

Hot Topic

Southern California World Service
Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements
for
Alateen Groups, Alateen Sponsors,
and
Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service
(AMIAS)
Proposed 8/2/11 Updates



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Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements Things We Can't Eliminate

1. Every Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service must:
 - a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings.
 - b. be at least 21 years old.
 - c. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
 - d. 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.
3. The area requirements must prohibit overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and Alateen member.
4. The area requirements must prohibit conduct contrary to applicable laws.
5. The area requirements must contain procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable.
6. The area requirements must be reviewed by local counsel.



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Age Info from Other Areas

- Average Minimum Certification age is 22.1
- Average Alateen age out is 18.7
- Average Difference is 3.4

ALATEEN CERTIFICATION		
STATE	AGE OUT	AGE
Alaska	18	21
Baltimore	18	21
California North	18	21
Colorado	18	21
East Texas	18	21
Georgia	19	23
Hawaii	18	21
Idaho	18	21
Indiana	19	23
Iowa	18	21
Kentucky	21	25
Missouri	18	21
Montana	18	21
Nebraska	19	21
Nevada	18	21
New Hampshire	18	23
New Jersey	19	25
New York South	21	25
North Carolina	19	21
North Florida	19	23
Northern Illinois	18	23
Ohio	18	21
Oregon	18	21
South Dakota	18	21
South Florida	19	21
Southern Illinois	18	23
Vermont	20	24
Virginia	18	23
West Texas	21	21
Wyoming	21	25



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What We've Heard So Far

Age

Slide 3 and Form One of Comparison Document

- Suggested ages: 24, leave at 21, 23, 25
- Legal age is 18
- If age changed would current sponsors not meeting age requirement be grandfathered in?
- Most 21 year olds are not equipped or emotionally ready to take on the responsibility of an Alateen Group.
- Transitioned Alateens need to separate from Alateen before becoming a sponsor... 4 year break helps them do that.
- It takes a certain level of maturity, as well as a good working understanding of the steps, traditions, and concepts to work in a safe and responsible manner as an Alateen Sponsor, there are many issues that might need to be dealt with. Helps to have more maturity.. Not that the maturity is guaranteed at 25, but more probable.



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What We've Heard So Far

SCWS Alateen Sponsor Workshop

Slides 4, 11, 12, and Form One of Comparison Document

- Requiring sponsor workshop prior to becoming a sponsor = Impractical
- Last SCWS Alateen sponsorship workshop was years ago
- SCWS Alateen coordinator turnover presents a bottleneck to the proposed mandatory workshop
- Can a few hours of a workshop turn a bad sponsor into a good sponsor?
- Who provides these workshops?
- Completed prior to being certified. If there are only 2 per year, slow down certification process.
- Will workshops happen at SCWS function? At district level? Vague directive.
- Workshops would help train sponsors as well as give them the opportunity to share and meet with other sponsors.
- Provide very little in terms of assisting sponsors with additional resources
- Two hour workshop should suffice – everyone gets the same information with workshop based on WSO formats.



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What We've Heard So Far

Certification (1)

Slides 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Comparison Document

- How dare the Board decide to judge who is worthy to sponsor!
- Using a group conscience which is in line with our traditions
- Suggest Reference form be standardized – develop form
- Add item directing DR or DAL to submit forms to SCWS AAPP
- Add a group conscience for confirmation of Alateen sponsorship from a home or other Al-Anon meeting?
- Add self-assessment piece
- Add statement re: for group sponsors group conscience by Alateen Group necessary.



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What We've Heard So Far

Certification (2)

Slides 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Comparison Document

- Requirements – involved in his/her own recovery, Understands and uses 12 steps and 12 traditions
- Add financial background check, increase scope of current background check
- The District Representative can't "know" every prospective AMIAS member in the District. What should they do if they don't know someone?
- Does a prospective AMIAS have a recourse if they are turned down?
- Are the District Representative and the District Alateen Liaison separate duties or functions?



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What We've Heard So Far

Recertification Process

Slide 11 of Comparison Document

- Why wouldn't the DR attempt to find a certified sponsor prior to the meeting being disbanded?
- Set a specific process for recertification where people answer the same questions they were asked initially.
- More accountability in the recertification process.
- Support attendance at annual workshop
- Suggest random background checks every 3 to 5 years
- Accountability is a concern.



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What We've Heard So Far

AMIAS Responsibilities

Slides 12 and 13 of Comparison Document

- Sponsor's job is to encourage Alateens to use the tools of the program, to practice 12 Steps and Traditions.
- Of course, common sense dictates we don't allow drugs and alcohol in our meetings, has faith lots of members would step in if Alateen meeting sponsor needed help.
- How do Sponsors accomplish keeping Alateens safe... Statement is vague and ambiguous.



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What We've Heard So Far

District Responsibilities

Slides 14 and 15 of Comparison Document

- What is the purpose of DR meeting with AMIAS or visiting Alateen meetings?
- Applicant doesn't need to attend district meeting to obtain paperwork
- Requiring applicant to go to District meeting to get the form/applications and be introduced gives GR's an opportunity to pass knowledge of the prospective sponsor to the DR or Alateen Liaison.
- Statement "is known to them" should be replaced with "has met with them".
- Statement re: DR responsibility to remain informed about Alateen meetings in their district is too vague. It is Alateen meeting responsibility to keep district informed...
- DR confirming list of all Alateen meetings and AMIAS's within district – too vague When, how, to whom
- If DR turns down applicant for certification what is applicants recourse?
- Rather than DR being responsible for notifying Alateen meeting of any Alateen sponsor whose status is no longer active - thinks Alateen meeting should be responsible for notifying district when CMA or sponsors change.
- Have DR or DAL attest that group conscience confirming sponsor candidate has taken place.
- These responsibilities create shared leadership – procedure begins at district.



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What We've Heard So Far

Alateen Meetings and Events

Slides 16, 17, 18 and 19 of Comparison Document

- Inappropriate touching, holding or hugging inappropriately, inappropriate communication – what is inappropriate? Who determines this? Needs to be more specific.
- Doesn't seem possible to list every single possibility of inappropriateness. Seems to leave room for loopholes if we miss one...
- Responsibility of the sponsor to remove offending Al-Anon or alateen from meeting. How is the AMIAS suppose to do this? Will there be training for this?
- Regarding detailed plan of how Alateen participation will be conducted – How detailed? Is it an operation plan? Does it involve emergency evacuation procedures? Contact with local law enforcement and fire agencies - vague and ambiguous...
- Groups that disregard SCWS requirements may be subject to delisting.



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What We've Heard So Far

Complaints and Compliance

Slides 5, 20, 21 and 22 of Comparison Document

- Paragraph regarding resolving complain should be more specific
- Term punitive should be defined as not everyone has same definition.
- Will there be a standard form created and used for complaints, or is this a verbal report. Who is responsible for formal report?
- Once any incident is reported, is sponsor removed from meeting? "Who is responsible for advising parents or authorities if accusation is of a sexual or legal nature? Vague and ambiguous
- Suggest that only elected positions have the authority to ask a sponsor to resign, too many people involved otherwise
- Policy establishes examples of inappropriate behavior. Every possible situation can't be predicted, but common sense has to prevail.
- Addresses a means for complaint and resolution.
- What do I do if the Board fails to take action on my complaint? What is my recourse?



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What We've Heard So Far

Decertification (1)

Slides 5, 20, 21, and 22 of Comparison Document

- Believes responsibility lies on individual Al-Anon adult members who attend Al-Anon meeting next door to Alateen meeting. It lies on the parents of Alateens, Sponsors and all those people who are around Alateens.
- What would decision to decertify be based on?
- Is the Board looking to protect its own interest and not be involved in legal hassle?
- Why can't we continue the process of Alateen members voting out sponsors who don't work?
- How do kids learn to stand up for themselves, if "someone" comes in and does it for them (decertify sponsor instead of letting kids vote sponsor out) .



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What We've Heard So Far

Decertification (2)

Slides 5, 20, 21, and 22 of Comparison Document

- Asking a sponsor to step down if there is any controversy has been the procedure since way before the requirements were approved. It was a way to avoid controversy in our program and not put us in the business of investigation and judgment. This also allows AMIAS's to make themselves inactive so that they could come back and become active again at a later time if appropriate.
- Why can only 3 committee members make the decision to decertify an AMAIS? Seems like too few members are involved.
- Shouldn't a majority of the Board members be required?
- A more transparent method of decertification should be defined / used
- Vague concept of "controversy"; are we talking criminal behavior?
- Is recertification after decertification possible? How?



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What We've Heard So Far

General Comments (1)

- Believes original set of rules crammed down our throats by SCWS Board. Individual people's agenda can override the group conscience.
- Doesn't believe rules can keep Alateens safe.
- If original rules worked so well, why is there a need to add more regulations and tighten original ones.
- What prompted this update now?
- Original requirements were prepared quickly in order to comply with WSO Board of Trustees Requirements. Updating seems appropriate.
- Seems SCWS Board is determined to play God or government and force their will upon all of us.
- Believes specific rules (age, number of meetings, etc) takes away people's dignity
- Where is God in this?
- Systematically cutting out our Higher Power.



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What We've Heard So Far

General Comments (2)

- What we need is not more regulation, but rather more good Sponsors who know the program themselves and guide the kids along
- Proposed requirements are burdensome for sponsors
- Attempting to legislate good Sponsor behavior with a heavy set of rules.
- Alateen package scares me, sponsors are guilty until proven innocent.
- Suggests getting the right people on the bus first. Answer the who question affirmatively
- Broader guidelines applicable to all situations rather than a complex set of rules which can never anticipate all possible scenarios.
- Include full input from various group stakeholders.
- Let's not pass a less than document and be stuck with consequences given the lengthy process required for changes or revisions.
- Group conscience process is meant to bring all to agreement despite how long it takes.



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What We've Heard So Far

General Comments (3)

- Why are these changes necessary?
- How did we arrive at these changes?
- Need more input from current Alateen meeting Sponsors and Alateen members.
- Lots of effort was put forth to gain input from Alateen Sponsors and members. Emails sent, requests for input on Sponsor email group... Even now, with a blog set up, emails sent out, only one district has gathered to provide input on requirements, less than twenty people have responded on the blog or via email. How long do we wait for such input?
- We are in compliance with current WSO requirements.
- Guidelines need to be specific enough to conform to area requirements, but general enough to allow for flexibility.
- Add a Frequently Asked Questions section to requirements



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What We've Heard So Far

General Comments (4)

- Alateen Sponsorship is not a right... Just because someone is in Al-Anon doesn't mean they have the right to be an Alateen Sponsor. The things we have to work for have a tendency to mean more. Sponsors who are willing to do what it takes show more commitment.
- Of course we don't allow currently violent people near Alateens
- Many Alateen Sponsors have operated in a vacuum, these requirements will allow all Alateens, Alateen Sponsors, Alateen Liaisons, District Representatives and Al-Anon convention chairs to have the same basic knowledge and most important it will be consistent.
- Proposed policy draws from accepted Al-Anon Sources: Guideline G-34, Alateen Policy in Service Manual.
- Think we should continue to use the AMIAS application we currently use, and stop working on this new application packet.



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What We've Heard So Far

General Comments (5)

- Eligibility Requirements
 - What is “working Knowledge of Alateen Policy”?
 - How is attending an Alateen Sponsor’s workshop going to help?
- Terminology
 - What is the Executive Board? Officers of the Board? Elected Officers of the Board?
- Annual Requirements
 - Districts are required to host / partner a Sponsors’ Workshop. Who pays for expenses? Format? Duration?



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Your Turn to Offer Feedback

- Speak your mind, but please be specific
 - What part of the guidelines need to be changed and why?
 - What part of the guidelines are acceptable?
- References
 - Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements
 - 2004 World Service Conference Summary Motion #12
<http://al-anon.org/members/pdf/summary/2004summary.pdf>
 - SCWS Alateen Blog Topic Comments
<http://www.scws-al-anon.org/blog/index.php?blog=14>



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