



## Code of Conduct and Organizational Expectations

### Athlete Code of Conduct

Gahanna Special Olympics (GSO) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and sportsmanship. **All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports partners agree to the following guidelines for conduct in-person and while using social or electronic media:**

#### *Sportsmanship:*

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use foul or hurtful language.
- I will not insult, embarrass or speak negatively of others.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

#### *Training and Competition:*

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training and competition.

#### *Behaving Responsibly:*

- I will not make inappropriate physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition, or at other organizational functions.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

***I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my coach, program coordinator or Games Organizing Committee can remove me from play at any time and not allow me to participate with Special Olympics in the future.***

### Spectator/Supporter Code of Conduct

Family, friends and supporters of GSO athletes are expected to play a positive and supportive role at all Special Olympics events (including competition, training, social events, etc.) and as a parent/guardian of an athlete, you agree to follow these guidelines:

- I (and any individuals with me) will refrain from using abusive or offensive language towards anyone. This includes (but is not limited to) athletes, officials, coaches, opponents and fellow spectators.
- I (and any individuals with me) will keep my emotions under control - *Keep in mind that this is an amateur sporting event and coaches and officials volunteer their time to support our athletes.*
- I (and any individuals with me) will refrain from shouting instructions and will let the coaches do the coaching.

- I (and any individuals with me) will de-emphasize winning and losing. Our athletes compete for personal growth, improved physical fitness, and positive social interaction, NOT just to win against the competition.
- I (and any individuals with me) will stay out of the competition areas. Only registered/approved coaches and athletes should be on the field of play. This is for the protection of you and our athletes.
- Any cheers will be in the spirit of good sportsmanship. I understand that derogatory comments, of any kind, directed at athletes, coaches, or officials will not be tolerated.

***Electronic and Social Media:*** GSO encourages the celebration of our organization and our amazing athletes via social and other electronic media. However, the guidelines above apply to social/electronic media formats as well as in-person. Hurtful, derogatory, offensive or unsportsmanlike comments posted on social or electronic media, directed at athletes, coaches, volunteers or other families in the organization will not be tolerated.

- Also, be mindful of other's privacy. Please don't post comments, pictures, or videos of them or their athlete without permission, and/or remove it promptly, if asked to do so.

**I understand that failure to follow these guidelines could result in ANY of the following consequences. The choice of the reprimand is at the discretion of the Head Coach/Lead Volunteer, Advisory Committee Member, or Local Coordinator:**

1. You may be escorted from the venue for that day's activity
2. You may be banned from attending future events for the remainder of the season
3. You may be banned from attending any Special Olympics event for life
4. If necessary, the proper authorities will be called to deal with the situation

## **Expectations for Parents/Guardians/Staff of GSO Athletes**

### ***General Expectations***

- Any paperwork or other information requested by the Head Coach or Local Coordinator must be submitted in a timely manner (especially athlete medical releases). Athlete medical releases (including updates for current GSO athletes) MUST be submitted and approved by the local coordinator PRIOR to the day of participation (i.e. – if your athlete's form is expired and you submit the form on the day of a practice or competition, your athlete is not guaranteed permission to participate that day.)
- GSO maintains an organizational calendar on the homepage of our local organization website at [www.gahannaspecialolympics.com](http://www.gahannaspecialolympics.com). Please consult this calendar for any scheduling questions prior to contacting coaches or the Local Coordinator.
- All parents/guardians should provide a working phone number and email address at the time of submitting an athlete application. If one of these contact details changes, notify the local coordinator immediately of the new information. We send out regular updates via email. If you are not receiving these updates, notify the Local Coordinator ASAP to avoid missing out on critical information.
- **Be an advocate for GSO!** We are a 100% self-funded and 100% volunteer-run organization. We need your support and rely on our members to help spread awareness and raise funding for the things we do.

### ***Registration for Sports/Events/Competitions***

- **Sport Registration** - To be eligible to participate in sports that GSO offers, YOU MUST REGISTER YOUR ATHLETE. Prior to the start of a sport season, you will be sent a link to an online site to register your athlete for that particular sport. FAILURE TO REGISTER YOUR ATHLETE MAY RESULT IN THEM NOT

BEING ABLE TO PARTICIPATE. For planning purposes, it is crucial that we understand how many athletes we will have for each sport to budget cost, order uniforms, book proper facilities, and ensure sufficient training equipment.

- Competition Registration – Prior to each competition, you will be emailed a link to an online site to register your athlete for that upcoming competition/tournament. This notifies the Head Coach or Local Coordinator that you plan to attend that competition/tournament and to, in turn, register your athlete with Special Olympics. **FAILURE TO REGISTER YOUR ATHLETE PRIOR TO THE CUT-OFF DATE WILL RESULT IN THEM NOT BEING REGISTERED WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS FOR THAT COMPETITION, MEANING YOUR ATHLETE WILL BE UNABLE TO COMPETE.** Deadlines are critically important to Special Olympics Ohio, as they are managing registration for thousands of athletes across the state, and they will not allow us to add/remove athletes or make changes after the due date for competition registration.

#### **Attendance**

- If you register your athlete for a sport/competition, it is expected that you will attend. As funding permits, GSO pays competition fees, buys uniforms, purchases equipment, and reserves space at training venues for each athlete that signs up. Failure to attend after signing up wastes hard-earned funds that could have benefitted another athlete or the organization in another way.
- **Athletes must attend at least 60% of training sessions/practices to be eligible for any competition.**

#### **Fundraising**

- GSO tries to cover the majority of the cost associated with participating with Special Olympics. This is not typical of most community sports programs. As you may know, if you have children that participate through school or other community sports, it is typically at least \$150+ just to participate, not including uniforms and equipment. In the past, GSO has paid for competition fees, uniforms, training equipment, training venues, partial travel/accommodation expenses, social events, etc. To continue doing this, **we ask that each person participates in AT LEAST one fundraising activity per year.** If you cannot attend yourself, please encourage someone that loves your athlete to participate in your place. We are a growing program and we need your support to offer the joy of sport at a low cost to your athlete and to as many individuals with intellectual disabilities in our community as possible.

Athlete Name (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

As a parent or guardian of the above signed athlete, I understand and agree to the information contained in all three (3) pages of this document and have reviewed the athlete code of conduct section with my athlete:

Parent/Guardian Name (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_