

Coaches Letter-2026 (updated 2/16/2026)

IMPORTANT NOTICES!

READ AND SHARE WITH TEAM MEMBERS AND PARENTS.

Dear Coach, March 14th is almost here and it is time for a few reminders. Please read this entire note and pass the information along to your team and team parents. This information is also being provided to Event Supervisors.

- Parking – Find driving/parking instructions here: <http://uakron.edu/polymer/agpa-k12outreach/science-olympiad/> (near bottom of page), campus maps and bus parking instructions. Parking Passes are not needed.
- Anyone on your team may drop off devices at impound.
- Event Day Registration will be held in Buchtel College of Arts & Science lobby. We will have the registration room open at 7:05 am.
- Coaches register. Students do not. Coaches may send an adult delegate to register.
- Coaches should bring all forms to registration: Team Roster & Ethics, the photo releases <http://uakron.edu/polymer/agpa-k12outreach/science-olympiad/scienceolympiad-forms>

At registration you will receive a Team folder containing the following items:

- Homeroom poster (and an index card with sticky circles). Please post outside your homeroom and remove at the end of the day.
- Up-to-date schedules, maps (5 copies each) PLEASE REVIEW FOR UPDATES,
- A copy of these instructions
- **Wristbands** – Each student must wear a wrist band to compete. Schools with two teams → your teams' wristbands will be different. Students must compete on one team or the other, no crossovers. (Supervisors will check wristbands.) Please ask your two teams to sit on opposite sides of the room from each other at events. Supervisors will check.
- Team number(s) and homeroom will be printed on your envelope. We email your homeroom building/number a few weeks in advance.
- Emergency phone numbers on brightly colored paper in your packet. Please TEXT and we will call you back.
- "TESTED" stickers – please provide a sticker to each student who turned in a completed, properly signed photo release. Ask them to place it on their person in an easy-to-see location. Our photographers will need to see the stickers before taking

photos of them. Coaches, we will need to rely on you – if a student is not allowed to be photographed, please do not give them a sticker.

- A garbage bag.
- Homerooms should be accessible by 7:00 am and vacated before 5:30 pm. Please leave them neat and clean, and as you find them. Please pack out your trash. (*sorry 'bout that.*)

The award ceremony is in the SRWC Gym. We will start at or after 5:30. Please be patient.

Tournament Break - The last testing period ends at 3:15. The ceremony starts at or soon after 5:30. Rob's Café has many dining options, the Student Union has food options too. Please make plans for this break time. (*if break activities are scheduled, we'll list them here, so please check back.*)

Test papers and score sheets will not be returned to the teams. We will follow the practices of state and national tournaments – neither gives the tests back.

We know that it is difficult to forbid the presence of cell phones and other electronic devices. If a student wants to keep one in a pocket or purse, we understand, as long as the device is turned off during events. However, if an Event Supervisor sees one being used during an event, it will be confiscated immediately, and the student may be **disqualified**. Coaches with team members wearing hearing aid devices should notify Karen Plaster at the Registration Table before 8 am or send an email before March 7st. **Students should bring calculators if their event allows the use of calculators.** We will NOT allow cell phones to be used as calculators during any event.

Team members can and should present any concerns, questions, or complaints about an event to the Event Supervisor BEFORE leaving the event site. Students should contact their coach about any concerns that cannot be resolved by the Event Supervisor and student. Lead Coaches may then discuss the issue with the Event Supervisor. Lead Coaches and Event Supervisors may contact Karen Plaster at Registration to discuss an issue. Official protests must be presented **BY THE COACH** (as listed on the team registration form) to Karen Plaster.

The goal of Science Olympiad is learning, event supervisors are encouraged to offer advice, tips and encouragement to the student competitors. They are encouraged to help the students advocate for themselves when necessary.

Please explain to your students' **parents** the following concepts, using your own words.

“You’ve worked hard all fall and winter to help your students learn their material and their devices. Now is the time to let go, trust them and allow them to succeed on their own, allow them to find and use their own resourcefulness and allow them the pride of achieving “All By Myself”.

Parents can help their student by rehearsing self-advocating. The parent could play the role of supervisor, and the student would play the role of someone who (a) forgot to bring a box for his device to impound, (b) was told the target length is 6.5 meters when only 6 or 7 are allowable distances at regionals. (etc.) *(Yes, sometimes supervisors make mistakes.)*

Please remind parents that supervisors have no obligation to engage with any individuals, beside competing students and their lead coach. Please mention that our event supervisors are volunteers too, and we need them to *want* to come back next year. Everyone be kind and polite.

Finally, remind both parents and students that failures are learning opportunities, and sometimes failures become the catalyst for great achievement, (and the source of the best Sci Oly stories.) It’s ok to fail. And necessity is the mother of invention. Let your student invent! *(At an invitational a student was told, “You can’t impound your device without it being in a box.” The student came back with a donut box hastily appropriated from their homeroom. Still had frosting and sprinkles in it. But it was a box. This was a failure turned into a success by the student. He won, he learned, he succeeded under his own steam. Learning Opportunities!)*

Parents can help their students create packing lists, check-off lists, procedure lists... They can verify that all boxes have been checked. On event day, please, parents should step back and enjoy the day.

In other (stricter) words:

Parents and other Non-**Lead**-Coach Observers (“*Observers*”) are **not permitted** to confront or challenge an Event Supervisor or any member of the planning committee at any time. Observers are **not permitted** to call out directions from the sidelines or touch a student's construct while at the event site or during practice. Practice times, when permitted, are for the team members only. Observers may not take part. Students may be disqualified from events or team point penalties may be issued for improper Observer behavior. **Event Supervisors will enforce this rule. PLEASE READ THIS LINK, AND SHARE WITH YOUR PARENTS:** <http://uakron.edu/polymer/agpa-k12outreach/science-olympiad/scienceolympiad-supervisor-and-parents> so that everyone knows what to expect.

As guests of The University of Akron, you, your students and their parents must comply with the University's rules as well as those issued by the Science Olympiad Planning Committee. Because of a few unfortunate events in past years, we must enforce the following rules:

Unless students are moving constructs (e.g., Sounds of Music) please use the stairs, not the elevators when in the buildings. In addition, everyone is to treat the University facilities with respect and conduct themselves accordingly while on campus. You are expected to leave all areas clear of trash and rooms in the condition they were found.

Incidents of inappropriate, disrespectful, or unsportsmanlike behavior which cannot be attributed to any one event (the team will be disqualified from that event) **WILL** incur a team penalty based on the severity of the behavior.

Please consider packing your lunch. The Student Union can be very crowded at lunch time. "Rob's Café" offers a tasty all-you-can-eat buffet. Please see the last paragraph.

Regarding the Student Union: The Food Court area is on the second floor and available. **ALLOTHER AREAS ARE OFF LIMITS TO TEAM MEMBERS.** This includes the lower floor, Bowling Alley and associated areas. **No one should visit the 3rd floor, please.**

Please encourage your teams to bring decks of cards, reading materials, board games or other diversions they can use to keep themselves occupied and out of mischief when they are not competing.

Coach, it is **your** responsibility to make these points clear to your students and their parents. Ultimately, their behavior is your responsibility.

The University of Akron will not take custodial responsibility for minors while participating in the Akron Regional Science Olympiad. Custodial responsibility will remain with teachers, parents, legal guardians and chaperones. Minors must be properly supervised at all times.

Thank you for your help! -- Science Olympiad Planning Committee