

# CLASS A & B VOLUNTEER INFORMATION & COACHES EDUCATION



# Class A & Class B Volunteer General Information

## GENERAL STATEMENT

A person's participation in Special Olympics, as a volunteer, athlete, coach, chaperone, etc. is an opportunity and privilege; it is not an entitlement. Special Olympics has the right and responsibility to protect the well-being and safety of all participants, as well as the right and responsibility to make decisions that are beneficial to the organization in general.

**Class A Volunteers** are those who have regular, close physical contact with athletes; are in a position of authority or supervision of athletes; are in a position of trust of athletes; and/or handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets of athletes. Examples include: Coaches, Chaperones and Unified Partners.

Class A Volunteers are required to complete on-line registration through a link provided by the delegation's HOD or designate.

Note: This form must be completed by all new Volunteers and Unified Partners in advance of their initial event. Thereafter, it must be re-submitted every 3 years.

For those 18 years and older, the information submitted will be used to complete a criminal records check, and where applicable, a motor vehicle records check. Criminal records checks will be completed at no cost to our volunteers and will help ensure the safety of our athletes.

As a part of this registration process, Volunteers will also complete Protective Behaviors Training.

## CLASS A VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- The maximum Coach/Chaperone: Athlete ratio shall be no more than 1:1. For example, if you have 20 athletes you cannot register more than 20 Coaches/Chaperones. This limitation will not apply to the sport of Equestrian.
- The minimum Coach/Chaperone: Athlete ratio shall be no less than 1:4, i.e., If you have 12 athletes you should have no fewer than three Coaches/Chaperones registered.
- Registered Class A Coaches/Chaperones must be at least 16 years old. No Coach/Chaperone under the age of 18 should be solely responsible for the supervision of athletes at any time.
- The minimum age requirement for Unified Partners is 8 years.

Special Olympics North America (SONA) classifies volunteers as follows:

**Class B Volunteers** (Day of Event Volunteers) are those who have limited contact with athletes or who have contact with athletes only when accompanied by coaches and chaperones. Examples of Class B volunteers include timers, medical personnel, and officials. Class B volunteers must either bring a completed Class B Volunteer Registration (Form F1 - F2) to the event or complete the form upon your arrival.

*For a copy of the volunteer screening policy in its entirety, please contact the State Office.*

**All forms can be found under the “Competition” tab on our website:**

[www.sosd.org](http://www.sosd.org)

# Coach Code of Conduct

**Local Programs:** It is at your discretion if you wish for your coaches to sign the contract below.

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics coaches are expected to observe the following code:

## 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.

## Ensure a Positive Experience

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage, and goals of each athlete.
- 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 the entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminary competitions and finals competitions in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

## Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions

- 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.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competition.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.

### **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).

### **Health and Safety of Athletes**

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training, and 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 toward sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct I will be subject to a range of consequences, up to and including being prohibited from coaching in Special Olympics.

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Coaches Name

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Date

## Breaching the Coach Code of Conduct

You, as a Special Olympics coach or volunteer, are a direct reflection of the philosophy of Special Olympics. Your behavior needs to serve as a positive example that exemplifies fair play and sportsmanship. A successful coach/volunteer is one who has succeeded in tempering his/her competitive urges and desire for success to assure his/her athletes receive the most benefit from a positive competitive experience.

You are representing your team, your school, your cheering section, your community, and Special Olympics South Dakota. Please keep this in mind when coaching or working with Special Olympics teams or at events.

Should the behavior and/or attitude of any coach, school/facility, or volunteer be contrary to these principles or the goals and philosophies of Special Olympics South Dakota; one or more of the following steps may be taken by Special Olympics South Dakota to alleviate the situation without further affecting our Special Olympics Athletes:

1. The coach or volunteer may be notified of the undesirable behavior and requested to remedy the situation for continued participation.
2. The coach or volunteer may be requested to withdraw personally, or as an organization from the remainder of the event or tournament.

In the event of extreme or repeated behavior contrary to the best interest of Special Olympics Athletes and Special Olympics; Special Olympics South Dakota may:

1. Prevent the coach, organization, or volunteer from participating in any or all Special Olympics events for a specified period of time.
2. Prevent the coach, organization, or volunteer from participating in Special Olympics South Dakota events indefinitely.

Specific complaints against a coach, school/facility, or volunteer must be filed with the State Office in writing within two weeks of the occurrence. Such a written complaint will be signed by the head of the filing organization and site-specific behaviors. Appropriate action will be taken if warranted.

## **Athlete Protective Behaviors**

The following information will be covered in Volunteer and Unified Partner initial registration and every 3 years thereafter. (Completed electronically through a link provided by the State Office to HOD's or their designate).

### **PROTECTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES**

To achieve the mission of Special Olympics, those responsible for supervising Special Olympics athletes in both training and competition must take positive steps to protect athletes as well as other participants.

Below are suggestions for strategies to protect athletes when participating in Special Olympics activities. These procedures are founded in common sense. You will also note that in most respects they reflect the same precautions that would need to be taken to protect any group of vulnerable individuals irrespective of whether they have intellectual disabilities.

#### **Q. If I suspect that an athlete is a victim of abuse or maltreatment, what should I do?**

- A. If you have reason to suspect that a Special Olympics athlete is a victim of maltreatment, you should report your suspicions and the reasons for them to the appropriate protective services agency. If the circumstances permit, seek assistance from Special Olympics staff members. When unable to contact a Special Olympics staff member, do not delay your report. Call either child protective services (for athletes younger than 18) or adult protective services (athletes 18 years old and older) or the police department in the jurisdiction in which the suspected abuse occurred.

Nearly all states have laws that require some individuals to report suspected abuse. Usually these include teachers, physicians, counselors, and other individuals who, due to their professions, have contact with individuals who are vulnerable to abuse. If you are a mandated reporter, you have a legal responsibility to report any abuse you suspect – including any that you reasonably believe involved a Special Olympics athlete. In some states all individuals are required by law to report suspected abuse. Each Special Olympics Program should determine what requirements are imposed by law in its jurisdiction and should inform its staff and volunteers accordingly. If you have not been provided with this information, ask your Special Olympics Program.

In addition, you should contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program and inform him or her of the incident and what actions you have taken to report it. Special Olympics needs to be able to mobilize its resources to assist victims of abuse that occur in conjunction with any of its activities.

#### **Q. What if I believe that an athlete abused another athlete?**

- A. Technically, assuming the athlete is not responsible for the care of a fellow athlete, the actions would not be considered abuse. They may however be criminal. Criminal acts such as assault, battery, sexual assault, rape, and extortion may occur. Acts of violence such as assault and rape should be reported to a law enforcement agency. Special Olympics does not condone violent criminal behavior in Special Olympics and requires that the safety of athletes take top priority. Lesser forms of misconduct should be examined based on the functional level of the individuals and the ability to prevent future

incidents from occurring. For guidance in identifying appropriate intervention, contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program.

**Q. What should I do if I encounter consensual sexual behavior between athletes?**

- A. Some Special Olympics athletes may develop sexual feelings that they will 1) act on, 2) want to act on, 3) be confused by or 4) be told by a caregiver are wrong feelings to have. This is a very difficult subject for many to assess and there are no simple answers. There is a need to balance the requirement to protect vulnerable athletes from exploitation with a desire to respect the privacy rights of the individuals involved, especially if those involved are both adults. Based on your knowledge of the individuals, you will need to determine if both parties are capable of understanding the consequences of their actions. Both chronological ages and functional levels are relevant considerations.

One factor to consider is whether the athletes are under the supervision of caregivers or are living independently. When one or both athletes are under the care of parents or guardians, the caregivers may have a need – and perhaps a legal right – to be informed of the sexual activities of their athletes. Facilitating a meeting with the caregivers and the athletes should be considered and discussed with Special Olympics staff. It is not the volunteer’s responsibility to initiate such a meeting.

The fact that athletes have engaged in sexual behavior may come to your attention due to the consequences of the behavior (pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or disclosure by a rejected lover). You should contact the President/CEO of your Special Olympics Program for assistance in responding appropriately.

**Q. What should I do if an athlete has questions about sex and sexuality?**

- A. While these questions are natural and understandable, Special Olympics volunteers and staff are not qualified to provide sex education. The best place for an athlete to get information is from parents, guardians or caregivers. You should refer athletes to these sources of information first. If the athlete is not able to discuss these topics with family members or other caregivers, or the families or caregivers have questions, you can refer them to: The Arc at 301-565-3842, or if the athlete or family members have questions regarding homosexuality, to PFLAG at 202-467-8180.

**Q. If an athlete confides in a volunteer and reports that there has been some sexual activity between athletes, but that it was consensual, should the volunteer immediately tell a staff person?**

- A. In order to ensure the protection of vulnerable athletes, all reports of sexual activity should be reported to your Program’s President/CEO or to a designated Special Olympics staff member. It is best to inform the athlete(s) that you will be disclosing this information because Special Olympics policies require you to notify Special Olympics officials. In this way, the activity can be evaluated as to whether it was abusive or exploitative and intervention (if necessary) can take place. Staff need to document both the report and their subsequent actions and determinations.

**Q. What is abuse?**

- A. There are slight variations in each state’s definition of abuse. Abuse or maltreatment is generally defined as the non-accidental injury of a person caused by someone responsible for his or her care.



Abuse may be classified as physical, emotional, or sexual. Related to abuse is another form of maltreatment – neglect – the failure of a caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or other necessities.

**Q. How can I tell if an athlete has been abused or maltreated?**

- A. In addition to statements by the athlete, there may be physical or behavioral indicators of abuse. Physical indicators include questionable injuries such as bruises or lacerations in the soft tissue areas of an athlete's body. Bruises change color during the healing process and bruises of different colors indicate different stages of healing, thereby indicating that the injuries happened on more than one occasion. Injuries to genital areas may indicate sexual abuse; for example, cigarette burns on the inside of the upper leg or on the buttocks. Tether marks or rope burns and abrasions caused by tying wrists, ankles or the neck are also indicators of probable abuse.

Some athletes are prone to injuries as a consequence of athletic competition, and the location of the injury may indicate whether the injury was due to abuse or competition. Injuries that happen due to athletic competition are most likely to be on the shins, knees, elbows, etc. They are less likely to be on the abdomen, across the back, on the backs of the legs, or on facial cheeks. If you notice that an athlete has been injured, ask how the injury happened. Could the incident described by the athlete have resulted in the injury you observed?

Possible signs of neglect include unattended medical needs, inappropriate clothing for the climate and weather conditions, chronic hunger, and poor personal hygiene.

Since bodily injuries are likely to be temporary, if present at all, behavior may offer the only visible clue that an athlete is the victim of maltreatment. Individuals under stress often reflect that stress in their behavior. Maltreatment causes stress and victims of maltreatment often exhibit stress related behavior: depression, withdrawal, thoughts of or attempts at suicide, aggression, immature acts, and sleep disturbances. Uncharacteristic changes in behavior that last for more than a few days indicate a possible need for intervention, but are not a certain indicator of abuse as there are other causes of stress. The absence of behavioral indicators does not indicate a lack of abuse. Individuals cope differently and some athletes will internalize abuse and display no outward signs.

**Q. What if I am wrong when I make an accusation of abuse?**

- A. When you report suspected abuse, you are not making an accusation. You are requesting an investigation to determine if the athlete in question is being victimized. The report that you make is only one part of the investigation that will determine if abuse occurred and, if so, who the abuser is. The laws in every state protect individuals who make a good faith report from liability if the report cannot be substantiated. It is always a good idea to limit those whom you voice your suspicions to, such as the protective services or law enforcement officials and to Special Olympics staff.

**Q. If I am right, will I have to testify?**

- A. It is unlikely that you will need to testify, because most cases do not result in a trial; however, there is no clear answer, as each case depends on the specific circumstances. If the case is prosecuted in

criminal court, and many are not, the prosecutor will determine if your testimony would be helpful at trial. Often criminal court can be avoided as the abusers agree to participate in social service programs that are helpful for preventing further abuse. Even if a case is prosecuted, most criminal cases are settled without a trial. While presenting testimony in court may be an unpleasant prospect for you, the future safety of an athlete could be at stake and that must be every Special Olympics volunteers' and staff member's highest priority.

**Q. How should I respond if an athlete comes to me and discloses abuse?**

A. An athlete who discloses abuse to you is seeking your help. Your response to his or her disclosure can help to minimize harm to the athlete or make it worse. Self-control is an important asset when confronting a disclosure of abuse. The following represent guidelines for responding appropriately to such disclosure:

- Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the athlete.
- Don't criticize the athlete or claim that the athlete misunderstood what happened.
- Do respect the athlete's privacy and take the athlete to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions, but stay in a place where you can be seen, not heard, by others.
- Do reassure the athlete that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the athlete that you appreciate being told about the incident and will help to make sure that it won't happen again.
- Do encourage the athlete to tell the proper authorities what happened. You should also tell the athlete that you are required to report the disclosure to the proper authorities and Special Olympics staff and that you cannot keep it secret but will only tell the people who need to know.
- Do consult a physician or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counseling for the athlete.
- Do contact your local Special Olympics Program if the incident occurred at a Special Olympics event.

**Q. What should I do if I believe that an athlete is lying about being abused?**

A. It is not up to you to determine if a disclosure of abuse is factual or not. You should file a report with the appropriate agency. When you file a report, you may tell them of your concerns about the truthfulness of the disclosure, but their investigation will determine if there are sufficient grounds to proceed. The athlete should be given the benefit of the doubt until the investigating agency determines otherwise.

**The following guidelines have been adopted by Special Olympics to prevent the maltreatment of athletes:**

- Special Olympics staff and volunteers should not use corporal punishment including spanking,

hitting, slapping, or other forms of physical discipline. Any discipline techniques used should be constructive and positive.

- When helping athletes with bathing or showering, volunteers and staff should check the temperature of the water to ensure that it is not too hot.
- Coaches and volunteers should not withhold water or food from athletes as a form of punishment. Water should be available for athletes during strenuous practice sessions and during competitions to avoid dehydration.
- Only medications that have been prescribed by an athlete's physician should be dispensed to that athlete, and then only as indicated on his or her consent form signed by either a parent or legal custodian.
- At no time should coaches or other volunteers use profanity or otherwise curse at athletes for their performance or behavior during competitions or practices. Special Olympics athletes are not to be threatened or intimidated for any purpose including attempts at improving athletic performance or for controlling behavior.
- Special Olympics staff and volunteers will treat all athletes with courtesy and respect. It is not in keeping with the purposes of Special Olympics to use denigrating and demeaning nicknames for athletes or to permit their use by others.
- There should be at least two volunteers or staff members present to supervise activities such as changing into team uniforms, showering, and toileting. This measure also serves to discourage unfounded allegations of abuse against volunteers and staff.
- When it is necessary for a staff member or volunteer to speak privately to an athlete, they should find a place out of earshot, but within sight of others for their conference.
- Hugs between Special Olympics athletes and volunteers should be open (not secretive) and respect the limits set by the athlete. Staff members and volunteers should respect any resistance by the athlete to physical contact.
- Special Olympics staff members and volunteers should avoid touching areas normally covered by swimming suits: breasts, buttocks and groin. Kissing on the lips and seductive massaging is not permitted (massaging pursuant of an injury or strain is permitted, but should be subject to observation by others).
- If an athlete attempts to initiate inappropriate physical contact with a volunteer or staff member, the volunteer or staff member should identify the objectionable behavior, explaining that it makes the volunteer feel uncomfortable and suggest a more appropriate ways to communicate feeling such as "high fives" or handshakes.
- When Special Olympics events require athletes to stay overnight, please refer to the Athlete Housing Policy (found in Section 5 of the Competition Guide)

## Coaches Education

All SOSD coaches must be Level 1 certified and all Head Coaches and HODs (Heads of Delegation) must be Level 2 certified. Recertification must be completed every three years.

**Form E.1:** Your Coaches Education catalog of courses.

**Form E.2:** When a course has been completed, submit to [coaches@sosd.org](mailto:coaches@sosd.org).

**All forms can be found under the “Competition” tab on our website: [www.sosd.org](http://www.sosd.org)**

# Coaches Education Training Requirements

All SOSD coaches must be Level 1 certified and all Head Coaches & HODs must be Level 2 certified. Your coach's education is good for 3 years and can be recertified at any time. The directions on how to become certified and recertified at different levels are listed below.

**All correspondence regarding Coach's Education, course requests, and certificate remittance should be directed to [coached@sosd.org](mailto:coached@sosd.org)**

## Steps to Becoming a Certified Coach

### Step 1: Obtain Class A Volunteer Status

Class A Volunteers are required to complete on-line registration through a link provided by the delegation's HOD or designate.

Note: This form must be completed by all new Volunteers and Unified Partners in advance of their initial event. Thereafter, it must be re-submitted every 3 years.

For those 18 years and older, the information submitted will be used to complete a criminal records check, and where applicable, a motor vehicle records check. Criminal records checks will be completed at no cost to our volunteers and will help ensure the safety of our athletes.

As a part of this registration process, Volunteers will also complete Protective Behaviors Training.

### Step 2: Complete Level 1 Certification

- Required Courses: All available on [SO Learning Portal](#)
  - **Fitness for the Sport Coach**
    - Complete the course and email the certificate to [coached@sosd.org](mailto:coached@sosd.org).
  - **Heads Up Concussions in Youth Sports**
    - Complete the course and email the certificate to [coached@sosd.org](mailto:coached@sosd.org).
  - **Special Olympics Unified Sports Coaching** (applicable for unified coaches)
    - Complete the course and email the certificate to [coached@sosd.org](mailto:coached@sosd.org).

### Step 3: Complete Level 2 Certification – Required of all Head Coaches and HODs

- Required Course:
  - **Principles of Coaching Special Olympics**
    - Complete at [CoachTube](#) and email the certificate to [coaches@sosd.org](mailto:coaches@sosd.org).

- Practicum Hours:
  - 10 hours with a certified head coach (new coaches only).
  - Exemptions: HODs and experienced coaches (case-by-case).

#### **Step 4: Advanced Certification Levels & Recertification**

- Recertify by taking one of the classes required of Level 1 & 2 that you have not previously completed or progress on to the next level.
- Progress to the next level by completing requirements for Levels 3 or 4.

#### **Level 3: Sport-Specific Course or In-Person Trainings**

- In-person courses (see SOSD Website or email [coacheded@sosd.org](mailto:coacheded@sosd.org)).
- Online courses available on [NFHS Learning Center](#).
- Email certificates, applications, or questions to [coacheded@sosd.org](mailto:coacheded@sosd.org).

#### **Level 4 & Beyond**

- Please contact [coacheded@sosd.org](mailto:coacheded@sosd.org) for individual guidance.

#### **Key Contacts and Links**

- **Email for submissions & questions:** [coacheded@sosd.org](mailto:coacheded@sosd.org)
- **Online Course Portal:**
  - [SO Learning Portal](#)
  - [CoachTube](#)
  - [NFHS Learning Center](#)

# Application for Sports Training Certification

**Instructions:** Please print clearly or type information below and return to your local program office.  
List **Permanent** Mailing Address and telephone number:

Name of Delegation:	
Name:	Address:
City:	State: <span style="float: right;">Zip:</span>
Daytime Phone:	Evening Phone:
email address:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

If your address has changed since your last certification, please check this box

1. I attended the \_\_\_\_\_ TRAINING SEMINAR/COURSE in  
Course Name  
 \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ hosted by \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State Date Name or Group

2. Coaching/Officiating experience with Special Olympics:  Yes  No (circle Coach or Official)  
 If yes, how many years \_\_\_\_\_ and where \_\_\_\_\_

Coaching/Officiating experience at the high school or college level:  Yes  No (circle Coach or Official)  
 If yes, how many years \_\_\_\_\_

Playing experience at the high school or college level:  Yes  No

Sport(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Having satisfactorily completed all requirements, I hereby request Special Olympics certification in the area identified above.

Applicant	Date	Head of Delegation	Date	SOSD Assistant Sports Director	Date
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Email to [coachedes@sosd.org](mailto:coachedes@sosd.org)

or mail to 800 E. I-90 Lane, Sioux Falls, SD 57104