

Al-Anon Guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

Starting an Alateen Group

G-19

Starting an Alateen group is a spiritual undertaking. It takes time, commitment, the support of one or more Al-Anon groups, and patience. In order to use the Alateen name, the group must have Alateen Group Sponsors who are certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and meet all of the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements for service to Alateen. The Alateen meeting must be registered through your Area's Alateen process, before the first meeting. Contact your District Representative (DR), Alateen Coordinator, or Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) for information on your Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and your Area's process for distribution and submission of Alateen forms. Your Group Representative (GR) can provide the contact information for these trusted servants or contact the World Service Office (WSO).

Who Can Start an Alateen Group?

Professionals, school personnel, Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) members, Al-Anon members, or the teenagers themselves can *initiate the formation* of an Alateen group; however, AMIAS are needed in order to register an Alateen group. Each Alateen group requires one or more Alateen Group Sponsors who are currently certified to be of service to Alateen through their Area's Alateen certification process. Al-Anon groups that are firmly established may want to help the teen members of Al-Anon by starting an Alateen group.

Where Do We Begin?

The essentials needed to start an Alateen group are listed below. Your Area may have additional requirements, and the sequence of events may differ.

- Contact one or more Al-Anon groups for support of the Alateen group. Experience has shown that Alateen groups which meet at the same time and place as an Al-Anon or A.A. group are more successful, safer, and the Alateens have fewer transportation problems. Al-Anon groups can also support the Alateen group by encouraging members to become certified AMIAS in order to serve as regular or back up Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Decide on a location to hold the meeting (such as a school, recreation center, hospital, religious facility, or other public place) and a day and time.
- Select an appropriate name for the group. The name should be informative and inviting to newcomers. See section below titled "What Name Should We Choose?"
- Contact your Area Alateen Coordinator or AAPP for the necessary paperwork to register the Alateen group.
- Complete the AMIAS certification and Alateen group registration process *before* the first meeting.
- Contact your Area Alateen Coordinator regarding Alateen Group Sponsor training.
- Follow your Area's Alateen process for being included in the District, Area, or Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) meeting directories and websites.

What Types of Alateen Meetings Are There?

Closed meetings: All Alateen meetings are closed meetings; only Alateens and the assigned (or substitute) Alateen Group Sponsors attend. District or Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Potential Alateen Group Sponsors may visit Alateen groups after certification as an AMIAS, with the Alateen group's permission. Alateen groups may also have occasional open meetings to celebrate the group's anniversary or for public outreach purposes.

Limited Access meetings: Meetings that take place at locations where the general public may not be able to attend (such as a school or group home) due to access restrictions. Alateen Group Sponsors in limited access meetings must also be certified through their Area's Alateen process in addition to complying with any facility requirements. More information on school meetings is available in the *Alateen Meetings in Schools* guideline (G-5) and the *Information for the Educators: Alateen Meetings in Schools* leaflet (S-64).

What Name Should We Choose?

Most groups use a name that is either descriptive of its location, time or day of meeting, meeting purpose, or a program phrase, followed by the word "Alateen." A group's name should not imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, religious group, or other outside enterprise. Your group name should be inviting, informative, and an attraction to potential newcomers. All Alateen groups, including those that lower the age limit, are registered as "Alateen."

Examples of Alateen group names are:

- Friday Night Alateen
- Be Excited About Recovery Alateen
- Courage To Be Me Alateen
- Woodland Hills Alateen

Who Can Sponsor an Alateen Group?

Alateen groups require Alateen Group Sponsors who are currently certified as AMIAS through their Area's Alateen process.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. and meet their Area's certification and Alateen group registration requirements may sponsor an Alateen group by virtue of their Al-Anon membership. Check your Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements for additional information. Anonymity regarding disclosing membership in other programs would be maintained in the Alateen meeting just as it would be in any Al-Anon meeting.

Parents who are currently certified through their Area's Alateen process may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors; however, whenever possible, it is preferred that the relatives of any of the Alateen members attending the group not sponsor that group.

How Do We Find Alateen Group Sponsors?

Ask nearby Al-Anon groups if they would be willing to support the group by encouraging members to become certified as AMIAS in order to serve as Alateen Group Sponsors. Contact your DR and Area Alateen Coordinator for assistance and information about the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and AMIAS training. If there are other Alateen groups nearby, ask if Alateen Group Sponsors and Alateens from those groups would be willing to share about Alateen and Alateen group sponsorship at Al-Anon meetings or events.

How Do We Register Our Group?

Contact your AAPP, DR, or Area Alateen Coordinator to obtain the Alateen Group Registration/Change form. Complete the form and submit through your Area process. All service positions listed on the form (Current Mailing Address [CMA], Phone Contacts for the Public, and Alateen Group Sponsors) must be currently certified AMIAS in the Area(s) in which they reside and serve.

What Can We Expect from our District, AIS, and Area?

- The District, AIS, and Area can help identify eligible AMIAS to serve as Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Districts may be able to help locate Area-certified AMIAS to serve as backup Alateen Group Sponsors when the regular Group Sponsor(s) is not available.
- Districts may provide assistance in getting start-up literature for the meeting.
- DRs and/or Area Alateen Coordinators can be called for help if a problem arises. It is also a good idea to invite these trusted servants to your meeting once or twice a year to keep in contact.
- Areas provide information about workshops and training for AMIAS. Districts, AISs, and Areas may publish a meeting directory and/or list Alateen meetings and events with Alateen participation on a local service arm website.

What Can We Expect from the WSO?

Registration with the WSO ensures a connection with Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide. Only groups registered with the WSO can use the Alateen name. The WSO toll-free meeting line refers callers to your meeting.

Alateen groups receive:

- New groups receive a packet filled with a variety of information, including suggestions for meeting topics, meeting format, information for Alateen Group Sponsors, sample Alateen literature, and service materials, such as *Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24).
- A free copy of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and other service tools.
- The quarterly Alateen publication *Alateen Talk* and forms for sending in sharings.
- All mailings sent to Al-Anon groups, including the *In The Loop* electronic newsletter and the Quarterly Appeal Letter.
- An annual Area Alateen Group Recertification Sheet sent to help keep your group information current.
- Access to information and publications on al-anon.org.

How Can We Attract New Members?

- Use the links of service (Area, District, AIS) as much as you can. Announce the meeting at District and AIS meetings, and at local events, such as anniversaries.
- Ask nearby Al-Anon and A.A. groups to announce your meeting and to bring their children. It helps if the Alateen group has a flyer with the name, location, day and time, and an Alateen Group Sponsor's first name and phone number as a contact for information.
- Ask your Area, District, AIS, Alateen Coordinator, and Area Public Outreach Coordinator for assistance.
- List the meeting in the local newspaper. Many newspapers list the meetings for free in the local events column.
- Provide information about the meeting to local schools. Ask for help from an Al-Anon group to contact the school's special assistance counselors.

Remember – Alateen behavior at meetings, conventions, round-ups, Assemblies, etc. can attract or turn away potential members or their families.

Additional Guidelines for Alateen Groups

Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34)

Members Interested in Speaking (G-1)

Taking a Group Inventory (G-8a and G-8b)

Alateen Meetings in Schools (G-5)

The Alateen group is the heart of the Alateen program!

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