

AL-ANON guidelines

The Shared Experience Of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Alateen Safety Guidelines

G-34

Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship 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 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 Alateen Behavioral and Safety 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 Sponsor(s), the Sponsor(s) can be replaced with another Al-Anon member who is currently certified through your area Alateen process as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service. First start with an informed group conscience. Involve the District Representative and/or district/information service/Area 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 a Sponsor or other Alateen members.
- ★ **Conduct exchange meetings with other Alateen groups and their Sponsors.** You may want to call upon them for help in solving Sponsor or group problems. An ongoing interchange between other 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, that member can be asked to leave the meeting. Start with an informed group conscience referring back to your group's behavior guidelines and the Twelve Traditions.
- ★ **Support the actions of your Sponsor.** Sponsors are responsible for the Alateens in the meeting room. They have the right to ask a member who is displaying inappropriate behavior to leave the meeting. To the best of their ability, Alateen 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.



JUST A NOTE: Each group is autonomous and is responsible for enacting and enforcing its own standards, rules of conduct, and procedures. 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.



Working Together

Let's keep Alateen going, growing, and glowing.
Alateen and Al-Anon;
Together We Can Make It fun, healthy, and safe.

KEEPING IT SAFE WHAT CAN ALATEEN SPONSORS DO?

- ★ **Make every effort to have two Sponsors at each meeting.** If one Sponsor cannot be there, call a Sponsor from another group or invite another certified Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service to serve as a Sponsor. This is a good reason to hold an Alateen meeting concurrently with an Al-Anon meeting. An eligible Al-Anon member who has agreed to serve as a contact between the Al-Anon and Alateen group can be called upon to serve as a substitute when the Sponsor cannot attend.
- ★ **In addition to regularly attending Al-Anon meetings, participate in district and area Alateen Sponsor Workshops.** Connect with other Sponsors and the Area Alateen Coordinator on a regular basis. Take an annual Sponsor inventory. Choose a service Sponsor who is familiar with Alateen Sponsorship. Know how to contact emergency services should an Alateen member become ill or is 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.** 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 Sponsor is not a counselor, nor the peer of an Alateen member. When a Sponsor gives advice or attempts to solve the problems of the Alateen member, it could lead to unhealthy dependencies. Overt and covert sexual interactions 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 Al-Anon and Alateen to the forefront of public controversy. For this reason, Sponsors are not permitted to serve as an Alateen 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 Sponsor's job to question or agree with how the parents exercise their authority. The 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 play; etc. Helping the Alateens identify inappropriate behaviors themselves through a group inventory provides them with an opportunity to design group behavior guidelines.
- ★ **Know when to step down as a Sponsor.** Whenever anything interferes with the need to protect yourself, i.e., accusations, controversy, threats of personal harm, etc., discontinue serving as a 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 behavioral and safety requirements, areas should establish behavioral requirements** specific to the type of function: i.e., Alateen meeting, area assembly, Alateen conference. The **requirements** should be general in tone, to allow for some flexibility, but specific enough to conform with site or schedule requirements. While 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 behavior and safety requirements. The requirements should be read and understood by all before leaving the home group when attending a conference or assembly.

- ★ **Support Alateen conferences!** To ensure the safety of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole, it is best when the Alateen conference within the area or region is connected to the area structure. The role of Al-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 Al-Anon member. Allowing the freedom for the members involved to make their own decisions within the boundaries of safety and the area's Alateen 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 Sponsors. (See Al-Anon Guidelines – *Alateen Conferences*, G-16)

FORM A: INFORMATION AND PERMISSION FORM

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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 Sponsor or accompanying adult.

SPONSOR/ADULT 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

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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/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/Escort Name) (Dates of Event including Travel Time)

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

FORM B: MEDICAL FORM

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/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/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/escort name) _____ is currently using the following medications:

OTHER CONDITIONS OR PROBLEMS

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

FORM B: MEDICAL FORM

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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 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:

KEEPING IT SAFE WHAT CAN AL-ANON AS A WHOLE DO?

★ **Form an Alateen meeting in 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 Sponsors. An Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service can serve as the contact between the Al-Anon and the Alateen group. This person does not take the place of the Alateen Sponsors. It is best to involve the Alateen group in the selection of the Al-Anon member and get permission from the Alateen group for this person to attend their meeting (or a portion of it) periodically. While the Alateens have the autonomy to direct their own meeting, the Al-Anon presence affords them an additional adult to turn to should problems arise. Also, because Alateen is a part of Al-Anon, Alateens may go to the Al-Anon meeting if an Al-Anon member is not willing to come into the Alateen meeting as a Sponsor fill-in when the regular Sponsor(s) is not present.

★ **Find a way to serve Alateen.** Many Al-Anon members cannot become full-time Alateen Sponsors for many reasons. Yet, everyone can serve Alateen in some capacity. Encourage eligible members to become certified through their area process as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service 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 temporary Alateen 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 creates 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 knows you are transporting his/her child to a meeting or other function.** Have the responsible party sign a 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 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. When engaged in one-on-one interaction, extreme caution is the key. Inform another Alateen Sponsor or Al-Anon member of your whereabouts and avoid meeting in isolated places.



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.
- ★ 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 Sponsors in boys' or male Sponsors' rooms; no boys or male Sponsors in girls' or female Sponsors' rooms.
- ★ Possession of alcohol, drugs, or any substance prohibited by local law is strictly forbidden. All Alateens under medication must report to their Sponsors and the designated nurse upon arrival at the conference/assembly.
- ★ Sponsors of 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 Sponsors/Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service 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.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE TO ALATEENS:

An Alateen 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 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 serve as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service, including 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.

ROLE OF AL-ANON MEMBERS INVOLVED IN ALATEEN SERVICE:

Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service are to provide direction to assure that emphasis is placed on the Al-Anon program of recovery and, to the best of their ability, maintain an atmosphere that will protect the Alateen members from physical and emotional harm.

Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service are expected to maintain appropriate adult behavior by exercising good taste and integrity in conduct. Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service are never to belittle a parent or place themselves above the authority of a parent or guardian. Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service also agree to abide by their area's behavior requirements and to step down should their behavior come into question.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AL-ANON MEMBERS INVOLVED IN ALATEEN SERVICE, INCLUDING SPONSORS:

At Alateen Meetings

-  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.
-  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

-  Have guidelines for acceptable behavior. Before attending a function or event, the Sponsor reads and discusses the guidelines thoroughly with the Alateen group.
-  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.)
-  Alateen Sponsors need to always be aware of the specific whereabouts of individual Alateen members during Alateen activities.

LEGAL AND TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF AL-ANON MEMBERS INVOLVED IN ALATEEN SERVICE, INCLUDING SPONSORS:

Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service 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 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. Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service that 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 incidents that are discussed at the meeting or event.

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 authorities 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 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 Sponsor/Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service and the Alateen program. It is important to follow the advice of your local legal counsel in keeping the identity of the alleged abuser anonymous, 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 Sponsor or Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service.