

COACH/VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT PHILOSOPHY AND PROCEDURES

SOWI prides itself in sponsoring high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of coach/volunteer behavior that will ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All coaches/volunteers are expected to abide by the code of conduct and standards of behavior as established by SOWI. Coaches and volunteers should be reminded that volunteering for SOWI is a privilege, not a right, and that the Agency manager has the authority to make immediate accommodations until final decisions can be made.

The following coach/volunteer behavior is unacceptable while participating in Special Olympics training or competition, including, but not limited to, practice, in transit, and at the competition venue:

- Uphold the philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and SOWI.
- Behave in a manner consistent with SOWI's core values of mutual respect, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication.
- Profanity or verbal abuse
- Tobacco use in restricted areas
- Use of alcohol
- Frequent unexcused absences
- Exhibition of poor sportsmanship
- Not following the rules of a sport
- Not providing adequate athlete supervision
- Submission of false or inaccurate competition qualification information
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Physical or verbal sexual overtures
- Any unwelcome physical contact
- Use of illegal drugs or any controlled substance*
- Possession of harmful weapons*
- Physical abuse*
- Felony or misdemeanors (or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior) which disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others*
- Public forum posts that degrade the organization

Not following the philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and SOWI The following coach/volunteer behavior is unacceptable:

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**These offenses will result in immediate suspension from any and all Special Olympics activities.*

Coach/Volunteer Code of Conduct Disciplinary Steps

Should the behavior and/or attitude of any coach or volunteer be contrary to the Coach/Volunteer Code of Conduct, then the following disciplinary steps may be taken by the Agency manager or a staff member from the Regional office or the State office:

- 1) Verbal warning given to the coach/volunteer with a request to remedy the situation for continued participation
- 2) Written warning given to the coach/volunteer with a copy to the Regional office and if a minor, the parent/guardian or caseworker
- 3) Personal meeting with the coach/volunteer to review unacceptable behavior and to work out a plan for improvement
 - If the coach/volunteer is under 18, or over 18 and not their own guardian, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the coach/volunteer is over 18 and is his/her own guardian, he/she may choose to have another adult present. The meeting will be do State office, Agency file, parent/guardian or caseworker.
- 4) Suspension from volunteer service including, but not limited to, practices or competition
 - The Regional office must be contacted before an Agency manager suspends a coach/volunteer. The Regional office will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the coach/volunteer parent/guardian (or caseworker) and a copy will be sent to the State office.

Any further action must be referred to the Regional office. The Regional office and Sr. Director of Field Services will approve any further action to be taken. Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- Suspension for more than one sport season
- Expulsion for one year or more
- Permanent expulsion

Volunteer Code of Conduct Disciplinary Appeals Process

A volunteer has the right to appeal a disciplinary action imposed on him/her with the Regional office or Sr. Director of Field Services. The volunteer or their representative must submit a written request for a meeting to appeal the decision within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action. Based on the written appeal request, SOWI will make the decision on whether an appeal meeting is necessary. The relationship between SOWI and volunteers is an "at will" arrangement and it may be terminated at any time without cause by either the volunteer or SOWI.

If deemed necessary, the appeal will be heard by a Code of Conduct appeals committee. A decision to reverse, amend or affirm a disciplinary action will be submitted in writing to the individual and Agency manager and may include a plan of action for the coach/volunteer to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action. The decision of the appeal committee is final and may not be appealed further.

Volunteer Grievance Procedure

Specific complaints against a coach or volunteer are to be filed with SOWI at the level of organization in which the Code of Conduct violation(s) occurred. Code of Conduct violations occurring at the local Agency or Regional/District event are to be filed with the Regional office. Code of Conduct violations occurring at a Sectional, State or National event are to be filed with the Vice President of Sports and Health. All complaints are to be in writing citing specific behaviors inconsistent with the philosophy of Special Olympics. Name and contact information of the person making the complaint is also required.

Within two weeks of receiving a written complaint on a coach or volunteer, SOWI will implement the following process of review:

- 1) Contact complainant and other persons involved to further discuss the nature of the complaint and confirm all information
- 2) Contact the Regional office and send them a copy of the complaint
- 3) The Regional office will contact the Agency manager, explain the nature of the complaint and ask the Agency manager to confirm or deny knowledge of the allegation.
- 4) If the Agency manager confirms the complaint, they will be asked to address the issue with the coach/volunteer and take disciplinary action if required. Severity of the disciplinary action will be determined by SOWI.
- 5) If the Agency manager cannot confirm the complaint, SOWI will convene a coach/volunteer review team consisting of the Regional office, Agency manager and the Sr. Director of Field Services. The review team will interview the coach/volunteer named in the complaint. If the nature of the complaint is confirmed, the review team shall determine the severity of disciplinary action. If the nature of the complaint is not readily confirmable, then the review team shall interview the complainant and determine if any action is justified or needed in settling the issue of the complaint.
- 6) The decision of the review team is final and cannot be appealed.

Coach Code of Conduct Disciplinary Appeals Process

- 1) A Conduct Review Request must be submitted to the Tournament Director at Tournament Central within a half hour of the event where the conduct is in question.
- 2) The form must be completed by a person who witnesses a violation of the Code of Conduct and is participating in the tournament (i.e. coach, Official, Games Management member, Sports Resource Team, Regional Athletic Director, etc.)
- 3) The form will be evaluated by a Review Board within one week of submission.
- 4) The Sr. Director of Field Services will follow up with the necessary parties, including the person submitting the form.