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Minnesota South Area Alateen Safety Policy

Alateen is the responsibility of all of us in Al-Anon as we seek recovery for our families, our friends, and ourselves from the disease of alcoholism. Alateens have suffered as we have, and are desperately in need of the twelve-step recovery that Alateen can provide. We in the South Area of Minnesota accept the responsibility to provide safe places for our younger family members to find the hope and healing that we have found in Al-Anon.

Therefore, in accordance with the requirements from the Trustees and the World Service Office, the Minnesota South Area Alateen Safety Ad Hoc Committee has developed a policy for Alateen safety in Minnesota South Area. The Safety Committee has written this policy, but it will be incumbent on the Alateen Coordinator, the Group Services Alateen Committee, Alateen sponsors, and all Al-Anon members to accept this policy and carry it out.

Definition of Alateen Sponsors

A Sponsor is any person who is directly involved with Alateens in the context of service to Alateen. Sponsors include:

- **Primary Group Sponsor**—Al-Anon member sponsoring an Alateen meeting on a regular basis
- **Substitute Group Sponsor**—Al-Anon member sponsoring an Alateen meeting when a Primary Group Sponsor is absent
- **Conference Sponsor**—Person working with Alateens to plan, organize, or supervise Alateen activities at any conference that has Alateen meetings, speakers, or other activities. This includes Alateen-specific conferences such as Midlake in which Minnesota Alateen groups and Sponsors participate in planning.
- **Transportation Sponsor**—Person who provides rides for Alateens going to meetings, conferences, or speaking engagements. This does not apply to private arrangements initiated by a teen or parent.

Anyone available to serve Alateen in these capacities shall be referred to as “Alateen Sponsor,” and must meet the Minimum Safety and Behavior Requirements defined below. For the purposes of this document, all Sponsors will be referred to as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service.

Alateen Sponsors will supervise Alateens:

- At regular Alateen meetings—in the Alateen room, for the duration of Alateen meetings or activities.
- At conferences with Alateen participation—when they are in the Alateen room.
- At Alateen-specific conferences—on the conference property, for the duration of the conference.

Alateen Sponsors are NOT responsible for supervising Alateens:

- Before and after regular Alateen meetings, and when the Alateens are not in the meeting room.
- At conferences with Alateen participation, when the Alateen room is closed, and whenever the teen is not in the Alateen room.

Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements

What follows are the minimum requirements that must be met by all Alateen Sponsors (as defined on page 1), Alateen groups, and conferences with Alateen participation in Minnesota South Area. All Alateens, Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, and other participants must adhere to the Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements or they will be prohibited from participating in Alateen.

1. Every Alateen Sponsor must:
 - a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings.
 - b. be actively working with their Al-Anon sponsor.
 - c. be at least 21 years old.
 - d. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
 - e. not have been convicted of a felony, and not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, and not have demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members.
2. There must be at least one Alateen Sponsor at every Alateen meeting. For the protection of Alateens and their Sponsors, it is strongly recommended that there be two Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service present at every Alateen meeting.
3. Overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and Alateen member is prohibited. Overt or covert sexual interaction between Alateen members at Alateen meetings or events or on meeting property is prohibited.
4. Conduct of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service and Alateens that is contrary to federal, state, and local law is prohibited. Use of alcohol or drugs by Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service and Alateen is prohibited at Alateen meetings and on meeting property.
5. There must be one Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service in attendance for every four Alateen members at Alateen-specific conferences such as Midlake taking place in Minnesota South Area or planned by Sponsors and Alateens from Minnesota South Area.
6. Alateens attending Alateen-specific conferences such as Midlake must have the approval of their Primary Group Sponsors prior to attending the conference.
7. All conferences with Alateen participation, including Alateen-specific conferences, must have a liaison to the Minnesota South Area Assembly.
8. Written permission of a parent or guardian is required when transporting teens to meetings or conferences. Medical release signed by parent or guardian must be secured when the Alateen will be away from home overnight. See G34, Alateen Safety Guidelines, for suggested forms to use for parental permission and medical release.
9. Primary Group Sponsors and Substitute Group Sponsors must attend at least one Alateen Sponsor workshop prior to Sponsoring, and one Alateen sponsor meeting or workshop annually while they continue to serve as Sponsor.
10. These requirements have been approved by legal counsel and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Nothing in the above should preclude attendance at an Alateen meeting of an Al-Anon member interested in Alateen who is invited by a primary sponsor and the Alateen members.

Additional Suggested Guidelines:

- Alateen meetings should be scheduled at the same time and place as an Al-Anon meeting whenever possible. At a minimum, each Alateen meeting should have an Al-Anon group committed to support the Alateen group and its Sponsors.
- Alateen Sponsors should ensure that all Alateens have transportation home from Alateen meetings before leaving the property.
- A commitment of one year, preferably two years, is strongly recommended for Group Sponsors. When stepping down as a Sponsor, time should be taken to find and orient a new Sponsor before the final meeting.

Steps an Alateen Group Can Take if there are Problems

Alateen groups need to stay in touch with other Alateen and Al-Anon groups. This begins with attending District meetings and the Area assemblies. Contacts are made within the fellowship that provides resources to strengthen the groups in cooperating in public outreach, new program ideas, and personal relationships.

It is the support of Al-Anon, especially groups meeting at the same time as Alateen, that help Alateen groups survive and thrive. Children from the families of Al-Anon and AA members hear about Alateen because of outreach within the fellowships. Future sponsors and support for sponsors come from the Al-Anon groups. The District Representative can also be a great support for the Alateen group and the Sponsors. The DR can be invited to come to the Alateen meeting to share his/her recovery experience.

If there are problems in the Alateen group that cannot be easily resolved within the group, the District Representative and/or the Alateen Coordinator is the first person to contact for help. Contact can be made by an Alateen member, a sponsor, or a parent. The Twelve Traditions and the Concepts of Service can be studied to help find solutions. The District Representative can help the Alateen group discuss the problems and have a group conscience.

There may be problems of a more serious nature that would not be appropriate for group discussion or problem solving, such as violent behavior or an accusation of sexual abuse. If a situation of this nature occurs, the following steps must be taken.

If an accusation of inappropriate sexual conduct, violence, or threatening behavior is made about an Alateen sponsor the following steps must be taken:

1. The sponsor will step down from sponsorship.
2. The District Representative and the Area Alateen Coordinator will meet with the Alateen group to discuss this change and to help the group members determine their needs and help find new sponsors for the group. Confidential information relating to the accusation will not be shared with the group.
3. The Alateen Coordinator and the Group Services Alateen support committee will determine if referral to an outside investigation is appropriate under the circumstances. Nothing decided by the Alateen Coordinator and Group Services Alateen Support Committee precludes individuals from taking legal action independently.

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4. Pending results of the outside investigation, the Alateen group can decide by group conscience to invite the sponsor back, provided that the sponsor still meets all of the Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

If an accusation of inappropriate sexual conduct, violence, or threatening behavior is made about an Alateen member the following steps must be taken:

1. The Alateen member will be removed from the event or group.
2. The group sponsor and the Area Alateen Coordinator will meet with the Alateen group to discuss the problem and to help the group members determine their needs.
3. The Alateen Coordinator and the Group Services Alateen support committee will determine if referral to an outside investigation is appropriate under the circumstances. Nothing decided by the Alateen Coordinator and Group Services Alateen Support Committee precludes individuals from taking legal action independently.
4. Pending the results of the outside investigation, the Alateen group and their sponsor can decide by group conscience to invite the teen back.