

## **SOWI Participant Disciplinary Process**

Special Olympics Wisconsin prides itself in sponsoring high quality physical fitness training and sports competitions. The primary purpose of the Athlete Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior to ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes are expected to abide by the code of conduct and standards of behavior as established by Special Olympics Wisconsin.

The following steps **may** be taken by the Local Program Manager or a SOWI staff member from the regional or state offices. The Regional office must be contacted before Local Program Manager suspends an athlete/Coach/Volunteer/Family Member. The Regional office will discuss the circumstances and approve or modify the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the Athlete/Coach/Volunteer/Family Member and parent/guardian (or caseworker) and a copy will be sent to the state office.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND ANY PARTICIPANT IS AN "AT WILL" ARRANGEMENT AND SUCH A RELATIONSHIP CAN BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME WITHOUT CAUSE BY EITHER SPECIAL OLYMPICS OR THE PARTICIPANT.**

Depending upon the nature of the issue, the participant may be suspended from all activities until an investigation is completed, situations may warrant moving to more advanced disciplinary steps, based on the nature of the incident, for the safety and health of all involved. The Sr. Director of Field Services or Regional Staff may meet to determine consequences associated with the behavior.

Special Olympics Wisconsin does not conduct background checks on Athletes as a requirement for participation in our program. We rely on information garnered from Local Program Managers, coaches, family and community members to alert SOWI of any criminal activity or abusive/violent behavior. Following discovery that an athlete has been alleged/charged with committing a crime, all relevant information will be forwarded to the Sr. Director of Field Services to initiate an investigation into the allegations/charges.

Potential disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning given to the individual with a copy to the region office and parent/guardian or caseworker
- Personal meeting to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for improvement. Athletes under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or caseworker.
- Allow to participate on a probationary basis.
- Require proof of attendance of applicable therapy, counseling (e.g., anger management courses) as a condition of participation.
- Prohibit individuals with known and documented histories of sexual abuse or violence from overnight trips, certain types of activities, or participation at all, if the risk to others cannot be sufficiently eliminated by increased supervision or other measures.
- Suspension or probation from practices or competition during specific sport
- Expel from or deny participation in Special Olympics permanently

SOWI Staff will report disciplinary measures to other key entities, as deemed appropriate. The Respective Code of Conduct will be cited (the violations(s) thereof) as part of the disciplinary measures. The participant will be required to reread and resign the relevant Code(s) as part of their ability to resume participation.

### **Evaluating Severity of Incident**

Special Olympics Wisconsin will take into account several factors when determining the severity of an incident or cases of incidents pending, and what, if any, action needs to be taken.

The disciplinary action taken by SOWI shall be based upon the severity of the infraction, any prior disciplinary action taken against the individual, and the overriding need to further the mission of SOWI and provide for the safety of the coaches, athletes, partners, volunteers, and members of the public.

#### **Criteria:**

- 1) Timing of the offense/incident: A recent offense/incident may be of greater concern than one that has taken place many years ago.
- 3) Number of offenses/incidents: Are there multiple offenses/incidences involved of a similar nature or a few isolated incidences? Is there a known pattern/history of inappropriate or unacceptable behavior?
- 4) Environment: Was the individual's behavior potentially influenced by external variables such as a change in the medication, housing, staffing, illness, personal issues that have had a temporary behavioral impact on the individual, or a serious life altering occasion

### **Appeal Process**

The participant has the ability to appeal any disciplinary actions with SOWI. The individual or their guardian/family member/caregiver must submit a written appeal of the decision within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action. SOWI will review the request and determine whether to uphold the decision or hold an appeal meeting to obtain additional information.

SOWI's decision to reverse, amend, or affirm a disciplinary action will be submitted in writing to the individual and the applicable local leadership with any applicable plan of action for the individual to correct the behavior that led to the disciplinary action.

Any questions regarding this document please contact the Sr. Director Field Services.

Regards,

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