

# United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy



Policy Name: Supporting Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment Policy

Publication Date: 02/01/2024

Policy Owner: Chief of Sport and Athlete Services

Applies to:

- Generally
  - All USOPC Staff, independent contractors, and Sports Medicine Volunteers
- Delegation Events
  - In addition to the above, this policy applies to the following individuals at Delegation Events: NGB Staff, independent contractors, volunteers, and athletes
- OPTC and Internally Managed Sport Activities
  - In addition to the above, this policy applies to the following at the OPTC and Internally Managed Sport Activities: NGB staff, independent contractors, volunteers and athletes

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Policy is to support Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment who train or live at an OPTC or participate in an Internally Managed Sport Activity, or a Delegation Event.

**Policy Statement:** The USOPC is committed to supporting Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment. In furtherance of this commitment, the USOPC requires a consistent approach to allowing Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment to participate in sport in a safe and inclusive environment.

## Section 1. Definitions

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**Adult Participant:** has the meaning set forth in the [USOPC Athlete Safety Policy](#)

**Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"):** An Adult Participant who assists an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living and/or preparation for athletic participation. PCAs are different for every athlete and support should be individualized to fit an II Athlete's specific needs.

**Amateur Athlete:** An athlete who meets the eligibility standards established by the National Governing Body or Paralympic Sports Organization for the sport in which the athlete competes.

**Athlete Participation Plan (APP):** A comprehensive plan developed by the Support Team that is tailored to address the specific needs of the II Athlete's participation in sport.

**Athlete with an Intellectual Impairment ("II Athlete"):** Athletes participating in the following sports in the following sport classes: Paralympic Track & Field T20/F20, Paralympic Swimming S14/SB14/SM14, Paralympic Table Tennis class 11.

**Dual Relationship:** An exception applicable to certain sections of this policy when an Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with an II Athlete, such as a coach of an II Athlete who is also that II

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Athlete's aunt or uncle, and the II Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception.

**Electronic Communications:** Refers to any and all communications taking place electronically, which includes, but is not limited to, phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, texting, email, and social media.

**Internally Managed Sport ("IMS"):** Sports that are internally managed and operated by the USOPC.

**Internally Managed Sport Activity:** Events in which IMS participants take part that include but are not limited to camps, short-term and resident programs at OPTCs and Training Sites, competitions, and clinics where the II Athlete is financially supported by IMS<sup>1</sup>.

**In-Program Contact:** Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any II Athlete related to participation in sport.

*Examples of In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post-game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.*

**Minor Athlete:** An Amateur Athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of the USOPC, an NGB, or LAO.

**MAAPP:** means the [USOPC Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#) available at [teamusa.org/maapp](https://teamusa.org/maapp) and on the USOPC Policies and Procedures page on SharePoint.

**NGB:** means a U.S. Olympic National Governing Body, Pan American Sport Organization, or Paralympic Sport Organization recognized by the USOPC pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501, et seq.

**NGB Short Term Programs:** NGB specific sport programming such as camps and clinics that occur on an OPTC campus.

**OPTC:** The Olympic & Paralympic Training Centers located in Colorado Springs, Colorado and Lake Placid, New York.

**On-site User:** A guest who stays at the OPTC in a dorm room. On-site includes housing, full access to the dining room and based on program approval, access to training facilities/venues (gyms, push track, strength and conditioning, medical services and sport performance services).

**On-site Resident Athletes:** A guest who has been approved by USOPC Sport Performance, after NGB recommendation, to live and train at the OPTC for a full one year at a time. Resident athletes receive housing, full access to the dining room (meals), and based on program approval, access to training

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<sup>1</sup> IMS **DOES NOT** fund National Team athletes to attend Trials, National Championships, or Selection Events.

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facilities/venues (gyms, push track, strength and conditioning, medical services, and sport performance services).

**Off-Site Resident Athlete:** A guest who lives offsite, but has been approved by Sport Performance, after NGB recommendation, to receive full access to the dining room (meals if applicable), and based on program approval, access to training facilities/venues (gyms, push track, strength and conditioning, medical services, and sport performance services) for a full one year at a time.

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**USOPC II Athlete's Support Team ("Support Team"):** The group of people who prepare and review an II Athlete's APP consisting of a member of Psychological Services, Sports Medicine, the Director of the Sport or their designee, a member of the Athlete Safety Office, the Director of the OPTC or their designee (if applicable), the Director of Games Ops or their designee (if applicable) and an athlete representative from the Team USA Athletes Commission.

**USOPC Delegation Event:** The Olympic Games, the Olympic Winter Games, the Paralympic Games, the Paralympic Winter Games, the Pan American Games, and the Parapan American Games individually or collectively as applicable.

## Section 2. Living and Training at an OPTC

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### 2.1 OPTC Requirements

- A. **On-Site Resident Athletes** – The USOPC will welcome II Athletes to live and train at an OPTC if the athlete meets the following requirements:
  - 1. The athlete is at least 18 years of age
  - 2. Meets their NGB performance and baseline participation criteria
  - 3. Is able to take care of all personal needs without supervision including but not limited to satisfying all team obligations, attending meetings, showering, dressing, eating, and is able to navigate and use basic technology to include utilizing a cell phone to communicate via text, phone call, and email.
- B. **Off-Site Resident Athletes** – The USOPC will welcome II Athletes to live off-site and train at an OPTC if the athlete meets the following requirements:
  - 1. Meets their NGB performance and baseline participation criteria
  - 2. Is able to take care of all personal needs without supervision including but not limited to satisfying all team obligations, attending meetings, showering, dressing, eating, and is able to navigate and use basic technology with any accommodations outlined in the Athlete Participation Plan

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3. Is able to manage transportation to and from the OPTC to satisfy team obligations.
- C. **NGB Short Term Programs** - NGBs will evaluate the needs of all athletes, including II Athletes on their short-term program roster (i.e., camps), and provide appropriate training curriculum and support personnel to their participants.

## Section 3. Delegation Events and IMS Activities

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### 3.1 Personal Care Assistants

The USOPC will use reasonable efforts to provide II Athletes with PCAs to support travel, training, activities of daily living and competition. Applicable competitions covered by this Policy include Delegation Events and Internally Managed Sport Activities.

## Section 4. Athlete Safety

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### 4.1 One-on-One Interactions:

- A. If an Adult Participant interacts with an II Athlete, the below requirements apply. However, if an II Athlete is under 18 years old, the USOPC [MAAPP](#) supersedes this policy.
- B. All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and an II Athlete must be observable and interruptible, unless any of the below exceptions apply:
  1. It is an emergency situation;
  2. A Dual Relationship exists;
  3. An II Athlete needs a PCA and:
    - a. The parent/guardian of the II Athlete has provided written consent to the USOPC;
    - b. The PCA has complied with the Training and Education requirements in Section 4.2 of the USOPC [Athlete Safety Policy](#); and
    - c. The PCA has complied with the [USOPC Background Check Policy and Procedures](#);
  4. The II Athlete is meeting with a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider and:
    - a. The door remains unlocked;

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- b. The provider notifies the USOPC and another adult at the facility that the meeting will occur; and
- c. The provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

## 4.2 Electronic Communications

- A. Unless an exception applies in Section 4.1(B), Adult Participants must include the II Athlete's parent/guardian, an adult family member of the II Athlete or an Adult Participant on all one-on-one electronic communications.
- B. If the II Athlete initiates the Electronic Communication with the Adult Participant, the Adult Participant must ensure that their response meets the requirements of this policy.

## 4.3 Transportation

- A. Adult Participants cannot transport an II Athlete alone, unless an exception in Section 4.1(B) applies, or the Adult Participant has obtained written consent from the II Athlete's parent or guardian.
  - 1. Written consent will be obtained on at least an annual basis. A parent or guardian can provide or rescind written consent at any time
- B. The Adult Participant meets the requirements of this policy if another individual is present.

## 4.4 Lodging

- A. This section applies to In-Program lodging that is paid for and arranged by IMS or the USOPC.
  - 1. An II Athlete will not be roomed alone in a sleeping room with an Adult Participant or Minor Athlete unless one of the following applies:
    - a. An exception in Section 4.1(B) applies;
    - b. The other Adult Participant is also an II Athlete and the parent/guardians of the athletes and both II Athletes approve of the arrangement;

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- c. The risk is greater if II Athlete rooms alone due to security concerns of that location.
2. If the II Athlete is being roomed in a multi-room housing situation, there must be at least two additional athletes present.
3. All rooming arrangements must be vetted through the USOPC Office of Athlete Safety, and if the rooming arrangement includes additional athletes, parental/guardian consent is required.

## 4.5 Mandatory Reporting

- A. An Adult Participant who learns of information and reasonably suspects that an II Athlete is or has been subject to criminal conduct, including abuse and/or neglect, as defined by any applicable state law, must report to Law Enforcement within 24 hours.
- B. Adult Participants must also comply with the reporting requirements contained in Section 6 of the USOPC [Athlete Safety Policy](#).
- C. Adult Participants must also be familiar with their local and state laws regarding reporting and follow those requirements.

## 4.6 Violation

Any violation of the requirements of this Section 4, will be a violation of Prohibited Conduct as defined in the USOPC [Athlete Safety Policy](#) and subject to response and resolution through said policy.

## Section 5. Athlete Participation Plan (APP)

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### 5.1 Developing an Athlete Participation Plan

- A. The USOPC acknowledges the inherent uniqueness of each II Athlete, particularly when it comes to their requirements for support and accommodation in participating in sport. Therefore, the USOPC is committed to developing a comprehensive APP tailored to the specific needs of each athlete.
- B. To ensure an inclusive and personalized approach, the Support Team will carefully evaluate the information provided by the II Athlete and their parent or guardian and the specific program requirements for the sport. The Support Team will consult the II Athlete and parent/guardian and develop an APP that addresses the II Athlete's unique needs. The APP will serve as a blueprint for support and accommodation throughout the athlete's

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experience (i.e. Delegation Event, Internally Managed Sport participation, and OPTC access). If the II Athlete's needs evolve or circumstances change, the USOPC may review and modify the APP as appropriate.

## Policy History

Publication Type	Policy Approver	Enabling Action	Publication Date	Next Scheduled Review	Revision Summary
Initial Publication	Board of Directors	Board Vote: December 7, 2023	February 1, 2024	December 2024	N/A – initial publication