



ATHLETE HOUSING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Special Olympics is an athlete-centered movement that welcomes athletes with intellectual disabilities of all abilities to participate in sports training and athletic competition. Special Olympics is open to persons with intellectual disabilities over the age of eight and offers a Young Athletes program for individuals with intellectual disabilities under the age of eight.

The health and safety of all Special Olympics participants is of paramount importance to Special Olympics. Participants should feel that every Special Olympics event is a safe and positive experience and should not be fearful of other athletes, coaches or volunteers.

Arranging housing for overnight events involves the consideration of a variety of factors, including the varying abilities, ages and behaviors of athletes, the availability of housing and the costs associated with overnight accommodations.

POLICY

Requirements

- 1.) **Gender** – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex. Local Programs may allow the following exceptions:
 - a. Married athletes who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply to the spouse of an athlete who is not participating in the event, but attending solely as a spectator.
 - b. Married volunteers who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple's child), if this scenario will create a situation whereby an athlete is housed with a volunteer of the opposite sex.
 - c. Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete.
 - d. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a condominium or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned to one condominium, if necessary, but private rooms may

not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Coaches must also be housed in the condominium and the coach/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of the policy) must be maintained.

- e. Use of barracks or other facility (such as a gym) where a large number of individuals are assigned to one room. Athletes and volunteers must be separated as much as possible by gender (for example, females on one side of the gym and males on the other side).

2.) **Supervision**

The coach/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered coach to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a coach present in the room at all times. All coaches must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Kansas Volunteer Screening Policy.

3.) **Young Athletes**

Young Athletes events that involve overnight activities require increased supervision and therefore, Young Athletes participants must be accompanied by a properly registered and screened parent, guardian or an individual designated by a parent or guardian at all overnight activities. Rooming assignments for Young Athletes should be separate from the remainder of the delegation, whenever possible (for example, separate hotel rooms).

4.) **Implementation**

Local Programs are responsible for implementing the policy for their delegation.