

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

ENDORSEMENT POLICY

WORLD GAMES

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: July 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 Special Olympics World Games.
 - d) “*Accommodation*” – Support provided to Athletes who are endorsed to participate in an Organization-sanctioned event
 - e) “*Organization-sanctioned event*” – means Special Olympics World Games
 - f) “*National Team Program (NTP)*”- program developed by SOC to better prepare and support the athletes, coaches and mission staff attending World Games. The program ensures that Special Olympics athletes in Canada have access to quality training, coaching and competitive opportunities to ensure optimal performance and a positive experience as a member of the National Team.
 - g) “*National Team Program Committee (NTP-C)*” - provides guidance, support and recommendations on the development and implementation of the National Team Program (NTP).

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*, and *National Team Selection Policy* (for national team Athletes)). 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 only applies to Special Olympics World Games (see the *Endorsement Policy for Local, Regional, Provincial/Territorial and National Games and Competitions* for all other sanctioned events and activities).
5. This Policy does not apply to requests for accommodation related to the rules of play in competition or sport-specific modifications.
6. Only the circumstances and behaviors of an eligible member that take place during travel and through the sanctioned qualifying event until the endorsement decision is due will be considered within the endorsement process.

ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

7. Endorsement involves consultation with all or some of the following: individuals within the Chapter, Community Coordinators, Club, Provincial/Territorial Team 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, without one-on-one support and/or within Athlete-coach ratios for the specific sport, 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 or routine
 - d) Ability to cope with being away from their usual support system for a long period of time
 - e) Ability to meet minimum training requirements as set out by Special Olympics Canada
 - f) Ability to work with individuals and settings that are unfamiliar (new coaches, new athletes, housing, food, language spoken)
 - g) Ability to attend calls/meetings and events and commit to regular reporting on training, goal setting, eating habits, etc.
 - h) Completed, submitted, and ascertained medical clearance to participate
 - i) Ability to acquire a valid passport

Note: One-on-one supports are not provided as part of SOI sanctioned events (including World Games) so athletes must be able to cope in the applicable athlete-coach ratios.

8. 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 or activity. 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 Charter must notify the Athlete first by telephone and then in writing with the appropriate rationale.

9. If the applicable Chapter has no concerns or issues with endorsing an Athlete, the endorsement process is complete.

10. 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 and notify Special Olympics Canada. The Panel should consist of people familiar with issues related to endorsement but not directly connected to the individual situation (this could include a member of the National Team Program Committee (NTP-C) or SOC Sport Team). 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, Club and Provincial/Territorial Team Coaches, and/or National Team Program Committee.
 - b) Consideration of the available quotas and athlete-coach ratios at the Organization-sanctioned event
 - c) A decision will be made by majority vote of the Panel
 - d) The decision will be provided to the Athlete first by telephone and then in writing 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.

11. An identified Athlete is not confirmed to participate in an organization-sanctioned event until an Official Team list of endorsed Athletes is distributed by Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter.

12. 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*.

Endorsement Policy Flowchart

