

## **Awakening Together Sanctuary Policy and Procedures**

**Policy:** Awakening Together's primary place of gathering for communal worship is our online Sanctuary. We call it the Awakening Together Sanctuary because it is like a temple, mosque, synagogue, church or ashram to us. Our intention is to create a respectful and kind environment where our members and friends may be focused on spiritual enrichment.

The assembly shall have a policy that addresses the administration of the Sanctuary. This policy shall include procedures that address how Sanctuary administrators are selected, the responsibilities of an administrator, supervision of administrators and the Sanctuary, Sanctuary etiquette guidelines, a consistent procedure for maintaining etiquette guidelines in the Sanctuary and administrative responsibility related to Awakening Together gatherings.

**Procedure I:** Only Awakening Together (AT) members in good standing are eligible to become an administrator of the Sanctuary (AT Admin). All AT Admins must commit to uphold the Purpose and Core Values of the assembly.

- A. Members who would like to volunteer as AT Admins may apply to and are selected by the AT Sanctuary Director. Only members who have completed the True Discernment class may apply.
- B. It is essential that AT Admins use true discernment to watch and manage the Sanctuary according to AT's purpose, core values, and etiquette. AT Admins should keep in mind there are different thresholds of what is disruptive depending on the nature and the purpose of the program. AT Admins should remain aware that administrating the Sanctuary may be particularly challenging when:
  - a. There are people in the Sanctuary with whom you are familiar. It is possible that because of familiarity, positive feelings towards the person or negative feelings towards the person, one's discernment regarding administration according to this policy may be challenged. It is helpful for Admins to be aware of this challenge and seek help in making administration decisions, if needed.
  - b. You strongly agree or disagree with a scheduled speaker. Keep in mind that all scheduled speakers are to be treated the same. You are not to praise some speakers as better than others, and you are not to put down some speakers as less than others. If you believe a scheduled speaker's general topic is not aligned with Awakening Together's Purpose and Core Values, share your reasoning with the Sanctuary Director who will review the program and determine whether it is consistent with AT's Purpose and Core Values. Be sure to include specific reasons and examples.

**Procedure II:** In order to maintain an open atmosphere for sharing and teaching, the AT Admin will be responsible for enforcing and maintaining order in the Sanctuary according to the etiquette guidelines stated in Procedure IV. The AT Sanctuary Director is responsible for supervising all AT Admins.

- A. AT Admin duties and responsibilities include:
  - a. Announce/Introduce speakers, as needed.
  - b. Fill in, either in person, by scheduling another speaker or by playing a recording, if a speaker is unable to make their committed time slot
  - c. Assist speakers by posting links, posting encouragement and quotes as needed
  - d. For a temporary period of time, arrange other means for speakers to meet their commitment during their scheduled time slot, as applicable. This may apply when a regular speaker has temporary equipment or internet problems or when there is a temporary guest speaker who does not use Paltalk. Other means may include options like telephone, Skype, Google+, etc.
  - e. Monitor chat on the online board to ensure that cross-talk is minimized, that chat is respectful and kind, not disruptive or abusive, and that chat stays on topic. Reference Procedures IV and V for additional guidance.
  - f. Treat all speakers the same including the present speaker and speakers who are not currently present (*i.e.*, no favorites, disfavored or “special” qualities given to any one speaker).
- B. An AT Admin may be removed from the position of AT Admin for failing to administrate the Sanctuary according to this policy. Removal procedures will follow the guidelines in the Awakening Together Leadership and Governance Policy, Procedure IX.4. If the AT Admin is not an employee or contractor, the Sanctuary Director or President-Minister may remove the AT Admin, when warranted.

**Procedure III:** The responsibilities of the AT Sanctuary Director include:

- A. Establish and update Sanctuary operating procedures, which are subordinate to this policy and at the discretion of the Leadership Subcommittee.
- B. Train and develop new AT Admins
- C. Communicate information to members and address their concerns regarding the Sanctuary
- D. Act as a liaison between the membership and the Leadership Subcommittee regarding Sanctuary issues, resolving such issues where possible and working with the Leadership Subcommittee to resolve issues that cannot be resolved by the Sanctuary Director.

**Procedure IV:** The Sanctuary is a place to share and teach, to associate, extend love, inspire and be inspired. We invite everyone to participate in our Sanctuary with reverence, respect, kindness and discernment. Awakening Together has developed etiquette guidelines for participation in the Sanctuary to promote the spirit of our intention. Consistent adherence to the rules helps to maintain an environment that encourages people to share openly. The Sanctuary etiquette guidelines are:

- A. Listen and respond to the current speaker with respect and kindness.
  - a. Respect includes regard for one’s feelings and for one’s spiritual point of view. Respect does not necessarily mean agreement, since everyone is asked to use discernment that comes from one’s own heart. However,

- honor the speaker's freedom to share as he/she feels to share without interfering.
- b. Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. Kindness includes supporting each other on different paths of awakening and allowing each one to be where he/she is in his/her current spiritual understanding and practice.
- B. If the speaker invites participation, raise your hand. When the speaker turns the microphone over to you, share openly, with consideration and respect in accordance with Awakening Together's core values.
  - C. When typing on the message board or speaking, direct your comments to the current speaker and be sure your comments are related to the topic currently being discussed by the speaker.
  - D. When typing or speaking, never indicate that someone else is wrong. You may share your experience and understanding, but your sharing should never negate the sharing of another.
  - E. When typing or speaking, use language fitting this spiritual community. That is, do not use inappropriate or vulgar language.
  - F. Do not use the Sanctuary's message board to have unrelated discussion with other participants.
  - G. Gossip is never permitted in the Sanctuary under any circumstances.
  - H. When sending a private message to someone, be respectful by asking if it is a good time for a private message. (They may want to listen without being disturbed.)

**Procedure V:** Everyone is welcome in our Sanctuary. Participants who do not adhere to our etiquette guidelines are subject to the following:

- A. If a participant is violating the Sanctuary etiquette guidelines, the AT Admin will communicate with the participant regarding AT's purpose and etiquette, as appropriate.
- B. Once a participant has been communicated with, the AT Admin will monitor that person's participation to ensure it is in accordance with the etiquette guidelines. If participation does not reflect an understanding of our Purpose and Core Values, or the participant becomes disruptive or abusive, the AT Admin will red-dot the person and send them another post/message.
- C. The AT Admin will remove the red-dot after adequate time has been given to allow the participant to review the website. The amount of time the red-dot is applied is left to the discretion of the AT Admin, but will typically be about 15 – 20 minutes.
- D. A participant who has been given the opportunity to review the etiquette but continues to be out of alignment with the etiquette may be suspended or put on administrative red-dot. All suspensions and administrative red-dots must be communicated to all AT Admins immediately.
  - a. Suspension is warranted when the AT Admin feels 24-hour removal from the room is the correct response to the current offense. After 24-hours, the person who was suspended will be allowed to return to the Sanctuary. When a person is suspended by an AT Admin, other AT Admins shall not,

- upon their own authority, invite that person into the Sanctuary before the 24-hour period is over.
- b. Administrative red-dot is warranted when the AT Admin feels escalation to the Sanctuary Director and Leadership Subcommittee is the correct response. This may be due to the nature of the current offense or due to knowledge of repeat behavior. When a person is put on administrative red-dot, the red-dot shall remain until the Sanctuary Director and Leadership Subcommittee have reviewed the situation and made a decision regarding the next appropriate action for this person, which may be removal of the red-dot, semi-permanent or permanent red-dot, or being banned from the Sanctuary. The decision regarding the situation will be communicated to all AT Admins.
  - c. If a person is on 24-hour suspension or administrative red-dot and comes into the Sanctuary under another Paltalk nickname, the suspension or administrative red-dot shall be applied to the additional nickname; additional warnings are not required.
- E. No participant shall be suspended or put on administrative red-dot until after two warning messages have been provided except when immediate suspension is warranted because of:
- a. Inappropriate and vulgar language
  - b. Pornography
  - c. Attempts to instigate illegal activity
  - d. Unauthorized business activity or solicitation
  - e. Unauthorized use of the comment board, microphone or video camera
- F. To suspend a participant, the AT Admin can bounce the participant from the Sanctuary. A suspension is in effect for 24 hours unless the AT Admin invites the participant back into the Sanctuary.
- G. Occasionally visitors will come into the Sanctuary with an intention to disrupt communication. These visitors are not associated with Awakening Together and often write vulgarities, hijack the microphone, or write racist or otherwise unwelcome messages on the board. These visitors will be red-dotted, bounced and banned immediately.

**Procedure VI:** Proper administration is critical to a successful Awakening Together gathering. The responsibilities of the AT Admins and Sanctuary Director related to gatherings are:

- A. The Sanctuary Director shall ensure the primary general weekly gathering is recorded and posted online so the recording is accessible for posting on the Awakening Together website.
- B. The AT Admin on duty during a gathering shall administer the Sanctuary according to normal Sanctuary administration procedure.
- C. The AT Admin on duty during a gathering shall provide links as appropriate during the gathering. During the contemplation that follows the minister's teaching, the AT Admin shall provide the donation link for easy access by congregants and guests.

**Procedure VII:** This procedure addresses Sanctuary Programs, Hours of Operation and Authorized Use of the Sanctuary During Non-Operational Times

- A. Sanctuary Programs will be selected based on the needs of the entire assembly as determined by the active interest of AT Members in accordance with AT's Purpose and Core Values.
- B. New programs can be added to the schedule in two ways. The Leadership Subcommittee may select programs they feel benefit our membership and recruit speakers who can lead those programs or members/friends may apply to add a new program to the schedule.
  - a. Members/friends who want to add a new program to the schedule must fill out an application prior to presenting their first program. The application will include the topic of the program and the way in which the program meets the AT Purpose and Core Values.
  - b. The Leadership Subcommittee will review these programs prior to scheduling to assure the program truly meets our member's needs.
  - c. Speakers who are currently scheduled in the Sanctuary must continue to assure the content of their teaching is in alignment with the AT Purpose and Core Values.
- C. Non-Operational Hours in the Sanctuary
  - a. With permission from the Leadership Subcommittee and when a trained Admin is available to open, monitor and close the Sanctuary, additional 'informal' times can be made available. For example, just as a group of members may use a physical church as a place to meet when the church is closed, if a member wants to use the Sanctuary, and there are others who want to join this person, a trained Admin can open the room for this group and then close it when the group is done.
  - b. Whenever the Sanctuary is open during non-operational hours, Sanctuary etiquette rules must continue to be followed. Failure to abide by this policy and other applicable policies may result in loss of the privilege to use the Sanctuary during non-operational hours.
- D. Regular Sanctuary programming will be suspended during AT retreats intended for all members. (For example, the annual Awakening Together Retreat.)