

PROTOCOL

Title:	Engaging young persons who wish to volunteer as part qualification/participation in a specific programme that is recognised by Special Olympics Ireland for the purpose of volunteering.
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Rationale for Protocol

Special Olympics recognises the value of engaging young people, who are registered participants of a specific challenge or development programme, in a volunteering role within local clubs and regions. An Gaisce Award Programme (ROI), the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme (NI) and the Prince's Trust are currently recognised as such challenges and development programmes.*

Whilst the organisation's policy is that volunteers must be at least 15 years of age, it is possible to offer a younger person (minimum 14 years) who wishes to volunteer as part qualification/participation in one of the aforementioned programmes an opportunity for involvement, so long as appropriate planning and support is put in place by the local club or region.*

Protocol Description

Once a participant is registered for one of the Award Schemes, the following steps should be followed:

Pre-planning:

1. The participant should, in the first instance, identify and agree with a club (or region) to sponsor their 'community involvement' or 'volunteer opportunity' as part of their qualification for the Award. If a participant is unable to identify a suitable placement, then he/she should contact the regional office of Special Olympics to get assistance.
2. Participants who wish to volunteer must complete and submit a Special Olympics Ireland Volunteer Application Form and indicate their participation in the An Gaisce/Duke of Edinburgh Awards/Prince's Trust on the form. The participant's age and place of residency will determine if their application will be subject to a background check. (see definitions below)
3. Once a club/region has agreed to consider offering the participant an opportunity to volunteer, the relevant person in the club (in many cases, the coach) should discuss the arrangements with the participant's President's Award Leader (PAL)/Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) /Prince's Trust Leader and agree the tasks to be undertaken. This should be planned well in advance of their volunteer placement dates to allow at least 6 weeks for the vetting process to be completed before they volunteer.
4. The participant and the club (or region) should agree the times, frequency and place where the participant will volunteer. The contact details of the participant, the PAL/DoE/Prince's Trust Leader and the sponsoring Special Olympics club coach should also be noted by both parties.
5. All participants will be required to complete an online volunteer induction training module on the Special Olympics Ireland website.

During the Volunteer Activity:

6. A designated person within the club/region must supervise the Award participant during all sessions of volunteering.
7. The participant, at no stage, should be given responsibility in the area of coaching or supervising athletes. The participant will need to work under the direction and management of the coach/club

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volunteer/regional person who is conducting the sport session /activity.

8. A club may not have more than 2 participants at a time volunteering in the same sports training session or activity.
9. Where the participant is under 18 years of age, his/her family/guardian must ensure that appropriate and safe arrangements are put in place in terms of travel to and from the volunteer activity.

Definitions/Further Information

1. All participants under 18 years of age must have the signed consent of their parent or guardian.
2. Applicants resident in the **Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland over 16 years of age must complete the vetting** process.
3. Applicants resident in the **Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland under 16 years of age will not be subject to the vetting** process.
4. Participants volunteering at Special Olympics activities are covered by public liability insurance. Participants may wish to take out personal accident insurance themselves.

Note: Participants on the Duke of Edinburgh Award must be 14 years of age, while the entry age for the Gaisce Award Programme is 15 years of age. It should be noted that the Prince's Trust accept participants from the age of 13 years old. However, the minimum age that Special Olympics Ireland will accept as a volunteer as a part of any of the above programmes is 14 years of age.

Related Forms

Name of Form	Who needs to complete?
Volunteer Application Form	All participants
Volunteer Service Agreement Form	All participants, and signed by the PAL/DofE/Prince's Trust Leader, Club Coach/Regional person
Garda Vetting (ROI)	All participants resident in the Republic of Ireland over 16 years of age
Access NI Form (NI)	All participants resident in Northern Ireland over 14 years of age
Parental Consent Form	All participants under 18 years of age