



## **Policy on the Rights of Children with Disabilities**

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**Introduction:**

This policy of Special Olympics Bharat is formulated to ensure the respect for the rights of children (Special Athletes) with Intellectual Disability. The organization has a long-standing commitment to the protection of the children (Special Athlete) and is determined to adhere with the policy.

This policy focuses about the prevention of sexual, physical, emotional abuse and any other form of exploitation of Special Olympics athletes. It is on account of the efforts and support of all our Special Athletes, families and volunteers that Special Olympics Bharat has become one of the most respected sports programs and all policies of the organization are designed to ensure their safety and dignity.

## **Objectives:**

- To Create an understanding of how to establish, strengthen formalize and implement protection policy and processes for children with intellectual disability.
- Enhance awareness about the policy among the Special Athlete (children with ID), families and the associated coaches and volunteers.
- Create a vision for a safe and a healthy environment for the Children with Intellectual Disability (Special Athletes) in Special Olympics Bharat.

# **I. Core Guiding Principles**

## **1. Safe and Inclusive Sport Settings**

### **1.1. Zero tolerance for Harassment and Abuse**

All individuals associated with the sport programme and their families are treated with dignity and respect. Participants, escorts, employees and volunteers are free from:

- Physical, psychological or verbal harassment or abuse, including bullying.
- Sexual harassment, including unwanted attention like references, staring, bullying, etc. on the basis of sex, including lewd comments, pinching, touching or caressing or sexual jokes.
- Sexual abuse in the form of groomed or coerced collaboration in sexual and/or genital acts where the victim has been entrapped by the perpetrator.
- Neglect or negligent treatment

### **1.2. Safe Sporting Spaces**

Organizers will take reasonable measures to ensure sport grounds, meeting space, transport and accommodations while traveling are safe and free from physical hazards and emotional threats.

### **1.3. Diverse Leadership**

The Organization will promote equal opportunity of participation in all the leadership roles of the organization which will reflect inclusion in the field of administration, governance and field activities.

### **1.4. Prevention of Abuse:**

#### **a) Sexual Abuse**

- For athletes requiring assistance with changing, toileting or showering, it is a best practice if two volunteers are present.
- Private conversations with athletes should be within sight of others who are aware of the conversation
- Physical contact like hugs should respect both athlete and volunteer limits (*limits are defined in the Protective Behavior brochure from SOI*) in an encouraging way and never be secretive
- Touching should avoid areas a traditional swimsuit would cover
- Be aware of unusual or inappropriate gifts, trips, affection or attention from a volunteer
- Be aware of relationships between volunteers and athletes that become secretive or even a topic of discussion
- Be clear and direct about pointing out inappropriate behavior

#### **b) Emotional Abuse**

- No Use of profane language.
- All athletes to be treated with respect and provided encouragement

- No use of demeaning nicknames even among teammates
- Discipline should be part of a meaningful behavior modification strategy and never acted on in anger

**c) Physical Abuse**

- No use of corporal punishment under any circumstances
- Withholding food or water is maltreatment and strictly prohibited
- Only prescribed medications to be given to Special Athletes and in accordance with state regulations (consult your Special Olympics Program office for those regulations)
- Awareness about any sensitivity the Special Athlete may have to temperature, sound and touch

**1.5. Tips for Travel**

- Ensure separate sleeping rooms by gender
- Try to assign roommates based on similar age, maturity and size
- Establish a plan for checking on each room/athlete
- Clearly set and explain rules and behavior expectations of both chaperones and athletes before each trip

**1.6. Reporting of Suspicious Activity**

- Suspicious activity should be reported to Special Olympics staff
- Reports will be reviewed and reported as appropriate
- Suspensions may be utilized during investigations
- Special Olympics reserves the right to expel athletes or volunteers as a result of suspected or confirmed physical, sexual or emotional abuse of a Special Olympics athlete

**2. Promotion of Individual’s Rights**

**2.1. Equal Treatment**

Participants, coaches, staff and volunteers will not be discriminated against based on gender, race, age, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, and beliefs, religious or political affiliation.

**2.2. Freedom of Expression**

All participants have the right to speak and act freely without harassment, fear or retaliation, recognizing that all participants are entitled to dignity and respect.

**2.3. Freedom of Dress**

Participants and employees cannot be forced or pressured to wear clothing that compromises their beliefs (Religious/ethical belief). However athletes, volunteers and Resource Persons must adhere to the basic dress code as prescribed in the Information booklet provided prior to each camp by the States and National Sports Director.

### **3. Positive Duty Bearer Behavior**

#### **3.1. Zero Tolerance for any form of Sexual Interaction**

Coaches, staff, volunteers and associated employees should not have any sexual interactions with participants this includes inappropriate verbal, written or physical exchanges.

#### **3.2. Favours and Threats**

Inappropriate threats or rewards (playing time, uniforms, food, etc.) are not used as a tool of manipulation by individuals in positions of power.

### **4. Effective Protection and Inclusion Process**

#### **4.1. Grievance Systems Established and Available**

Clear mechanisms are in place to empower anyone within a programme to confidentially disclose violations, abuses and misconduct. All care shall be taken to ensure that individuals reporting any grievance will be free from retribution and will be entitled to complete confidentiality as outlined by the organizational policy. (*Refer Grievance Policy – HR Manual*)

#### **4.2. Training and Awareness Raising Activities**

All individuals employed by or participating in the sport programme are trained on their rights, support services, and how to report a grievance with full transparency. Process is clearly posted and participants and staff are regularly educated. Training is reasonable and age-appropriate.

#### **4.3. Children are Aware and Involved in the implementation of the policy**

While establishing and implementing protection and inclusion processes, children (special athletes) and their families will be actively engaged and will be trained for their rights and all applicable mechanisms will be child-friendly and available.

## **II. Service Delivery Principles**

### **i. Priority**

Child protection and inclusion are a priority in all activities undertaken by Special Olympics Bharat. No activity or programme will be undertaken if the child protection standard cannot be enforced

### **ii. Engagement**

All people involved with the Special Olympics Bharat programme– men, women, boys, and girls are involved in creation, implementation and evaluation of child protection and inclusion activities.

### **iii. Sustainability**

Child protection activities are supported with adequate resources.

**iv. Access**

All people involved with the program, including children, will have access to information about child protection policies and activities.

**v. Confidentiality**

In cases of a grievance, disclosure, complaint or individual incident, the privacy of all parties is protected. The case is shared on a strict need-to-know basis for appropriate resolution.

**vi. Accountability**

Child protection and inclusion programs and services will have regular and transparent monitoring, evaluation and Internal review by the management on a time to time basis.

**vii. Promotion**

Child protection and inclusion activities and principles are reflected in external communications, such as media materials, web site, etc.