
Code of Conduct

The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete, coach, and volunteer behavior, which will ensure the safety, and well being of all individuals involved in training and competition. All who participate are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and standards of behavior as established by Special Olympics New Mexico.

Standards of Behavior

The following behavior is unacceptable while participating in Special Olympics activities including, but not limited to practice, in transit, and during competition:

- Disrespectful behavior by anyone
- Profanity and/or verbal abuse
- Tobacco use
- Frequent unexcused absences
- Exhibition of poor sportsmanship
- Physical, mental and sexual abuse, or any unwelcome physical contact
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Physical or verbal sexual overtures
- Possession of harmful weapons
- Use of alcohol, illegal drugs or any controlled substances
- Failure to attend practice sessions according to the SONM Local Program requirements.
- Felony or misdemeanors (or any illegal or socially unacceptable behavior which seriously disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others)
- Dress and conduct ones behavior according this code and any other team rules that may apply. Athletes must be dressed appropriately for training and coaches/assistants/chaperons must not be dress in a manner deemed inappropriate.
- Coaches/Assistant Coaches are additionally bound by all responsibilities outlined in the SONM Coaches Job Description and by the SONM Coaches Code of Ethics.

Disciplinary Steps for Code of Conduct Violations

Coaches, Local Coordinators, and Area Director may take the following progressive disciplinary steps.

Step One: Verbal warning.

Step Two: Written warning given to the individual in question, with a copy sent to the Local Coordinator, Area Director, and the SONM Sports and Competition Director.

Step Three: A) Face-to-face meeting to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for Improvement

If the individual is under 18, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the individual is over 18, a third person selected by the individual will attend the meeting. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the Sports and Competition Director, Area Director, Local Program Coordinator, Coach, parent/guardian or caseworker.

B) Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season.

The Area Director must be contacted before a coach suspends an athlete, volunteer or family member. The Area Director will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The Sports and Competition Director must be contacted before someone is removed from the Program. The action(s) will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete, parent/guardian, and/or volunteer. A copy will be sent to the SONM Executive Director. Any further action must be referred to the Area Director or Sports and Competition Director. Any further actions must be approved by the Executive Director.

Further action could be but not limited to:

- Suspension for more than one sport season.
- Expulsion for one year or more.

C) Violent physical and/or verbally abusive behavior

In cases when a coach, Local Coordinator, and/or Area Director deem a situation warrant immediate action, procedures listed in "Step 3" may be invoked with the approval of the SONM Executive Director.

Appeal Process

All individuals have the right to appeal any disciplinary actions.

- A written request for an appeal of a disciplinary decision must be submitted to the SONM Sport Director.
- The Sport Director will meet with a Conduct Review Team.

- The Conduct Review Team will be chaired by the SONM Sport Director and will consist of the Area Director, Coaches and/or Local Coordinators and 2 other members not associated with the individual(s) submitting the appeal.
- The Conduct Review Team will review information by all involved either in person or in writing, and will render one of the following decisions:
 - Up-hold original decision.
 - Dismiss original decision.
 - Expand original decision or implement an alternative course of action.
- All decisions rendered by the Conduct Review Team will be final.

SONM Executive Director Authority

Nothing contained in the Code of Conduct will diminish the authority of the Executive Director, or his/her designee, to administer the Special Olympics New Mexico sports program according to the standards and procedures outlined in the Special Olympics, Inc. General Rules and/or the Official Summer/Winter Sports Rules.

Code of Ethics

- Uphold the philosophy that Special Olympics sport has an important place in the general educational scheme and pledge to cooperate with others in the field of special education.
- Uphold the philosophy that ones actions as a coach/volunteer should be so regulated that they will be a credit to the Special Olympics Program.
- Uphold the philosophy that the staff, games management team, officials, and coaches of Special Olympics New Mexico are capable of expressing the rules of the game and will abide by these rules in both the spirit and letter in which they were written.
- Uphold the philosophy in exercising patience, tolerance, and diplomacy in ones relations with athletes, volunteers, game officials, spectators, and families.
- Uphold the philosophy that the proper administration of all sport offers an effective laboratory method to develop the adherent high ideals of sportsmanship: qualities of cooperation, courage, unselfishness and self-control; desires for clean healthful living; and respect for fair and just discipline and authority.
- Uphold the philosophy that these admirable characteristics, properly installed through coaching will have valuable carry-over and will aid each athlete connected with sports in becoming a better person.
- Uphold the philosophy which supports all reasonable moves to improve athletic conditions, to provide for adequate equipment and to promote the welfare of an increased number of athletes, coaches, families and other volunteers.
- Uphold the philosophy that the media should never be used by a coach or volunteer to vent his or her anger against any school, administrator, team, coach, athlete, game official, or the Special Olympics New Mexico program.