



Special Olympics Michigan

COACH/CHAPERONE CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Michigan adheres to the highest ideals of sport in the tradition of the Olympic movement. The Special Olympics Oath, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," represents the ideal of competition that every Special Olympics athlete tries to achieve.

I understand that my participation in Special Olympics as a coach/chaperone is a call to excellence for me to teach in ways that bring honor to the athletes, to my family, and to Special Olympics. I pledge to uphold the spirit of this Code of Conduct, which is only a general guide for my conduct and does not describe all types of good behavior and bad behavior. If I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my Program or a Games Organizing Committee may suspend me from Special Olympics, either temporarily or permanently. If I am suspended from Special Olympics, I can appeal the decision in accordance with the attached Special Olympics Appeal Process.

I pledge that:

Sportsmanship

- I will practice and instruct the athletes to have good sportsmanship and act in ways that will bring respect to the athletes, my team, Special Olympics and me.
- I will not use abusive language or behavior towards other persons. I will be a good role model and have a positive attitude.

Training & Competition

- I will conduct regular training sessions and meet training criteria set by Special Olympics Michigan. I will instruct the athletes to always try their best during training/practice and competitions.
- I will instruct the athletes to follow the rules of the sport, and I will encourage and support them in spite of their abilities.
- I will not allow the athletes to hold back in divisioning preliminaries in order to get into an easier heat in the finals.

Personal Responsibility

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- I will always hold the athletes' well-being and safety as my utmost responsibility.

By signing below, I am saying that I have read, or have had read to me, this Coach/Chaperone Code of Conduct and that I agree to obey this Code of Conduct. If I violate this Code of Conduct and disagree with my punishment, I agree to follow the Special Olympics Appeal Process and I will accept their decision as final.

Coach/Chaperone

Date

Witness

Relationship to Coach/Chaperone

COACH/CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES

The most important and demanding job of a volunteer associated with the Special Olympics Michigan program is that of the coach/chaperone for athletes attending tournaments and events. The job is demanding because, as the coach/chaperone, you are responsible for the athletes in your care 24-hours a day. You have been entrusted by parents or guardians to ensure their son or daughter's well-being. Special Olympics International recognizes the importance of your role as a coach/chaperone and because of this tremendous responsibility has instituted a volunteer policy to uphold the good name of Special Olympics volunteers and to help assure the safety of the athletes. To meet the mandates of the policy, you as a coach/chaperone are asked to complete the A Volunteer form, review the responsibilities listed on the back and sign the agreement to adhere to all responsibilities. This form must be completed and mailed to the state office with registration materials. These forms are a lifetime form and are available from your Area Director. Background checks will be conducted every three years on all forms. If you feel the responsibilities present too difficult a challenge for you, please consider volunteering in another capacity with Special Olympics. We at Special Olympics Michigan are very serious about the responsibility assumed by the coach/chaperone, and we insist that you, as the coach/chaperone, accept the responsibility knowing what is expected of you.

The following are the general responsibilities that must be assumed by you as the coach/chaperone.

1. Know your athlete(s) - It is possible an athlete(s) under your supervision will be on some type of medication. Be aware of the dosage, the times it is to be given, how they are to be properly stored and accounted for and that you have enough for the entire stay. Learn behavioral or eating habits and allergies of the athlete(s) under your care. Ensure he/she has adequate and proper clothing and that you are aware of any valuables the athlete(s) has brought with him/her. Know who to contact on behalf of the athlete(s) in case of an emergency.
2. Know your athlete's schedule - Be familiar with the details of the event or program to which you are taking your athlete(s), including on-site emergency procedures and phone numbers. Be familiar with the athlete's events, times, locations, and any special equipment that will be needed. This information can be found with the Area Director or in the event's Information Book.
3. Know your athlete's identity - Make sure he/she is properly identified throughout the event. This means wearing a wristband at all times. Lost athletes are more easily located if you can identify your athlete (clothing, hair color, height, etc.).
4. Know how to maximize your athlete's involvement - Most likely, you are accompanying your athlete to an event lasting many hours or, possibly many days. In order to maximize the experience and make it a success, you must provide an opportunity to be involved in other special event activities.

Know what is expected of you personally - As the coach/chaperone, you are expected to provide for your athletes' physical and emotional needs 24-hours a day. Your responsibility to them does not stop after their competitions or after they have gone to bed in the evening. You must act at all times as the parent/guardian regarding praise and commendation, as well as discipline. The use of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances is not permitted at any time by athletes or coaches/chaperones. Coach/chaperones must conform to all directives given by the Area Director or Area Director Representative in charge of the delegation. You must at all times conduct yourself in a manner that would reflect positively on you, the athletes, your area and Special Olympics Michigan and follow the Coaches Code of Conduct.

Needless to say, the job of a volunteer coach/chaperone for Special Olympics Michigan is a major undertaking. But as you already have discovered, or may soon discover, chaperoning and coaching an athlete who is mentally retarded is one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences one can have in a lifetime. You are very special to the Special Olympics Michigan program. Without you, the athletes would never have the opportunity to train and compete in a sports setting that provides numerous benefits to the athletes, their families and communities.

CHAPERONE/COACH RATIO

This ratio is four (4) athletes to one (1) coach, with the exception of blood-borne contagious infection carriers, MATP and one-night SMI-SXI participants, in which case the ratio is one-to-one (see BBCIC policy).

CODE OF CONDUCT: Coaches, chaperones and athletes are expected to act with appropriate sportsmanship and conduct when attending any Special Olympics function (practice, event, etc.). If it becomes apparent that a coach, chaperone or athlete is displaying improper behavior, the Area Director or Area Director Representative will be notified. Continuous inappropriate actions can result in suspension/expulsion from participation in the program. If the inappropriate behavior is deemed severe, immediate action will be taken to protect the safety and well being of the athletes.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Special Olympics International, as the authorizing body of many multi-national and United States chapter programs, has developed a volunteer registration policy to uphold the reputation of organization volunteers and to secure the safety of the athletes.

There are specific standards and instructions for implementation of the volunteer policy. Each nation and U.S. chapter program is required to adhere to the policy. Volunteers at all levels are asked to give general information (name, address, group affiliation and Social Security or driver's license numbers). Volunteers who have either a great deal of contact with athletes (i.e., coaches, chaperones) and/or fiscal responsibilities, will be asked to answer more specific questions regarding their backgrounds and also provide two personal references and their photo ID will be verified.

It is important to Special Olympics Michigan that all volunteers are given the respect and appreciation they deserve. It also is the aim of Special Olympics Michigan to ensure all athletes involved in the program receive the highest quality of training and competition possible. Thus, this policy has been implemented and should benefit all athletes and volunteers of Special Olympics Michigan. All volunteers are being asked to complete these forms regardless of their number of years as a volunteer.

As a volunteer coach/chaperone for Special Olympics Michigan, I certify that I have read the above, and I am familiar with the general responsibilities I am assuming as the coach/chaperone for athletes with mental retardation. I understand the scope of my responsibilities and I agree to carry out those responsibilities as noted above.

Signature of Coach/Chaperone

Date

