

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE/UNIFIED PARTNER CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes and unified partners to act in a manner that both contributes to the overall mission of Special Olympics and follows Special Olympics Virginia policies. All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code of conduct:

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language at Special Olympics events, training sessions or competitions.
- I will not insult other persons at Special Olympics events, training sessions or competitions.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly and commit to knowing and playing by the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions. I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier competition division.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke or chew tobacco at any training or competition site except in designated smoking areas.
- I will not consume alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances during any Special Olympics training or at competitions.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will not engage in sexual activities during any Special Olympics training or at competitions.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).
- I will respect the property of hotels, dormitories, athletic facilities and dining facilities.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to act in a manner that both contributes to the overall mission of Special Olympics and follows Special Olympics Virginia policies. All Special Olympics Coaches agree to observe the following code of conduct:

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.
- I will respect the property of hotels, dormitories, athletic facilities and dining facilities.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience for each athlete I coach.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminary competitions and final competition in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.
- I will ensure that athletes are properly attired.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will provide for the general welfare, health and safety of all Special Olympics athletes in my charge during the course of my assigned duties.
- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities as above.
- I will not smoke or chew tobacco at any Special Olympics training or competition site except in designated areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of coaches dating athletes.
- I will not engage in sexual activities during any Special Olympics training or at competitions.

QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the sports rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the medical, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics, International Federation and National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes in the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities used are safe.
- I will ensure that the sport equipment, training plans and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes as healthy athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition after an illness or injury only when appropriate.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- I will ensure that prescribed medications and over-the-counter medications are taken at the proper times according to instructions given by the parent/guardian.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all volunteers to act in a manner that both contributes to the overall mission of Special Olympics and follows Special Olympics Virginia policies. All Special Olympics Volunteers agree to observe the following code of conduct:

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes.
- I will respect the property of hotels, dormitories, athletic facilities and dining facilities.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that Special Olympics is a positive experience for the athletes.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminary competitions and final competitions in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will provide for the general welfare, health and safety of any Special Olympics athlete in my charge during the course of my assigned duties.
- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities as above.
- I will not smoke or chew tobacco at any Special Olympics training or competition site except in designated areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at any Special Olympics event, training or competition.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of coaches dating athletes.
- I will not engage in sexual activities during any Special Olympics training or at competitions.

QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will assist to provide the highest quality event possible.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes in the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will assist in ensuring that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes as healthy athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition after an illness or injury only when appropriate.
- I will assist when necessary making sure that prescribed medications and over-the-counter medications are taken at the proper times according to instructions given by the parent/guardian.

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Recommended Actions for Athletes, Coaches or Volunteers Who Violate their Code of Conduct

The Codes of Conduct were designed to assist each athlete, coach and volunteer in abiding by the philosophy of Special Olympics Virginia. It is the individual's responsibility to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct.

In order to give Areas assistance with difficult behavior issues regarding athletes and/or volunteers, the following guidelines should be incorporated into the Standard Operating Procedures for the Area, or similar guidelines should be established by each Area and Local program.

GUIDELINES

- 1) Incidents should be recorded on a Conduct Report Form within 24-48 hours of occurrence even if no action needs to be taken in regard to the conduct at that time. It may be necessary to have a history of the behavior of the volunteer or athlete if future conduct issues occur.
- 2) Incidents should be reported to the Area Coordinator within 7-10 days and the subsequent Conduct Report Form should be sent to the Area Coordinator to be kept in a confidential file.
- 3) The Area Coordinator should keep a file of all occurrences and maintain this file for a period of no less than 5 years per occurrence.
- 4) If the occurrence does not violate SOVA or SOI policies, the Area Coordinator may make the decision regarding the next course of action. This course of action should include:
 - a) Notification to the athlete, coach or volunteer and parent/guardian (when necessary) that a Conduct Report has been filed.
 - b) A meeting to discuss the occurrence and implement actions to resolve the issue should be organized within 1 month of the occurrence or as soon as possible for all parties involved. The Area Coordinator works with the athlete, coach or volunteer to assign an advocate for them if an advocate is needed. Communication at the beginning of difficult situations often avoids conflicts at a later date and is crucial in the resolution.
 - c) Actions taken should be recorded on the Code of Conduct Action Plan and acknowledged by all parties involved even if this is a verbal notification to the athlete, coach or volunteer that the decision is that no action will be taken at that particular time.

Areas must adhere to SOVA's Participation Policy. Areas and Local Programs may not suspend or expel an athlete or volunteer from the program without the permission of the President of SOVA. Areas may issue a **warning** to a volunteer or athlete or may place an athlete or volunteer on **probation**. These actions should be discussed in detail with the Section Director prior to their enactment.

The SOVA Participation Guidelines are as follows:

Definition of Inappropriate Behavior

1. Behavior that has a reasonable likelihood to jeopardize the health, safety and/or well being of self or others, and/or has a reasonable likelihood to reflect badly on the organization.
2. Illegal activity, and/or alleged illegal activity, whether or not a formal criminal charge has been made.
3. Violation of Special Olympics Virginia Policies.

Penalties

Penalties for actions that result in a criminal charge and/or conviction are addressed in Attachment A to this document. The penalties outlined below deal with situations in which the health, safety and well being of athletes, volunteers, staff or others may be at risk, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result.

Action taken will be predicated on a good faith belief that the disciplinary action is appropriate and corresponds to the seriousness of the infraction. Actions that may be taken include **warning, probation, suspension or expulsion from Special Olympics Virginia.**

A **warning** or **probation** may be levied as appropriate by the supervising individual.

The President has sole discretion to **suspend** an athlete/volunteer from Special Olympics Virginia based upon available information and a determination that the conduct or the alleged conduct is so inherently harmful or egregious as to warrant immediate action, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result. The President will report the suspension to the Chairman of the Board and will submit a report to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) has sole discretion to **expel** an athlete/volunteer from Special Olympics Virginia. Action will be taken if the circumstances are so inherently harmful or egregious as to warrant expulsion, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result.

A suspension or expulsion may be appealed in writing to the President. The Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) will act on the appeal.

The document entitled *Athlete/Volunteer Behavior Resulting in a Misdemeanor or Felony Charge or Conviction* will be used as a guideline for disciplinary action when a criminal charge has been made against an individual.

Definitions

1. **Warning:** A cease and desist warning for perceived inappropriate behavior which, if ignored, could lead to a more severe course of disciplinary action. Decision to be made and notification to be given by supervising personnel.
2. **Probation:** A flexible, but defined period of time (which may contain temporary participation restrictions in an activity) during which the probationer must demonstrate the corrective behavior required. Decision to be made and notification to be given by supervising personnel.
3. **Suspension:** A temporary period of time in which a person is barred from participation in Special Olympics Virginia. Decision to be made and notification to be given by the President.
4. **Expulsion:** Permanent dismissal from Special Olympics Virginia. Decision to be made by the Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) and notification to be given by the President.



SOVA CONDUCT REPORT FORM

Name of Athlete/Volunteer:			
Please check:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Volunteer	
Date of Incident:			
Event Where Incident Occurred:			

Witnesses to Incident

Names	Role in SOVA Program

Please Describe the Incident

Action Taken at the Time of Incident

Information on Person Completing the Form

Form Completed By:		
Date Form was Completed:		
Street Address:		
City	State	Zip Code
Telephone Number:		
E-Mail:		

Area Coordinator's Name:

Date Received by Area Coordinator:

Immediate Action Plan for Incident (Completed by Area or Local Coordinator)

<small>(Example: Nov. 14, 2003 - Notification sent to volunteer regarding incident from Area Coordinator)</small>	
Date	Action to be Taken

