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## Athlete's Code of Conduct

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Gwinnett Masters Special Olympics prides itself in sponsoring high-quality physical fitness and sports competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior which will ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and standards of behavior as established by GMSO. When representing or participating in Special Olympics, all Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports partners will obey the Athlete Code of Conduct. This includes while participating in or attending any Special Olympics activity, including transportation to and from the activity.

If it is discovered that any athlete has a criminal history, a background check will be issued by GMSO at which time the individual must submit their full name, social security number, and birth date. Each situation will be assessed case by case and the appropriate decision regarding participation will be made by GMSO.

### Sportsmanship

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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 bad language.

I will not swear or say mean things about other people.

I will not fight (either with a loud voice or hitting) with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

### Training and Competition

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I will train regularly and attend as many practices as I can.

I will let my coach know when I will not be at practice.

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 competitions.

I will not "hold back" in preliminaries just to get into an easier final heat.

### Responsibility for My Actions

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I will not make inappropriate physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.

I will not drink alcohol, smoke, or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics.

I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.

I will not bring any weapons to any Special Olympics activity.

I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

I understand that it is a privilege to participate in Special Olympics and not a right. I also understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, GMSO may not allow me to participate.

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### Disciplinary Actions for Not Following the Athlete's Code of Conduct

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**GMSO prefers that any conflicts between athletes should be worked out between the athletes and their families.** However, the following progressive disciplinary actions may be taken by a coach. Depending upon the nature of the incident, any actions may be bypassed in the disciplinary process. Bypassing more than one action level requires approval from the GMSO Coordinator. **A GMSO Incident Report Form should be completed and kept on file for any athlete or volunteer with whom there are ongoing behavioral or safety concerns, and must be completed immediately if it is suspected further disciplinary action may be needed.** Copies of Incident Report Forms should be forwarded as soon as completed to the GMSO Coordinator. A SOGA representative will be notified and invited to attend any Disciplinary Committee meeting or hearing.

Action One: Verbal warning given to the athlete. Parent/guardian/caregiver notified of warning. The Coach will keep a record that a warning has been issued.

Action Two: Prior to this action being taken, a GMSO Incident Report Form must be completed and sent to the GMSO Coordinator. Subsequent to its receipt, a written warning (a copy of the Incident Report Form) will be given to the athlete with a copy to the appropriate individuals.

Action Three: Personal meeting with coach, athlete, and GMSO Disciplinary Committee member(s) to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for improvement.

The athlete will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian/caregiver. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the athlete, coach, GMSO Coordinator, and parent/guardian/caregiver.

Action Four: Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season. The Coordinator must be contacted before a coach suspends an athlete. The Coordinator will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete, parent/guardian/caregiver.

Any further action must be referred to the Coordinator. The GMSO Coordinator must approve further action.

Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- Suspension for more than one sport season.
- Expulsion for one year or more.

### Appeal Process

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The athlete has the right to appeal any disciplinary actions with the GMSO Coordinator. The athlete or representative will submit a written request for a meeting to appeal the decision.

The appeal will be heard by the GMSO Advisory Board's Disciplinary Committee, including a SOGA representative if available. A decision to reverse, amend or affirm a disciplinary action must be submitted in writing to the coach and should include a plan of action for the athlete to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action.