Northern California World Service Area

LETTER TO AN ALATEEN GROUP

PLEASE READ THIS LETTER OUT LOUD AND DISCUSS IT BEFORE MEETING A SPONSOR CANDIDATE

Dear Alateen Group:

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups and the World Service Conference has determined that the safety of our teens, our sponsors and our Alateen groups is one of the most important parts of our recovery. As a result, the Northern California World Service Area (NCWSA) has passed the Requirement for Teen Safety, NCWSA Guideline B-17, posted on the NCWSA website. These NCWSA requirements implement the World Service Office’s (WSO) criteria identified as minimum requirements for all Alateen Groups. Please keep a copy with your group’s records.

The NCWSA Guideline B-17 states that all Alateen Sponsors must be certified as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and placed on a Sponsor Candidate List and that Alateen Groups must provide information about their sponsors on the Alateen Registration/Group Records Change Form. Your District Alateen Process Person (DAPP), who is most likely your District Alateen Coordinator or your District Representative, will inform you on how to keep this information current with NCWSA and WSO. The WSO requires that all AMIAS and all Alateen Groups renew these forms annually. Your DAPP will help you with these requirements.

If you know of someone who would like to become a sponsor for your group, refer them to your DAPP to begin the process of becoming an AMIAS.

The remainder of this letter will assist you in selecting an Alateen Group Sponsor.

We want to help you choose good, supportive sponsors. As Alateens, you play a crucial part in the process. Your DAPP or District Representative will arrange for a Sponsor Candidate to attend your group meeting. At that time, you may ask the Sponsor candidate any questions you feel may help you get to know the candidate better and to assure that your meeting place remains safe from any inappropriate conduct. Additionally, you may want to discuss what you consider to be inappropriate behavior, as well as what you expect of a sponsor candidate.

You may use a blank AMIAS Candidate Profile, A22.1a, form as a guide for your questions. You should also be open and willing to answer any questions that the Alateen Sponsor Candidate might have for you.

After this question-and-answer session, your meeting will take a group conscience to determine if this candidate will be accepted on a trial basis. So that everyone can feel safe to have their own opinion, we recommend using secret ballots on slips of paper.

After a trial period of approximately four (4) weeks (one meeting at a time), we recommend that your meeting take another group conscience (again using secret ballots) to determine if the candidate is to become your Sponsor. Each time a secret-ballot vote is taken, if the vote is a majority but not unanimous (100% in favor of the sponsor candidate), we suggest you have a group discussion to voice any possible concerns and encourage the minority to be heard. A second ballot may then be taken to determine the group conscience. Using secret ballots is important because it encourages honesty and discourages peer pressure.

Remember, you always have the right to ask an Alateen Sponsor Candidate any questions or discuss any behavior that you don't feel comfortable with. Most importantly, don't be afraid to speak up about any uneasiness or "gut feelings" that you may have about your current sponsors or any Alateen Sponsor Candidate; you may not be the only one with those feelings.

Talk to other Alateens or an Al-Anon member. You have the right to say "NO." The Sponsor is there to support Alateens--not vice versa.

One of the priceless gifts that this program teaches us is to trust our feelings and speak up about something we don't like. Finding good group sponsors is serious business and hopefully, in your group, a wonderful, healthy Group Sponsor/Alateen relationship is being established now.

Love in service,

Northern California Alateen & Al-Anon

Forms used with this Letter:
A22.1a AMIAS Candidate Profile, New
A22.2 Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service, WSO
A22.3 Letter to Alateen Sponsor Applicant

Guidelines used with this Letter:
B17 Requirement for Alateen Member Safety.