

# **ATOS YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

## **As amended through August 2, 2010**

### **I. Purpose**

Organizations that provide programs and services for young people recognize the importance of providing written and enforced policies providing guidance as to how activities will be conducted.

The American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) desires to ensure that a safe environment exists for young persons who choose to participate in the organization's activities. It shall be the policy of ATOS to require that all officially sponsored ATOS Youth events be conducted in compliance with this Youth Protection Policy (herein "Policy").

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a set of uniform practices for conducting ATOS activities involving Youth Participants.

This Policy is designed to:

1. Provide protection for young persons participating in ATOS Youth Events;
2. Provide protection for adults and chaperones involved in official activities; and
3. Provide protection for ATOS by establishing guidelines that reduce the potential for improper conduct involving young persons.

### **II. Definitions**

- A. **Policy** – the ATOS Youth Protection Policy contained herein as may from time to time be amended by the ATOS Board of Directors.
- B. **ATOS Youth Event** – any officially sponsored activity of ATOS at which Youth Participants are present. Such events shall include but not be limited to competitions, clinics, fellowships, workshops, mentoring sessions, performances, the ATOS Summer Youth Adventure, and youth-related convention activities.
- C. **Chairperson** – the Chairperson of the committee responsible for overseeing and/or implementing the ATOS Youth Event.
- D. **Youth Participant** – any male or female under the age of eighteen (18) years of age who participates in an ATOS Youth Event.
- E. **Adult Participant** – any person over eighteen (18) years of age, including but not limited to any adult ATOS member who is appointed or requested by the Chairperson, ATOS Board of Directors, ATOS Staff Member, or ATOS President to work for or on behalf of any ATOS Youth Event.
- F. **Two Person Rule** – the requirement that two or more Adult Participants and/or chaperones, at least two of whom shall be at least twenty-one (21) years old, be present during any ATOS Youth Event or any portion thereof when a Youth Participant is present. Any parent or legal guardian shall be allowed to observe and be present during any ATOS Youth Event and may be counted as the second adult for the purposes of this rule.
- G. **Child Abuse** – the physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or neglect of children by adults or others with whom they have contact.
- H. **Medical Emergency** – the sudden onset of a medical condition in an ATOS Youth Event in which the Youth Participant experiences physical distress including but not limited to breathing difficulties, circulatory issues, extreme blood loss, allergic reaction, or any another serious condition.

### **III. Requirements of Adult Participants**

The number of Adult Participants in ATOS Youth Events shall be strictly limited to those assigned a specific role essential to the success of the specific program as determined by the Chairperson. The number of Adult Participants in any event will be carefully balanced to provide (1) a sufficient number of required chaperones to

ensure the safety and security of the participants, (2) the ability to maintain the Two Person Rule, and (3) sufficient support to meet the logistical needs of the activity. The Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring that non-assigned and non-approved persons are not allowed to participate in ATOS Youth Events or otherwise be in close proximity of Youth Participants. Notwithstanding, any parent or legal guardian shall be allowed to observe and be present during any ATOS Youth Event.

In some cases, participants may have reached legal adulthood and still be participating in ATOS Youth Events with younger participants under the age of eighteen. Any such participants shall at all times be bound by the same rules as all other Adult Participants for the duration of the Youth Event.

All ATOS Directors, Officers, Staff Members, and Adult Participants will be required to review the Policy and sign a written agreement verifying their understanding of and commitment to upholding this Policy. Copies of these signed policies shall be kept on file by the ATOS Secretary.

#### **IV. ATOS Youth Event Requirements**

The parent or legal guardian of a Youth Participant is responsible for his/her safety and security. However, due to the nature of certain ATOS Youth Events, it is possible that situations will occur where the Youth Participant is effectively under the care and supervision of an Adult Participant who is not the parent or legal guardian. In either case, the following guidelines shall be observed during all ATOS Youth Events:

- A. All Adult Participants, including but not limited to chaperones, coaches, and/or counselors, shall be good role models at all times. This requirement includes but is not limited to setting a proper example in speech, decorum, and personal conduct. Parents and/or legal guardians who accompany a Youth Participant must also set a proper example in front of other youth.
- B. The consumption of alcoholic beverages shall be strictly prohibited in the presence of any person under the age of 21. Any individual who is or is reasonably suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or any other substance shall be promptly reported to the Chairperson and shall be excluded from participation in the ATOS Youth Event.
- C. Appropriate attire is required of Adult Participants and Youth Participants at all times during ATOS Youth Events. The Chairperson shall be responsible for addressing inappropriate attire that detracts from the Youth Event.
- D. All participants in ATOS Youth Events, regardless of age or adult status, shall be required to comply with the rules set forth in the Policy while participating in activities with and/or when in close proximity to Youth Participants. Older participants who have reached age 18 must also serve as a good example to younger participants.
- E. The "Two Person Rule" shall be observed at all times at any ATOS Youth Event. This rule is designed to provide protection both for Youth Participants and Adult Participants.
- F. The privacy of Youth Participants shall be absolute at all times including, but not limited to changing in dressing rooms, restroom visits, etc. Should an emergency situation occur where access to a restroom, changing room, shower room, etc. is required, access will be consistent with the "Two Person Rule" and, where appropriate, utilize an Adult Participant of the same sex as the Youth Participant who is in need of emergency assistance.
- G. Separate accommodations and rooms shall always be provided for Youth Participants. Under no circumstances will there be sharing of a rooms between Adult Participants and Youth Participants. Adult Participants are prohibited from visiting the room of a Youth Participant, and *vice versa*. This restriction shall not apply to the parent or legal guardian of the Youth Participant. Should an emergency situation occur where there is no parent or legal guardian present, and which requires access to a Youth Participant's room, access shall be consistent with the "Two Person Rule."
- H. No secret sub-organizations or cliques will be permitted during any ATOS Youth Activity. Hazing, initiations, harassment and the like are strictly prohibited.
- I. Any one-on-one contact or private fraternization between Adult Participants and Youth Participants outside of scheduled activities is strictly prohibited.
- J. Any misconduct on the part of a Youth Participant or Adult Participant shall be immediately reported to the Chairperson and may constitute grounds for removal from the event and for future events.

- K. Under no circumstances shall an Adult Participant touch, grab, or otherwise make physical contact with a Youth Participant, except for participating in a formal handshake or when required to respond to an emergency situation.
- L. The names of all Adult Participants who will be working in proximity with or who will have personal interaction with a Youth Participant shall be checked against the National Sex Offender Website maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice ([www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov)). No person who has registered as a sex offender in any jurisdiction shall be permitted to work in proximity with or have personal interaction with a Youth Participant during any ATOS Youth Event.
- M. The Chairperson and/or ATOS Board of Directors may require additional reasonable screening and/or security measures for certain ATOS Youth Events where such measures will reasonably help to further the goals of this Policy.
- N. Any Youth Participant at an ATOS Youth Event shall be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. No Director, Officer, or Staff Member shall serve as a legal guardian for a Youth Participant.
- O. All ATOS Chapters shall at all times be bound by the provisions of this Policy.

**V. Reporting of Medical Emergencies**

Each Youth Participant in an ATOS Youth Event will be required to provide a medical release form properly executed by his/her parent or guardian which allows the Chairperson to seek medical attention for the Youth Participant in the event of a Medical Emergency. The form shall include any known significant medical conditions which might impact the treatment of the participant during the course of an emergency. This form may be waived if the parent or guardian will be readily available during the activity.

If a Youth Participant has a Medical Emergency, 911 will be promptly called and his/her parent or legal guardian shall be notified as soon as practicable.

**VI. Reporting of Child Abuse**

While adhering to this Policy will greatly reduce the likelihood of abuse, ATOS shall immediately report any allegation of Child Abuse to the Youth Participant's parent or legal guardian, and, where appropriate, to local law enforcement officials.

All Adult Participants should be continuously alert to any indications that inappropriate conduct has occurred or is occurring. Any Adult Participant observing or receiving information relating to a possible incident of alleged Child Abuse shall immediately notify the Youth Participant's parent or guardian, the Chairperson, and the ATOS President. If the incident involves a possible violation of criminal law, local law enforcement authorities will also be contacted. In many states, failing to report suspected child abuse to law enforcement officials is also a crime.

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In signing below, I indicate that I have read and am familiar with all of the provisions of the ATOS Youth Protection Policy and agree to abide by and uphold this Policy at all times.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)