

**World Service Conference Structure**  
**Electronic Alateen Safety & Behavioral Requirements (WSC EASBR)**  
**2024 World Service Conference Questions & Answers**

## **EA VIP Responses to Delegate Questions**

This document contains responses to questions submitted by Conference members from the 2024 WSC regarding electronic Alateen groups. The questions and answers have been categorized for clarity, and duplicate questions have been removed.

### **Electronic Alateen General Questions**

**Question:** Is the WSO seeking guidance from AA/NA regarding minors attending their electronic meetings, or are they not allowed to attend those meetings unless they are 18 yo? Did the WSO consult with other youth organizations who are dealing with similar issues?

**Answer:** The WSO has conducted exhaustive research from many resources that advocate for recovery for minors living with conditions that affect mental health, including those who've been affected by someone else's drinking.

**Question:** Are Alateens asking for electronic meetings? If yes, are they included in the discussion to establish minimum safety requirements online?

**Answer:** Alateens were surveyed and provided a positive response and are backing up the responses with participation in pilot projects. Because there are legal requirements for interacting with minors, minors can be consulted but cannot provide considerable input.

**Question:** Will these strict guidelines and possible consequences keep teens from coming to Al-Anon as adults?

**Answer:** Anyone is welcome at Al-Anon meetings without age restrictions. Safety is everyone's concern in any meeting. Transitioning from Alateen to Al-Anon can be topics covered in Alateen meetings.

**Question:** If approved, will these guidelines set a precedent for our organization and affect the minimum requirements for in person Alateen meetings?

**Answer:** No, these specific requirements apply only to electronic Alateen meetings.

**Question:** If this process is implemented, why would a teen attend and feel welcome?

**Answer:** The Pilot Project reveals that teens enjoy and use electronic meeting platforms with ease. Attendance and participation in the Pilot Project meetings have been robust. Teens are able to attend Alateen wherever they are most comfortable.

**Question:** Have they considered that the additional responsibilities of the Group Sponsors might require us to carry insurance on every group or the Group Sponsors?

**Answer:** A need for personal liability insurance was not identified as a requirement by legal counsel.

**Question:** Can the teens attend without the permission of parents? Like they can in schools.

**Answer:** Permission is not required within the WSC Structure; contact information of a custodial parent/legal guardian is required in the case of an emergency.

**Question:** Have they considered that some AMIAS may just decide this is too much responsibility and just give up their certification?

**Answer:** Serving as an AMIAS-E has no bearing on serving as an AMIAS connected to an in-person Alateen group. Those certified to support physical meetings will not be required to serve as an AMIAS-E. However, if interested in serving electronic Alateen groups in the Area, AMIAS-E must abide by the process established by the Area that supports the EASBR.

### **Legal Requirements/Minimum Age to Participate**

**Question:** COPPA established a minimum age limit of 13 years old for businesses engaging with minors through electronic media. Is this the minimum age for electronic Alateen meetings?

**Answer:** In order to comply with laws regarding interactions with minors online, including COPPA, it is necessary to be knowledgeable about local laws. The minimum age to participate in electronic Alateen meetings is 13 years old.

**Question:** Why are AMIAS serving electronic meetings required to be a mandated reporter?

**Question:** Is COPPA requiring us to become mandatory reporters?

**Question:** Isn't COPPA primarily concerned with young kids under the age of 13 and data collection?

**Answer:** COPPA is about collecting information over the internet about children under 13. It may be helpful to become familiar with COPPA. The elevated safety requirements are not about collecting data but are about all aspects of safety for minors and AMIAS alike interacting online together.

**Question:** How does one become a mandated reporter?

**Answer:** Your Area ASBR may already contain information about how to be a mandated reporter. If not, completing mandatory reporter training in compliance with local laws will be part of your Area process to support the EASBR. Additionally, information supporting the requirement for mandatory reporting will be in the training modules provided by the WSO.

**Question:** What are the risks and liability if an AMIAS fails to report as a mandated reporter? If we fail, will this put Al-Anon at risk?

**Answer:** Areas must have safety and behavioral requirements in place for all Alateen members and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). These requirements must meet the minimums set forth in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees of AFG, Inc. Each Area must have a process to certify, and must so certify to the WSO annually, that each AMIAS has met the Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements and has agreed to abide by them. Areas supporting electronic Alateen groups must certify annually to the WSO that those certified as AMIAS-E have met the WSC EASBR. Should an AMIAS (or AMIAS-E) not comply with the requirements, including those pertaining to their responsibility as a mandated reporter, it is possible that a lawsuit could be brought naming both the AMIAS/AMIAS-E in their individual capacity and AFG, Inc. in its corporate capacity.

**Question:** How forgiving is the law when we make a mistake as a mandated reporter and how will this then affect Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole? Is it worth it?

**Answer:** It is wise to remember that Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are not above the law. It is important to recognize the difference between a mistake and intentional disregard for mandated reporting laws. Laws related to mandatory reporting are outside of our control. Mandatory reports are made on behalf of a person, not a group or organization.

**Question:** Mandated reporter is a legal term. How will Al-Anon go about getting each state to add AMIAS-E to their defined Mandatory reporter statute? Al-Anon can't just say "you are a mandatory reporter" - that's not how it works.

**Answer:** Al-Anon is not seeking to have AMIAS-E added to the mandatory reporter list in state laws. Instead, our intention is to proactively identify for those who choose to serve as AMIAS-E that in certifying they are agreeing to adhere to the unenforceable by behaving in accordance with the mandatory reporting laws. If an Area chooses to participate, their EASBR will include provisions for mandatory reporting training as an elevated safety measure.

**Question:** Will the electronic Alateen meetings be helpful to Alateens if the AMIAS are mandated reporters?

**Answer:** Many currently certified AMIAS serving face-to-face Alateen meetings are mandated reporters, and Alateen continues to thrive in many Alateen meetings.

**Question:** How will mandated reporting be explained to the teens?

**Answer:** Currently, Alateen Group Sponsors share a statement announcing they are mandated reporters. This should be made known to the Alateens at every meeting, so they can make an informed decision regarding what they choose to share

**Question:** Does making an AMIAS a mandated reporter more like a professional position vs. Volunteers?

**Answer:** Being a mandated reporter may be considered a community responsibility and does not add any layer of education or profession.

**Question:** Who do they report it to?

**Answer:** In the case of online Alateen meetings, the AMIAS-E would report to the state or province in which the AMIAS resides, sharing the emergency contact information collected at registration with the report.

**Question:** If an AMIAS-E needs to make a report about abuse for a teen from another Area, does that AMIAS contact the Al-Anon Area as well as the state in which the teen attends the meeting? (I think I already heard the answer to this at WSC but could not find it—I think I remember that we just report to the Gvt child protection agency and not the Area).

**Answer:** A mandated report takes place on behalf of an individual. Individuals should ensure they are familiar with legal requirements of both their home and the

Alateen group state and consider the purpose underlying the reporting—to ensure the safety of minors—when deciding where they need to report. Whether across Area boundaries or at home, it is imperative for the report to provide accurate guardian contact information.

The legal jurisdiction is where you reside. It is important for the AMIAS-E to have accurate guardian contact information to provide in the report.

### **Background Checks**

**Question:** Does the background check need to be completed each year as part of the recertification process or is that up to the Area to determine if subsequent background checks are required.

**Answer:** At the time of the Area’s annual Alateen recertification, a valid background check must be available. It will be important to know the practices of the chosen background check company.

**Question:** Who will be conducting the background checks? Who will request the background checks and who will receive the results of the background checks?

**Answer:** The Area process to support EASBR will determine the process for conducting the background check. The Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) will be responsible for maintaining records.

**Question:** Question about reciprocity of AMIAS across states. Areas may need to reduce cost of maintaining a secure server, as well as doing background checks. Could we have worldwide AMIAS-E? (Background checks in our state cost \$85 per person for both Federal and State reports when we had them, which is one of the reasons why the Area Safety and Behavioral Policies were changed, as well as the problems of secure storage of the documents).

**Answer:** AMIAS-E will adhere to the Area process to support EASBR. Background check companies can be vetted and chosen to provide pass/fail reports rather than disclosing personal history files.

**Question:** Will current AMIAS be allowed to become AMIAS-E?

**Answer:** Any Al-Anon member interested in serving Alateen will first become certified for face-to-face Alateen meetings in their Area, then go through the training to become a certified AMIAS-E in their Area.

**Question:** If Alateen electronic meetings are allowed will there be an option for someone to only be an AMIAS-E?

**Answer:** Since the WSC EASBR represents a superset of most WSC Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements, we have established AMIAS certification as a minimum since these requirements are unlikely to exceed those required to become an AMIAS-E. As a result, the impact on the individual and Area should be minimal. The Global Electronic Area (GEA) serves as an exception. Since the GEA can only have electronic Alateen meetings, members seeking to serve Alateen in this Area would be required to certify only as AMIAS-E in accordance with the WSC EASBR.

### **Pre-Interview/Registration**

**Question:** If an AMIAS-E is required to check in teens for each meeting based on previously provided information, the information needs to be stored electronically. This raises questions on how to keep this information safe.

**Answer:** Each Area is responsible for developing the process for storing the personal data related to AMIAS, AMIAS-E and Alateens attending groups that ensure the protection of that personal identifiable data. Alateen member registration in groups needs to be stored securely in a way similar to how the AMIAS-E certification is secured. Electronic storage that utilizes password protection, with information access being limited, is one example.

**Question:** Since an Area has to establish a Global EASBR to have Electronic Meetings in their area, does this mean that only AMIAS-E certified in their Area can support those meetings? Are there any restrictions to which meetings teens can attend? How does this work with the GEA

**Answer:** The Area will develop their AMIAS-E certification process in alignment with the WSC EASBR. These AMIAS-E will serve their Area's electronic Alateen meetings. Teens will participate in any electronic Alateen meeting to which they have registered.

**Question:** Will these "pre-interviews" be conducted electronically outside of the regular meeting? Who will conduct these meetings - the Alateens? With a new meeting - the AMIAS-E?

**Answer:** A certified AMIAS-E assigned to that meeting will conduct a brief interview outside of that meeting to verify the teen's identity and obtain guardian contact information. The teens will conduct the actual Alateen meeting.

**Question:** This is an extra duty for AMIAS that I am not sure I am comfortable maintaining. How do we protect the personal information of these individuals?

**Answer:** A process for maintaining a list of Alateens will be identified in your Area process to support the EASBR. No personal information is shared. Protecting AMIAS-E information is a responsibility of the AAPP. A segment of training will be dedicated to protecting anonymity.

**Question:** Who can see this list and how? Will all AMIAS for that group have access to this information? Who/where will this information be stored? Will WSO keep a copy as well? In the event that AMIAS from other districts in the Area want to help out on a meeting, how easy will it be to give them access to the list or will the list be Area Wide access?

**Answer:** Keeping in mind only certified AMIAS-E can participate in the electronic Alateen meeting, the electronic list may be shared according to the process outlined in the Area process to support EASBR. In accordance with current Area ASBR, the WSO does not interfere with Area autonomy with regard to maintaining certification records for AMIAS outside of the Online Group Records application. The WSO would not interfere with an Area process of maintaining records to support the EASBR.

**Question:** Will Alateens have to register with each individual group they would like to attend? Can they register with multiple groups in their AREA? Can they register ONCE and DONE for an AREA?

**Answer:** Registration would be specific to one electronic Alateen Group. The aim would be to take minimal time to grant access to the meeting, allowing the bulk of the meeting time to be used for recovery.

**Question:** Who determines if they passed the interview?

**Answer:** The intent is to be able to verify the identity and age of the participant along with guardian emergency contact information. It is verifiable information for registration purposes. It is not a pass/fail interview.

**Question:** Who decides what to ask a newcomer in their pre-interview? And how is this welcoming?

**Answer:** The Area process to support the EASBR is encouraged to keep it simple and welcoming. The purpose is to verify identity as a teenager between the ages of 13-18 and provide guardian contact information.

**Question:** Do teens have photo identification with proof of age? Is the teen providing emergency contact information? Without the knowledge of the parent/guardian?

**Answer:** Proof of identity and age is required as an elevated safety measure. Teens will not be encouraged to bypass parental/guardian rules or limits. Electronic Alateen meetings are not the only way teens can seek recovery.

**Question:** Do all teens have photo ID's that include their age? Do student ID's include that information? Would the teens be willing to provide their parent or guardian contact information, particularly if they were not supportive of their attending Alateen? I understand why WSO is implementing these requirements and we do follow them in cases such as the Workshop and other events requiring permission slips.

**Answer:** Teens that are unable to provide a picture and proof of their age may not attend. Electronic Alateen meetings are not replacing face to face Alateen meetings. Emergency contact information is required in order to provide the information needed to get the teen services they may need that would be determined by the results of a mandated report.

**Question:** EASBR mentions photo IDs – what type of photo ID? Federal ID??? What will be the acceptable legal documentation for photo identification.

**Answer:** The Area process to support EASBR will determine acceptable photo IDs. It may be as simple as a class picture, a library card, a bus pass, etc.

**Question:** Why do Alateens have to show their ID at every meeting? Won't the AMIAS get to know the teens and know them by sight.

**Answer:** Alateen Group Sponsors are not always at every meeting, sometimes substitutes fill in, sometimes rotational schedules are set up...

**Question:** Will it be a turnoff to teens to have their ID checked at every meeting? Where is the trust?

**Answer:** Teens that want to attend an electronic Alateen meeting will register and show their ID. It is not a safe practice to make assumptions that members are who they claim they are.

**Question:** The AMIAS keeps track of the IDs that have signed in, is this shared with anyone else?

**Answer:** The teens attending are specific to each meeting. Any method of sharing is determined by your Area Process.

**Question:** Is there a specific type, style or requirement of the photo?

**Answer:** The photo should be a recent, real photo, not a sketch or avatar.

**Question:** What if a teen is wearing a colored mohawk hair style but their photo is a full head of hair?

**Answer:** We are exercising our due diligence; if facial features are not recognizable with different hair styles and identity not verifiable, a more recent photo will be needed.

### Group Email Address

**Question:** Suggest that a set standard be created for the format of the group email addresses. Who will create the group email address?

**Answer:** The autonomy granted in Tradition Four allows for groups to choose the email provider and email address. Current policy (Anonymity and the Media) guards us against using identifying information on any website accessible to the public.

### Electronic Alateen Group Minimums

**Question:** Why are two AMIAS-E required at every meeting?

**Answer:** Pilot projects have shown the need for at least two AMIAS for roles such as admitting and removing participants, monitoring for cameras and full-face views, screen sharing topic information, and helping the group practice the principles of recovery in the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

**Question:** What are the risks to holding an electronic Alateen meeting with 2 AMIAS and less than 10 teens?

**Answer:** Minimum of two AMIAS-E are required. If an electronic Alateen group continuously attracts more Alateen members than is manageable, the group may want to suggest more AMIAS-E are present. The Area process may designate a ratio of AMIAS-E to teens.

**Question:** Safety for the Alateen, I understand all the EASBR, however, what safety measures for those teens that have been coerced by others and they are in the background. Also, there's a level of isolation for teens not having physical contact

with other teens and that's a major concern. As we move toward the electronic age of our fellowship, I believe we are not fostering healthy physical communication skills.

**Answer:** Electronic Alateen meetings still require human interaction, taking turns, listening, sharing, and participating. Electronic Alateen meetings are not replacing face to face Alateen meetings. Teens are strongly encouraged to have private space while attending Alateen meetings to protect the anonymity of all members in the meeting. AMIAS-E can interrupt the meeting to address the situation as needed.

**Question:** Will WSO be responsible for updates? Will WSO assist in these training sessions? As AAC for Area 52 I don't think I would have a problem with this training along with WSO. This may require having another Area AMIAS willing to help train. It would be nice if WSO would just have training sessions scheduled through out the year for AMIAS to attend who are either new, or for whatever reasons would like to brush up on the E-Alateen meeting protocol and use of app or software that will be implemented.

**Answer:** As a shared Area responsibility, an Area's process to support EASBR may include information related to training assistance provided by District Representatives, alternates of any positions, or other support roles. Periodic correspondence through the links of service will provide opportunities to share trials and triumphs. The role of the WSO is as a clearinghouse and resource to all members and groups.

### **Anonymity**

**Question:** How can anonymity be maintained for Alateens participating in Electronic Alateen meetings?

**Answer:** In the meeting, how names are displayed may be changed depending on features of the chosen platform, and principles of anonymity are shared in the welcome.

**Question:** Many teens have an issue showing their faces, and some use alias names as well. As a part of Al-Anon, anonymity is a core part of our program. AMIAS stress the importance of anonymity. So my question is How will the Alateens accept this? Will there be a preliminary form for teen to add information online? What type of Photo ID will they have to provide? How do AMIAS verify this?

**Answer:** There will be a process developed by Areas to support EASBR, along with considerations to consider such as sharing the responsibility with other Area

trusted servants. All Alateens are not required to attend electronic Alateen meetings; all Areas do not need to host electronic Alateen meetings. It may be helpful to include asking if an alias name will be used.