

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS ALBERTA
ENDORSEMENT & ENDORSEMENT RECONSIDERATION POLICY

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: Sept 2019

LAST REVISED: Feb 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 Canada National event or activity
 - d) *“Accommodation”* – Support provided to Athletes who are endorsed to participate in an Organization-sanctioned event or activity
 - e) *“Organization-sanctioned event or-competition”* – means any local, regional, provincial 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 or activity, is endorsed to attend; and
 - b) How an Athlete who is not endorsed to attend can apply for reconsideration of endorsement.

APPLICATION

3. To participate in an Organization-sanctioned competition, event or activity, an Athlete must be **eligible** to participate, **identified** to participate, and **endorsed** for participation (see the *Eligibility for Participation Policy*, the *Competition Identification 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 or activity 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 consultation with all or some of the following: individuals within the Chapter, Community Coordinators, Educators (for School Based Teams), Club Coaches, and Parents/Guardians. 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 or activity
 - b) Ability to cope with travel requirements
 - c) Ability to cope with being out of their usual environment
 - d) Ability to work with individuals and settings that are unfamiliar (new coaches, new Athletes, housing, food, language spoken)
 - e) Completed, submitted and ascertained medical clearance to participate.
7. If Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter has any concern or issue with endorsing an Athlete, Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter should not endorse the Athlete.
8. An identified Athlete is not confirmed to participate in an Organization-sanctioned event or activity until an Official Team list of endorsed Athletes is distributed by Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter.
9. Decisions on whether an Athlete may be endorsed may not be appealed through the Pan-Canadian *Appeals Policy*. Instead, Athletes who are not endorsed may request reconsideration of endorsement, as described in this Policy.
10. Special Olympics Canada and its Chapters are required to inform Athletes who are not endorsed for participation of the reasons they were not endorsed. Special Olympics Canada and its Chapters are also required to inform Athletes about the process for requesting reconsideration of endorsement.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION of ENDORSEMENT

11. Should an Athlete not be endorsed by Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter to move from Provincial/Territorial Games to National Games, the Athlete and/or the Athlete's representative may submit a request for reconsideration of endorsement to Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter within twenty-one (21) days of the Athlete being informed that he or she is not endorsed. The Request should include:
 - a) Confirmation that the Athlete is eligible and has been selected;
 - b) Reasons (provided by Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter) for why the Athlete was not endorsed;
 - c) A doctor's note supporting the request (if applicable);
 - d) Suggested remedies to support the Athlete's participation at the Organization-sanctioned event or activity; and
 - e) Proposal(s) (from the Athlete and/or the Athlete's representative) for accommodation.

12. Upon receiving a request for reconsideration of endorsement, Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter will appoint a three (3) person Panel to make a decision on the request. 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) and Special Olympics Canada or the applicable Chapter who made the decision to not endorse the Athlete
 - b) Consideration of the available quotas and Athlete-coach ratios at the Organization-sanctioned event or activity
 - c) A decision should be made within fourteen (14) days following the request for reconsideration of endorsement
 - d) A decision will be made by majority vote of the Panel
 - e) The decision will be written and the Panel will give reasons for either
 - i. Accepting the request for reconsideration of endorsement and what Accommodation will be provided (if any); or
 - ii. Rejecting the request for reconsideration of endorsement. 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.
13. The decision of the Panel is final.
