

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

ENDORSEMENT POLICY

FOR LOCAL, REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL NATIONAL GAMES AND COMPETITIONS

This Policy has been prepared by Special Olympics Canada and is a Pan-Canadian Policy applicable to Special Olympics Canada and its Chapters. This document cannot be modified by a Chapter without consultation and approval from Special Olympics Canada.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2022

LAST REVISED: May 2022

DEFINITIONS

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) “*Athlete*” – an individual engaged in activities with Special Olympics Canada or its Chapter as an Athlete.
 - b) “*Chapter*” – means the Provincial or Territorial Special Olympics organization recognized by Special Olympics Canada as a provincial or territorial governing body of Special Olympics
 - c) “*Endorsement*” – means that an eligible Athlete has met certain criteria and been formally endorsed by the Chapter to participate in a sanctioned Chapter event or activity or Special Olympics Canada National event or sanctioned activity
 - d) “*Accommodation*” – Support provided to Athletes who are endorsed to participate in an Organization-sanctioned event or activity
 - e) “*Organization-sanctioned event*” – means any local, regional, provincial/territorial or national games, competitions, events or activities sanctioned by Special Olympics Canada or the Chapter

PURPOSE

2. This Policy describes:
 - a) How an Athlete who is eligible and identified to participate at an Organization-sanctioned event, is endorsed or not endorsed to attend.

APPLICATION

3. To participate in an organization-sanctioned event, an Athlete must be **eligible** to participate, **identified** to participate, and **endorsed** for participation (see the *Eligibility for Participation Policy*, the *Athlete Identification for Competition Selection Policy*. This Policy applies to Athletes who are eligible and identified for an organization-sanctioned event and who need to be endorsed to participate.
4. This policy generally applies to events that take place outside of the local community and that may require being away overnight(s). It does not apply to ongoing programs.
5. This Policy does not apply to requests for accommodation related to the rules of play in competition or sport-specific modifications.

ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

6. Endorsement involves Chapter consultation with all or some of the following: individuals within the Chapter, Community Coordinators, Educators (for School Based Teams), Club Coaches, the Athlete and Parents/Guardians. Please see flowchart in Appendix A. One example of whether an Athlete will be endorsed for participation is if the Athlete displays appropriate maturation, based upon the following:
 - a) Ability to cope with pressures involved associated with the Organization-sanctioned event
 - b) Ability to cope with travel requirements
 - c) Ability to cope with being out of their usual environment and routines
 - d) Ability to meet minimum training requirements as set out by the applicable Chapter
 - e) Ability to work with individuals and settings that are unfamiliar (new coaches, new Athletes, housing, food, language spoken)
 - f) Ability to participate both physically and mentally. If applicable has received medical clearance as outlined in the release form.
7. The applicable Chapter has a duty to ensure due diligence throughout the endorsement process, including suggesting remedies to support the Athlete's participation in the sanctioned event. The Athlete and their parents/guardians (if applicable) should be consulted throughout the process to ensure they understand the expectations and requirements for moving on to the next level of competition. If an Athlete is unable to meet the endorsement criteria the applicable Chapter must notify the Athlete with the appropriate rationale, first by calling them and following up in writing.
8. If the applicable Chapter has no concerns or issues with endorsing an Athlete, the endorsement process is complete.
9. If the applicable Chapter has any concern or issue with endorsing an Athlete, the applicable Chapter will appoint a three (3) person Panel to make a final decision. The Panel should consist of people familiar with issues related to endorsement but not directly connected to the individual situation. The Panel will be guided by the following:
 - a) The Panel may ask questions of the Athlete (and/or the Athlete's representative), Special Olympics Canada, Community Coordinators, and/or Club and Provincial/Territorial Team Coaches
 - b) Consideration of the available quotas and athlete-coach ratios at the Organization-sanctioned event or activity
 - c) A decision will be made by majority vote of the Panel
 - d) The decision will be written and the Chapter will give reasons for either
 - i. Endorsement and what accommodation will be provided (if any); or
 - ii. Not endorsing. Reasons may include why accommodation would cause undue hardship to Special Olympics Canada or the Chapter, other participants (Athletes, coaches, staff or volunteers) and/or the holding of the Organization-sanctioned event or activity.

PAN-CANADIAN POLICY

10. An identified Athlete is not confirmed to participate in an Organization-sanctioned event until an Official Team list of endorsed Athletes is distributed by the applicable Chapter.
11. Decisions made by the applicable Chapter on whether an Athlete may be endorsed are final and may not be appealed through the Pan-Canadian *Appeals Policy*.

Appendix A

Endorsement Policy Flowchart

