

PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

Science Olympiad is an exciting program and we know that parents are eager to help their child succeed. It can be difficult, however, to know where to draw the line in assisting your child, particularly with construction events. These guidelines are to help parents discern how to appropriately help their child without endangering their child's participation in the program.

What can & should parents do?

- Ensure that your child makes all event and team meetings.
- Fill out any required forms on time.
- Ask your team's head coach how you can be helpful for the team. Help may be needed with mentoring students in events, fundraising, travel, hospitality, etc.
- Take your child shopping for materials. Help them find resources to learn about their events. Teach them to use tools. Help them understand the underlying principles for their event. Be a sounding board for their ideas, but do not control their ideas.
- Help your child pack up and transport their materials or constructed device to tournaments.
- Volunteer to help at tournaments. Each team must contribute volunteers to make sure that tournaments are adequately staffed.
- Be a great cheerleader and model good sportsmanship for your child. Focus more on the learning and teamwork rather than tournament results. Encourage student collaboration with teammates.

What things should parents NOT do?

- *Construct anything on competition devices. If students cannot do something safely by themselves, they must find another way to accomplish the same objective or change their design. (At tournaments, students may be extensively questioned about device construction and functioning and will be disqualified if unable to answer satisfactorily.)*
- *Test, assemble, or calibrate competition devices at any time.*
- Enter the competition area at tournaments, interfere with an event in any way, or offer advice or coaching from the sidelines, even if acting as a team mentor for the event. Appropriate penalties will be assessed for interference.
- Touch or take pictures of another team's devices.
- Contact the VA State organization directly with concerns or questions; these should be addressed by your team head coach who can seek further clarification with VASO if necessary.

NOTE: *This policy is slightly more restrictive than the National-level policy.* In VASO's experience, middle and high school students have the ability to learn most tools and also have open to them many ways to construct devices. VASO strongly encourages teamwork and urges students to utilize the skills of other students on their 15-person team.