



The **Codes of Conduct** were designed to assist each athlete, coach, and volunteer to abide by the philosophy of Special Olympics Virginia (SOVA). It is the individual's responsibility to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct.

In order to give Areas assistance with difficult behavior issues regarding athletes and/or volunteers, the following guidelines should be incorporated into the Standard Operating Procedures for the Area, or similar guidelines should be established by each Area and Local program.

GUIDELINES

1. Incidents should be recorded on a Conduct Report Form within 24-48 hours of occurrence even if no action needs to be taken in regard to the conduct at that time. It may be necessary to have a history of the behavior of the volunteer or athlete if future conduct issues occur.
2. Incidents should be reported to the Area Coordinator within 7-10 days and the subsequent Conduct Report Form should be sent to the Area Coordinator to be kept in a confidential file.
3. The Area Coordinator should keep a file of all occurrences and maintain this file for a period of no less than 5 years per occurrence.
4. If the occurrence does not violate SOVA or SOI policies, the Area Coordinator may make the decision regarding the next course of action. This course of action should include:
 - a. Notification to the athlete, coach or volunteer and parent/guardian (when necessary) that a Conduct Report has been filed.
 - b. A meeting to discuss the occurrence and implement actions to resolve the issue should be organized within 1 month of the occurrence or as soon as possible for all parties involved. The Area Coordinator works with the athlete, coach or volunteer to assign an advocate for them if an advocate is needed. Communication at the beginning of difficult situations often avoids conflicts at a later date and is crucial in the resolution.
 - c. Actions taken should be recorded on the Code of Conduct Action Plan and acknowledged by all parties involved even if this is a verbal notification to the athlete, coach or volunteer that the decision is that no action will be taken at that particular time.

Areas must adhere to **SOVA's Participation Policy**. Areas and Local Programs may not suspend or expel an athlete or volunteer from the program without the permission of the President of SOVA. Areas may issue a **warning** to a volunteer or athlete or may place an athlete or volunteer on **probation**. These actions should be discussed in detail with the Section Director prior to their enactment.



The SOVA Participation Guidelines are as follows:

DEFINITION OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

1. Behavior that has a reasonable likelihood to jeopardize the health, safety and/or well being of self or others, and/or has a reasonable likelihood to reflect badly on the organization.
2. Illegal activity, and/or alleged illegal activity, whether or not a formal criminal charge has been made.
3. Violation of Special Olympics Virginia Policies.

PENALTIES

Penalties for actions that result in a criminal charge and/or conviction are addressed in Attachment A to this document. The penalties outlined below deal with situations in which the health, safety and well being of athletes, volunteers, staff or others may be at risk, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result.

Action taken will be predicated on a good faith belief that the disciplinary action is appropriate and corresponds to the seriousness of the infraction. Actions that may be taken include **warning, probation, suspension or expulsion from Special Olympics Virginia.**

A **warning** or **probation** may be levied as appropriate by the supervising individual.

The President has sole discretion to **suspend** an athlete/volunteer from Special Olympics Virginia based upon available information and a determination that the conduct or the alleged conduct is so inherently harmful or egregious as to warrant immediate action, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result. The President will report the suspension to the Chairman of the Board and will submit a report to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) has sole discretion to **expel** an athlete/volunteer from Special Olympics Virginia. Action will be taken if the circumstances are so inherently harmful or egregious as to warrant expulsion, whether or not a criminal charge has been made or could result.

A suspension or expulsion may be appealed in writing to the President. The Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) will act on the appeal.

SOVA's Policy Manual for athlete and volunteer eligibility will be used as a guideline for disciplinary action when a criminal charge has been made against an individual.



DEFINITIONS

1. **Warning:** A cease and desist warning for perceived inappropriate behavior which, if ignored, could lead to a more severe course of disciplinary action. Decision to be made and notification to be given by supervising personnel.
2. **Probation:** A flexible, but defined period of time (which may contain temporary participation restrictions in an activity) during which the probationer must demonstrate the corrective behavior required. Decision to be made and notification to be given by supervising personnel.
3. **Suspension:** A temporary period of time in which a person is barred from participation in Special Olympics Virginia. Decision to be made and notification to be given by the President.
4. **Expulsion:** Permanent dismissal from Special Olympics Virginia. Decision to be made by the Board of Directors (or Executive Committee) and notification to be given by the President.