

## **VOLUNTEER AND STAFF DATING SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW MEXICO ATHLETES**

### **PRINCIPLES**

Among the Special Olympics movement's highest priorities is the wellbeing of, and respect for the dignity of Special Olympics athletes\*. The purpose of this document is to make clear Special Olympics New Mexico's policy on volunteers\* and staff dating Special Olympics athletes and to protect all participants in the Special Olympics movement, including athletes, coaches and staff, as well as Special Olympics New Mexico.

Special Olympics New Mexico will take all reasonable steps to ensure that athletes\* participating in New Mexico do so in an environment that is free from abuse, intimidation, fear, pressure or coercion from any person in a position of authority, including Special Olympics New Mexico staff, coaches, and other volunteers. At the same time, Special Olympics New Mexico respects the right of every Special Olympics New Mexico athlete to be treated with dignity and to have the same rights as every other human being.

### **POLICY**

Special Olympics New Mexico prohibits any Special Olympics New Mexico staff member or volunteer (excluding spouses of athletes and athletes who are Class B volunteers) from dating or having a sexual relationship with any Special Olympics New Mexico athlete. In the event that Special Olympics New Mexico learns of any dating or sexual relationship, the organization immediately shall require:

1. that the staff member or volunteer end his or her association with Special Olympics New Mexico
2. that the association between the staff member or volunteer and Special Olympics New Mexico athlete will be terminated.

In the case of a Special Olympics New Mexico athlete who is also a staff member or volunteer, the Special Olympics New Mexico Executive Director must evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the competing athlete, and if it is determined that there is such a relationship, then apply the above policy in the same manner as the policy is applied to non-athlete staff or volunteers.

If the relationship is determined to be abusive or exploitive, Special Olympics New Mexico is required, by law, to alert New Mexico Adult Protective Service or the New Mexico Child Protective Services

Special Olympics New Mexico respects the right of athletes to have the full range of human relationships available to other human beings. This policy shall not be interpreted as a limitation on the rights of athletes, but only as a restriction on Special Olympics New Mexico staff and volunteers.

\*The terms "Special Olympics New Mexico athlete" and "athlete" refer to persons with intellectual disabilities. The term "volunteer" includes Unified Partners.