-class participation (i.e., frequent breaks, medically related absences, food/drink, tardy leniency) * Note Taking Assistance (smart pens, recorders) * Preferential Seating * Mobility Assistance | **Categories of Disabilities Accommodated:**   * Specific Learning Disabilities * Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder * Physical Disabilities: hearing, vision, medical, orthopedic, etc. * Psychological Diagnoses * Autism Spectrum Disorder * Temporary Disabilities |
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