

Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Alateen Safety Guidelines

G-34

Alateens are members of the Al-Anon Family Groups who have suffered because of the alcoholism of a loved one. They have come to Alateen seeking recovery. Before recovery can take place, an environment of trust and safety must exist. It is the responsibility of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole to work together to maintain a healthy, loving, and supportive environment.

These guidelines offer procedures for insuring the safety of Alateen members, their Alateen Group Sponsors, and Al-Anon /Alateen as a whole. All guidelines, including the *Alateen Safety Guidelines*, offer the shared experience of Al-Anon /Alateen members. Following these guidelines is not a substitute for knowing and obeying the law of your Area as it relates to minors. Each state and province has its own way of regulating these issues, and it is important that each person involved with Alateen is aware of and follows local legal requirements.

Keeping It Safe

What Can Alateen Members Do?

- **Familiarize yourselves with your Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.**
- **Remember, you are responsible for your own safety and well-being.** You do not have to accept unacceptable behavior! If you or anyone else in your group is uncomfortable with the actions of your Alateen Group Sponsor(s), the Sponsor(s) can be replaced with another Area-certified AMIAS. First, start with an informed group conscience. Involve the District Representative and/or Area/District/Al-Anon Information Service Alateen Coordinator. These trusted servants will work with you. They are committed to your well-being.
- **Invite your District Representative to your group on a regular basis.** Then, if a problem should occur, you have another familiar source of help at hand. Staying connected with a District Representative, or having an Al-Anon group contact person, may prevent unacceptable behavior by an Alateen Group Sponsor or other Alateen members.
- **Conduct exchange meetings with other Alateen groups and their Alateen Group Sponsors.** You may want to call upon them for help in solving Sponsor or group problems. An ongoing interchange between other Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateens brings a new perspective to problem solving. *There is safety in numbers.*
- **Take responsibility for your own behavior and the behavior of the other members of the group.** You could lose your meeting space by engaging in any inappropriate activity. Engaging in roughhousing, fighting, overt and covert sexual behavior or any other inappropriate activities before, during, and after an Alateen meeting or event can put you or your group in a dangerous position and prevents you from receiving the help that Alateen offers. These inappropriate actions can affect Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole and place the adults who are trying to help Alateen in a legally vulnerable position. Even if *your* actions are blameless, you can be adversely affected by the actions of others.
- **It is suggested that Alateen groups create behavior guidelines** so that everyone knows what is expected before, during, and after the meeting. Then, if you or anyone else in your group is uncomfortable with the actions of another Alateen member, a discussion regarding the group's behavior guidelines is appropriate. If the offensive conduct persists, that member can be asked not to return to the meeting. Before taking such action, start with an informed group conscience, referring back to your group's behavior guidelines and the application of the Twelve Traditions.
- **Alateen members who are legally adults must adhere to the same requirements as Alateen members who are minors when they are participating as Alateens.**
- **Take regular group inventory;** the guideline *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a & G-8b) may be helpful.
- **Support the actions of your Alateen Group Sponsors** who are responsible for the Alateens in the meeting room. To the best of their ability, Alateen Group Sponsors must maintain a sense of safety and trust in order for recovery to take place and to protect the Alateen members from physical and emotional harm. Whenever appropriate, Alateen Group Sponsors have the right to ask a member who is displaying inappropriate behavior to leave the meeting.

Just a Note: Each group has the autonomy to enact and enforce its own standards, rules of conduct, and procedures, provided it does not violate local law or the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. The acts of each individual, Al-Anon / Alateen group, and Alateen Group Sponsor(s) are solely the acts of that group/individual(s) and not those of AFG, Inc.

Keeping It Safe

What Can Alateen Group Sponsors Do?

- **It is recommended to have two Alateen Group Sponsors at each meeting.** If one Alateen Group Sponsor cannot be there, call a Sponsor from another group or invite another certified AI-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) to serve as a substitute Sponsor. This is a good reason to hold an Alateen meeting concurrently with an AI-Anon meeting. An eligible AI-Anon member who has agreed to serve as a contact between the AI-Anon and Alateen group and has been certified by the group's Area can be called upon to serve as a substitute when a Sponsor cannot attend.
- **In addition to regularly attending AI-Anon meetings, participate in district and Area Alateen Group Sponsor Workshops.** Connect with other Alateen Group Sponsors and the Area Alateen Coordinator on a regular basis. Take an annual Alateen Group Sponsor inventory. Choose a Service Sponsor who is familiar with Alateen sponsorship. Become familiar with Alateen literature and guidelines. Know how to contact emergency services should an Alateen member become ill or be hurt on site. Since phones are not always available after hours at some meeting locations, emergency procedures should be worked out in advance.
- **Keep on hand a list of community resources where Alateen members can seek help** for physical violence, abuse, suicide prevention, etc., and share how the members can get in touch with the resources.
- **Set boundaries.** Alateen Group Sponsors share *experience* in living with the disease of alcoholism, *strength* gained from working the Twelve Steps, knowledge of the Twelve Traditions and *hope* for the future. An Alateen Group Sponsor is not a counselor, nor the peer of an Alateen member. When an Alateen Group Sponsor gives advice or attempts to solve the problems of the Alateen member, it could lead to unhealthy dependencies. Overt and covert sexual interaction between an Alateen member and any adult is prohibited. It leaves the adult subject to liability, including charges of statutory rape, and diminishes any possibility of recovery for the Alateen member. Such involvement is illegal and brings AI-Anon and Alateen to the forefront of public controversy. For this reason, no AMIAS is permitted to serve as an Alateen Group Sponsor if there is any romantic involvement with any Alateen member. Alateen members who are legally adults must adhere to the same requirements as Alateen members who are minors when they are participating as Alateens.
- **Avoid infringing upon parental authority.** Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children before and after a meeting. If an Alateen member must be removed from the meeting, it is up to the parent to discipline his/her child. It is not the Alateen Group Sponsor's job to question or agree with how the parents exercise their authority. The Alateen Group Sponsor's job is to help the Alateen member cope, using the tools of the program.
- **Help the Alateen member to establish limits.** Protect the Alateens whenever behavior gets out of hand. Inappropriate behavior includes physical threats; sexual conduct; rough

Working Together

Let's keep Alateen
going, growing, and glowing.

Alateen and AI-Anon :
Together We Can Make It
fun, healthy
and safe.

play; etc. Helping the Alateens identify inappropriate behaviors themselves through a group inventory provides them with an opportunity to design group behavior guidelines. The *Taking a Group Inventory* guideline (G-8a and G-8b) may be helpful.

- **Know when to step down as an Alateen Group Sponsor.** Whenever anything interferes with the need to protect yourself, i.e., accusations, controversy, threats of personal harm, etc., discontinue serving as an Alateen Group Sponsor. Even if you are totally blameless, stepping aside will not only protect both the Alateen members and you, it will preserve the unity of the fellowship as well.

Keeping It Safe

What Can Areas Do?

- **In addition to establishing Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, Areas should establish behavioral requirements specific to the type of function;** e.g., Alateen meeting, Area Assembly, Alateen conference, Alateen fundraising event, etc. The requirements should be general in tone to allow for some flexibility, but specific enough to conform with site or schedule requirements. While Alateen Group Sponsors are not parents, they are responsible for the Alateens they escort to functions outside of the meeting. They have the right to refuse to bring an Alateen member who will not abide by the safety and behavioral requirements. The requirements should be read and understood by all before leaving the home group when attending a conference, Assembly, or other event.
- **Support Alateen conferences!** To ensure the safety of AI-Anon and Alateen as a whole, an Alateen conference within the Area or region is connected to the Area structure. The role of AI-Anon is to *guide* rather than *direct* the young people toward recovery. Alateens are more responsive when they are treated with the same respect as any other AI-Anon member. Allowing the freedom for the members involved to make their own decisions within the

boundaries of safety and the Area's minimum requirements insures integrity to Al-Anon /Alateen principles and fulfills the purpose of an Alateen conference: to encourage the growth of Alateen and to increase understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions through the sharing of ideas, fun, and fellowship with other Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors (See *Alateen Conferences* guideline [G-16]).

- **Support your Area Alateen Coordinator's training and education efforts.** Provide time and resources for training workshops.
- Support your Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) with the AMIAS certification, group registration, and annual recertification process.

Keeping It Safe

What Can Al-Anon as a Whole Do?

- **Form an Alateen meeting at the same location where there is an Al-Anon meeting.** Experience shows that forming a new Alateen group that meets concurrently with an Al-Anon group increases safety for Alateen members and Alateen Group Sponsors. The Al-Anon group can be a source of additional certified AMIAS to serve as backup Alateen Group Sponsors. The Al-Anon presence affords the Alateens additional adults to turn to should problems arise. Also, because Alateen is a part of Al-Anon, Alateens may go to the Al-Anon meeting if a substitute Alateen Group Sponsor is not available when the regular Alateen Group Sponsor(s) is not present.
- **Find a way to serve Alateen.** Many Al-Anon members cannot become full-time Alateen Group Sponsors for many reasons. Yet, everyone can serve Alateen in some capacity. Encourage eligible members to become certified through their Area/s process as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) so that they can serve Alateen by providing transportation to meetings, district/Area meetings/functions, and Alateen conferences. Another way these members can be of service is to be a backup Alateen Group Sponsor or chaperone at the Area Assemblies or conventions. Any Al-Anon member can be of service to Alateen by encouraging other members to bring their children to Alateen, providing information to schools, or other Public Outreach projects.

Additional Safety Procedures

Alateen members come from homes where the disease of alcoholism may have created distorted impressions of acceptable behavior. Just as we in Al-Anon had to learn what appropriate boundaries are, so do Alateens. When an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service chooses to interact with Alateens in some capacity, it is well to keep the following in mind:

- **Transport Alateens in groups and with another adult whenever possible.**
- **Make sure a custodial parent/legal guardian signs a permission form which you are transporting his/her child to a meeting or other function.** Have the responsible party sign the permission form in your presence. This is a legal requirement in most states/provinces.
- **Have a notarized "Authorization to Obtain Medical Care Form" (FORM B – MEDICAL FORM; see sample enclosed).** This form is necessary when escorting an Alateen member to a function that takes him or her away from the custodial parent/guardian. In the event of an emergency, timely medical care can then be obtained.
- **Be gender and number conscious!** It is always a good idea to work in teams if you are involved with several Alateen members at a time. Whenever transporting or meeting with Alateen members, inform another Alateen Group Sponsor or Al-Anon member of your whereabouts and avoid meeting in isolated places. Whenever possible, it is best to avoid one-on-one interactions with Alateen members.

Shared experience to consider when drafting behavior guidelines:

- All Alateen members are responsible for themselves, remembering that what they do reflects on their group, the conference/Assembly, and the name of Alateen.
- Alateen Group Sponsors should have knowledge of their group members' whereabouts at all times.
- Everyone is expected to attend the conference/Assembly sessions, i.e., workshops, meetings, etc.
- No girls or female Alateen Group Sponsors in boys' or male Alateen Group Sponsors' rooms; no boys or male Alateen Group Sponsors in girls' or female Alateen Group Sponsors' rooms.
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, or any substance prohibited by local law is strictly forbidden. All Alateens under medication must report to their Alateen Group Sponsors and the designated nurse upon arrival at the conference/Assembly.
- AMIAS responsible for each Alateen group/member should be aware of their special responsibility as adult escorts of their Alateen group/member.

It's important for the Alateen group/member to understand that because the Alateen Group Sponsors/AMIAS are responsible for the Alateens they bring, they have the right to refuse to bring a member whom they do not think will abide by these guidelines, always remembering to place principles above personalities.

Responsibility Statement

This statement offers clarification to the Al-Anon /Alateen fellowship regarding the role of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).

Requirements for Service to Alateen:

An Alateen Group Sponsor is a responsible, adult member of Al-Anon who attends Al-Anon meetings regularly, is currently certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved In Alateen Service (AMIAS) through their Area's Alateen process, and who shares his/her experience in living with the disease of alcoholism, strength gained from the Twelve Steps, knowledge of the Twelve Traditions, and hope for the future. He/she helps the Alateens keep the focus on the Al-Anon program.

No person may be certified as an AMIAS, including Alateen Group Sponsors, who has ever been convicted of a felony, or charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, or has demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to the Alateen members. For the complete list of requirements in your Area please contact your Area Alateen Coordinator.

Role of AMIAS, including Alateen Group Sponsors:

AMIAS are to provide direction to assure that emphasis is placed on the Al-Anon /Alateen program of recovery and, to the best of their ability, maintain an atmosphere that will protect the Alateen members from physical and emotional harm. An AMIAS is familiar with and complies with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

AMIAS are expected to maintain appropriate adult behavior by exercising good taste and integrity in conduct. AMIAS are never to belittle a parent or place themselves above the authority of a parent or guardian. AMIAS also agree to abide by their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, and to step down should their behavior come into question.

Legal and Traditional Responsibility of AMIAS, including Alateen Group Sponsors:

Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) may become aware of instances of child abuse. A dilemma then arises on how to deal with the problem. If in an effort to protect the Alateen member from further harm, an incident is reported, is the Tradition of anonymity or confidentiality violated?

The first action is to seek legal advice regarding Area requirements and existing state/provincial laws. Child abuse laws relating to mandatory disclosure usually refer to individuals performing in a professional capacity, and not as volunteers. It is advisable that the laws in each state/province/country be investigated because they do vary from place to place. Where reporting is required, there is no choice but to comply with the law. In most localities, an Alateen Group Sponsor is not legally required to report instances of suspected child abuse. Yet, as a Sponsor, we may question what is truly right for the Alateen member in the long run. Alateen Group Sponsors and AMIAS who are required by law to report cases of suspected child abuse should let the Alateens know, up front before sharing begins, that they will disclose such incidents that are discussed at the meeting or event.

Alateen Group Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service who feel a moral responsibility or are compelled by law to report cases of suspected child abuse to the authori-

Suggestions for AMIAS, including Alateen Group Sponsors:

At Alateen meetings

1. Encourage the Alateen members to keep reasonably good order among themselves, and establish behavior guidelines with them. Rough housing, fighting, inappropriate sexual behavior and/or the use of alcohol, drugs, or other prohibited substances on the meeting premises are forbidden.
2. Alateen members are made aware that they bear responsibility for their own actions, and that through their actions, they set an example for Alateen and Al-Anon as a whole.

At Alateen/Al-Anon activities away from meetings

1. Have guidelines for acceptable behavior. Before attending a function or event, the Alateen Group Sponsor reads and discusses the guidelines thoroughly with the Alateen group.
2. Obtain a signed permission slip from a parent or legal guardian for Alateens to attend Alateen/Al-Anon functions other than regular meetings. A signed permission slip, however, does not necessarily eliminate potential liability for accidents or injuries that result from certain activities (i.e., swimming, horseback riding, etc.)
3. Alateen Group Sponsors need to always be aware of the specific whereabouts of individual Alateen members during Alateen activities.

ties should contact their Area Alateen Coordinator, District Representative, or other Area-designated trusted servant prior to reporting. It is important to reason things out through the Area process before disclosure, keeping in mind the Traditions and the Alateen member's anonymity.

Prior to reporting to the authorities, the Alateen Group Sponsor or Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service should also discuss their intentions with the Alateen member to avoid placing the member in danger and to maintain confidence and trust in the Alateen Group Sponsor/AMIAS and the Alateen program. It is important to follow the advice of your local legal counsel, as keeping the identity of the alleged abuser anonymous is important, since accusations of child abuse are defamatory and could lead to claims of libel and slander. In order to keep the Alateen fellowship from public controversy, any reporting is done on a personal basis rather than as an Alateen Group Sponsor or Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service.

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FORM A: INFORMATION AND PERMISSION FORM

page 1 of 2

Since laws vary from Area to Area, it is suggested that this form be reviewed for compliance with local laws.

THIS FORM MUST BE FILLED OUT ENTIRELY IN ORDER FOR THE ALATEEN MEMBER TO PARTICIPATE

PARENTS: Please read, complete, sign this form and keep a copy for your records.

ALATEENS: Please return this completed form to your Alateen Group Sponsor or accompanying AMIAS.

SPONSOR/AMAIS ESCORT: Keep the original copy of this form in your possession for the duration of time the Alateen member is in your charge.

ALATEEN MEMBER'S INFORMATION

First and Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: () _____

Date of Birth: _____

SPONSOR/ADULT ESCORT INFORMATION

First and Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: () _____

EVENT INFORMATION

Name of Event: _____

Location of Event: _____

Address of Location: _____

Phone Number of Location: () _____

Date & Time & Place of Departure: _____

Date & Time & Place of Return: _____

Mode of Transportation : _____

(include make, model, year of vehicle & license plate number)

FORM A: INFORMATION AND PERMISSION FORM

page 2 of 2

Since laws vary from Area to Area, it is suggested that this form be reviewed for compliance with local laws.

CUSTODIAL PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

First and Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: Home () _____ Work () _____

During this event, I can be reached at: () _____

NEAREST RELATIVE NOT LIVING WITH THE ALATEEN MEMBER OR PARENT/GUARDIAN

First, Last Name & Relationship: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: Home () _____ Work () _____

HOLD HARMLESS STATEMENT

As the parent/guardian of aforementioned Alateen member, I am responsible for payment of any medical services required and obtained on said member's behalf. I further hold harmless the event attended by my child and

_____ (insert name and WSO registration number (if known) of group, district, Al-Anon Information Service office, and/or Area)

or authorized representative thereof, should any harm come to my child as a result of his/her participation in this activity or procurement of medical treatment.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENTAL PERMISSION (to be signed in the presence of the Sponsor/AMIAS escort)

I, _____ hereby grant permission to _____ to travel to and
(Parent/Guardian Name) (Alateen member name)

from and to participate in _____ under the supervision of
(Event Name)

_____ on _____
(Sponsor/AMIAS escort Name) (Dates of Event including Travel Time)

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

FORM B: MEDICAL FORM

page 1 of 2

Since laws vary from Area to Area, it is suggested that this form be reviewed for compliance with local laws.

AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN MEDICAL CARE

In order for anyone to obtain medical care for another person who is not a family member, this form must be filled out entirely and bear the original notary seal.

When distance and time may compromise acquisition of timely medical attention, attendance to a fellowship event can be prohibited if this form is not properly filled out and notarized.

DISEASES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS

(Alateen member or Sponsor/AMIAS escort name) _____ has (had) the following diseases or problems:

Heart Trouble _____
 Tuberculosis _____
 Stomach Ulcers _____
 Asthma _____
 High Blood Pressure _____
 Low Blood Pressure _____
 Epilepsy _____
 Liver Trouble (Hepatitis) _____
 Fainting spells or Seizures _____
 Diabetes _____
 Hives _____
 Other (Please describe) _____

ALLERGIES

(Alateen member or Sponsor/AMIAS escort name) _____ has had allergic reaction from the following:

(please check):

Penicillin _____
 Local Anesthetics _____
 Aspirin _____
 Sulphur Drugs _____
 Sedatives _____
 Bee Stings/Insect Bites _____
 Pollens _____
 Foods (please list) _____
 Other (Please Describe) _____

CURRENT MEDICATIONS

Please list all prescriptions & over-the-counter drugs. These medications MUST be in their original container(s) with labels firmly in place.

(Alateen member or Sponsor/AMIAS escort name) _____ is currently using the following medications:

OTHER CONDITIONS OR PROBLEMS

(Alateen member or Sponsor/AMIAS escort name) _____ has the following condition or problems not listed above that you should know about: (please explain)

FORM B: MEDICAL FORM

page 2 of 2

Since laws vary from Area to Area, it is suggested that this form be reviewed for compliance with local laws.

MEDICAL INSURANCE INFORMATION

You must provide medical insurance information in the space below.

For the US:

Name of Insurance Co. _____

Employer Name _____

Employee Name and Social Security Number _____

Group ID Number _____

(or attach a medical coupon if covered by Medicaid)

For Canada:

Health Card or Medi-Number _____

NOTARY STATEMENT

Form B, Authorization to Obtain Medical Care, is not valid without a signed and sealed Notary Statement.

State/Province of _____

County of _____

(Sponsor/Escort/Responsible Party Name) _____ is authorized upon
my signature below to obtain any medical care necessary for the duration of the above stated function on behalf of
(Participant's Name) _____
who is (state relationship - self, son, daughter) my _____.

Dated this _____ day of _____ 20__

(Signature - if 18 or over)

(Signature of Parent or Guardian, if under 18)

Before me, the above signed authority, on this day personally appeared _____, to me known and known by me to be the person who signed the above authorization, and acknowledged to me that (s)he executed the same for the purpose therein stated.

WITNESS my hand and seal this _____ day of _____ 20__

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

Seal: