Purpose:

To clearly define the eligibility requirements for athletes participating in Special Olympics Manitoba.

Policy:

To be eligible for participation in Special Olympics Manitoba, an individual with an intellectual disability*, must agree to observe and abide by the Special Olympics Canada Sports Rules.

*Note: For the purpose of this policy “intellectual disability and/or “Mental Retardation” mean substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two (2) or more of the following applicable adaptive skills areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work. Mental retardation manifests before age eighteen (18).

The following four assumptions are essential to the application of the definition:

1. Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication and behavioural factors.

2. The existence of limitations in adaptive skills occurs within the context of community environments typical of the individuals age peers and is indexed to the person's individualized needs for supports.

3. Specific adaptive limitations often coexist with strengths in other adaptive skills or other personal capabilities.

4. With appropriate supporters over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with mental retardation will generally improve. (Definition, Classification and Systems Supports, 9th Edition, AAMR, Washington, DC -1992, p.5)

The term ‘mental retardation’ is a diagnostic term used to describe the condition acknowledged above.

In keeping with the current language practiced within the field, the term mental retardation is no longer commonly used.

In its place, if it is absolutely necessary to use a label, i.e. in an educational setting or in a SOC/NCCP Workshop, then the term that is in keeping with the current practice is 'a person with an intellectual disability'.

Special Olympics Manitoba was created and developed to give individuals with an intellectual disability the opportunity to train and compete in sport activities. No person shall, on the grounds of gender, race, religion, colour, national origin or financial constraints, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of Special Olympics Manitoba.

Flexibility is left to the Region and Chapter for determining the eligibility of the participants because of the variety of situations and needs that exist in the many localities where Special Olympics Manitoba programs have been and will be instituted. Inclusion is preferred to exclusion when eligibility is in question.

Individuals who have both an intellectual disability and multiple disabilities may participate in Special Olympics Manitoba programs and competitions.

Athletes must participate in the region where they reside. If the region does not offer a sport or sport level, the athlete may access it through another region

Participation by Individuals in Special Olympics Manitoba' Aquatics Programs

Athletes in any swim programs must be able to swim 25 meters without assistance and be comfortable in deep water to be eligible to participate on a Special Olympics swim team (at the discretion of the Head Coach).

Participation by Individuals with Pending Criminal Charges

Special Olympics Manitoba will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure the safety of all athletes, coaches and volunteers participating in programs. To that end, the Vice President of Sport and Programs, in conjunction with the President and CEO of Special Olympics Manitoba, will review the eligibility of any athlete who is charged with a criminal offence, to participate in any Special Olympics programs and/or activities. While Special Olympics Manitoba respects an individuals right to due process of the law, an athlete who is charged with a criminal offence which may pose a risk to other athletes, coaches or participants may not, in the sole discretion of the Vice President of Sport and Programs and the President and CEO of Special Olympics Manitoba or either of them, be allowed to participate in any Special Olympics programs and/or activities unless and until such time as the Vice President of Sport and Programs and the President and CEO of Special Olympics Manitoba are satisfied that such participation will

not pose an undue risk to other participants or until such time as the charge (s) are stayed, dismissed or result in an acquittal.

Upon Special Olympics Manitoba being made aware of any criminal charges alleged against an athlete, such athlete will be contacted by the Vice President of Sport and Programs to substantiate the information. At such time the athlete will have the opportunity to submit (to SOM) any information relating to the pending criminal charges. After reviewing all information available to them, the Vice President of Sport and Programs in conjunction with the President and CEO of Special Olympics Manitoba will make a decision regarding the athlete's continued eligibility to participate in Special Olympics programs until such time as the criminal charges have been stayed, dismissed or result in an acquittal. Upon the rendering of a decision the athlete and coach(s) will be notified in writing.

All decisions may be appealed as per Special Olympics Manitoba policy 2000-9.