



The health and safety of all Special Olympics New York participants is of paramount importance to Special Olympics New York. Participants should feel that every Special Olympics New York event is a safe, positive experience and should not be fearful of other athletes, coaches or volunteers. Each member of the delegation shall be assigned his/her own bed. Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex. \* The chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy.

\* Please see Policy requirement for exceptions.

## **Policy Requirements**

1. **Gender** – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex.

## **Potential Exceptions**

- a. At the discretion of Special Olympics New York 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.
- b. Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete.
- c. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a suite or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned to one suite, if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Chaperones must also be housed in the suite and the chaperone/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of the policy) must be maintained.
- d. 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 chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a chaperone present in the room at all times. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics U.S. 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. **Acknowledgment** – Special Olympics New York must secure a parent’s/guardian’s signature acknowledging the possibility for overnight activities and that additional information about the rooming assignments or the Program’s housing policy should be directed to Special Olympics New York. Athletes who are legally responsible for themselves are permitted to provide acknowledgment on their own behalf.

This requirement provides confirmation that the parents/guardians are aware that the Program has a policy relative to housing arrangements, empowers the parents/guardians to learn more about the housing practices, and also provides them an opportunity to notify Special Olympics New York if there are any concerns with the housing arrangements or information about which Special Olympics New York should be aware.

All athletes participating in Special Olympics New York overnight events, must have a signed Housing Policy document.

5. **Policy Implementation** – Special Olympics New York State and/or Regional offices are responsible for implementing the Housing Policy.