

ADHD Symptoms, Impairments and Accommodations in the High School Environment

DSM-5 Symptom	Possible Resulting Impairments in High School	Possible Accommodations
Inattention		
Fails to give close attention to details OR makes careless mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with including details such as name and date and misses spelling mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Misses details in test questions and assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely checks for errors, proof reads or edits <input type="checkbox"/> Poor quality of work – inaccurate, careless mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Poor time management so doesn't leave time to complete details or check for mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to write exams on computer with spellcheck software or do not deduct marks <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to review assignment, check details, assist with time management & due dates <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility in due dates – with opportunity to complete details & correct mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment
Difficulty sustaining attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties remaining focused during class, conversations, or when reading lengthy material <input type="checkbox"/> Day-dreaming or mind-wandering during lectures or reading text books etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty focusing on & completing large amounts of written work (essays, reports etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaps in learning due to inability to stay focused during class etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to audiotape lectures, use audiotaped textbooks, receive notes & copies of PowerPoint presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Allow use of a note-taker <input type="checkbox"/> Use of a computer for tests or exams <input type="checkbox"/> Allow testing/exams to be completed over several shorter sessions rather than one long session <input type="checkbox"/> No more than one exam per day
Difficulties listening when spoken to directly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mind often wanders when discussing something with peers <input type="checkbox"/> Often misses social cues or key words during one-on-one or small group interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide notes from class discussions & presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Work with educational staff or mentor to learn strategies for keeping mind on conversations, watching for social cues <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of instructions of an assignment
Difficulties following through on instructions AND fails to finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begins but unable to remain focused to complete assignment or task, easily side-tracked <input type="checkbox"/> Moves from one incomplete assignment to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work with staff to chunk & review progress on assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment
Difficulty organizing tasks & activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to chunk assignments into manageable pieces – easily overwhelmed <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty organizing thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to access 'prompt' sheets with outline of steps, formulas etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and

	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sequencing or organizing steps in complex projects, creating and following outlines and schedules <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting things together for school, organizing things needed for the day <input type="checkbox"/> Has to go over and over instructions and still cannot organize what needs to be done in their heads	clarification of an assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Provide organizational/planning software plus instruction & support in its use <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to set up work plan, lists of essential items to bring to class etc. & review steps <input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to keep their belongings with them
Avoids, dislikes OR reluctant to engage in effortful tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Puts off starting assignment – procrastinates <input type="checkbox"/> Leaves assignments to the last minute then runs out of time to complete & hand in <input type="checkbox"/> Gets anxious about procrastinating <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelmed and unable to identify how to start an assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Can't get started and articulate ideas in their head or on to paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to review assignments and discuss first steps, chunk assignments and review progress <input type="checkbox"/> Additional time for assignments if too many due at same time <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility on due dates when the load of assignments are overwhelming <input type="checkbox"/> Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment
Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Loses essential belongings <input type="checkbox"/> Loses things that are vital to completing assignments, duties, life activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Provision of additional copies of course material <input type="checkbox"/> Work with education staff to develop effective habits or strategies for keeping needed items in one place & how to retrace steps to remember where item was last
Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli	<input type="checkbox"/> Distracted by noise, visual distractors and movement <input type="checkbox"/> Daydreams or gets distracted by own thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to remain focused during academic or social activities <input type="checkbox"/> Misses educational information and instructions due to distractibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow the use of (noise-cancelling) headphones when working in distracting environments <input type="checkbox"/> Priority seating away from sources of distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Take tests/exams in quiet environment <input type="checkbox"/> Provide description of assignment in written format <input type="checkbox"/> Allow extra time on timed-tests (usually time and a half)
Often forgetful in daily activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Often forgets to bring things to specific classes <input type="checkbox"/> Forgets to record and misses key appointments & due dates <input type="checkbox"/> Over-reliance on adults to remind <input type="checkbox"/> Mixes up days so ends up missing classes of other important appointments <input type="checkbox"/> Forgets commitments resulting in difficulty sustaining work, social/friendship, academic activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Provision of electronic organizers & visual reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to access reminder sheets with steps, formulas etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Teach reminder strategies, provide access to online class schedules, liaison with parents on important due dates and appointments

Hyperactivity / Impulsivity

Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet OR squirms in seat	<input type="checkbox"/> Particularly when having to sit long periods <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets to the point of distracting others <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets with objects, leg-jiggling, shifting positions frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Bites nails, twirls hair, chews pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> Permit preferred seating so squirming & shifting position will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Allow use of stress balls to help control fidgetiness <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for more frequent breaks to stand & move around
Often leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected	<input type="checkbox"/> When there is no provision to move around in class they get up and leave class or walk around	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow student to stand or move at side or back of class when required <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of standing desk or allow to stand as needed
Often 'on the go', acting as if 'driven like a motor'	<input type="checkbox"/> When working at desk or computer feels compelled to get up and move about <input type="checkbox"/> Get bursts of energy and just have to move around <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to function, remain still in quiet environment, such as exams, libraries, confined work spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious when unable to move – compelled to move <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot shut off creative side, streams of ideas, so constantly writing notes or muttering, records voice notes because they cannot write as fast as they think	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow frequent movement breaks, send on errands <input type="checkbox"/> Develop signal to request movement break <input type="checkbox"/> Allow preferred seating so pacing or leaving area will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Allow controlled movement such as use of stress balls <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of standing/elevated desk <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for independent work so movement will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage mindfulness or meditation classes
Often blurts out, unable to await turn, interrupts or intrudes	<input type="checkbox"/> May be disruptive in class & annoy others <input type="checkbox"/> May become ostracized by instructors & peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Educators to ignore minor disruptions <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle reminders of social rules and reward attempts to comply <input type="checkbox"/> Actively teach, model and practice social skills <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to work independently –excuse from group work

Please Note: The possible accommodations included in this chart are based on expert consensus opinion,^{i, ii}. While certain accommodations are beneficial for some students with ADHD^{iii, iv} the listed accommodations are not uniformly beneficial for all students with ADHD. Therefore, medical experts should use the charts as a tool to assess functional impairments while reviewing possible accommodations that would likely be helpful.

ⁱ Froelich & Brinkman 2017

ⁱⁱ Fabiano & Pylr 2018

ⁱⁱⁱ Jansen et al, 2017

^{iv} Lovett et al 2018