

Hampshire Astronomical Group
Safeguarding Children Statement

Principles

- The Hampshire Astronomical Group takes seriously its responsibilities to provide a safe and secure environment for children when they visit the observatory or take part in the Group's activities
- The Hampshire Astronomical Group will adhere to the laws relating to children when they visit the observatory or take part in the Group's activities
- Any member noticing abuse of a child or children has a responsibility to report such abuse to either the Police or to Children's Services of the Local Authority. This will be carried out with immediate effect.
- The Group's Child Protection Responsible Officer will by default be the Group's chairman or a specifically delegated person agreed to by committee
- Any member witnessing abuse on the Group's premises and/or during its activities, who is unsure about abuse, or who to report such matters to, can discuss the issue with the Group's Child Protection Responsible Officer who will, if necessary, seek advice from Children's Services and advise accordingly
- Any reports of child abuse, either at the observatory or on a Hampshire Astronomical Group event, must also be reported to the Group's Child Protection Responsible Officer
- The Group's constitution is written to protect children
- All membership applications are approved by the Committee
- At no time will the Group, or its members acting on behalf of the Group, act '*in loco parentis*'
- A child's parent or guardian, or an adult acting *in loco parentis* will be responsible for the child at all times whilst undertaking activities with the Hampshire Astronomical Group
- Future decisions regarding policy or the activities of the Group will be mindful of, and not contradict, the principles for safeguarding children
- For a detailed working policy on child protection and astronomical bodies, the Group defers to the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS) Child Protection Policy (CPP)

Child

For the purposes of this document, a child is anyone under 18 years of age.

Abuse

Abuse can present itself in many forms. There are obvious forms of abuse such as physical, sexual and neglect. Emotional or psychological abuse is more difficult to identify. A detailed description is provided in the FAS's CPP and should be referred to.

Junior Membership

Junior membership of the Group is open to young people under the age of 18 years. Junior members must be accompanied by their parent or guardian at all times when undertaking activities with the Group. Parents or guardians of such young people will join the Group and abide by its constitution and other rules governing security and safety.

Parents or guardians of junior members must supervise their child's activities and retain responsibility at all times for the safety, security, and actions of their child.

Visits

During any visit which involves a child, the child must be accompanied by a responsible adult. In normal circumstances a responsible adult will be the child's parent, guardian or an adult acting *in loco parentis*.

When groups of children (Scouts/Cub/Brownies etc.) visit the observatory, the visiting organisation will ensure there are sufficient adults to accompany the children who have been vetted as suitable to work with children, and that the vetting adheres to the most recent legislation. It is the responsibility of the visiting organisation, not the Hampshire Astronomical Group, to ensure the vetting is undertaken.

The observatory is dark and thus the Hampshire Astronomical Group requires a ratio of at least 8:1 children to responsible adults when children are visiting the observatory. This will help to ensure children's supervision and safety when visiting the observatory site. This ratio may vary according to the needs of the visiting group.

Visiting groups who do not adhere to the above will not be admitted to the observatory or its activities.

This document will be reviewed annually, or more frequently in the light of any experience, future legislation or guidance issued in relation to the safety and safeguarding of children.

Members should be reminded that assisting children at the telescopes (hands on) should be undertaken primarily by the parent or guardian and any help offered by members must be with the agreement of the child and parent/guardian.

Reporting Concerns

Any member noticing abuse of a child or children has a responsibility to report such abuse to either the Police or to Children's Services of the Local Authority. This will be carried out with immediate effect.

When in doubt about any observed abuse, discussion should take place as soon as possible with the Child Protection Responsible Officer of the group. It is good practice to make contemporaneous notes for future reference, especially when making the referral. These notes must be kept confidential.

A detailed process is described in the FAS's CPP and should be referred to in the event of a concern being raised.

To discuss concerns or to make a referral, contact details are as follows:

- During office hours (8.30am – 5:00pm) - you should contact **Children's Services: 0845 603 5620**
- At all other times you should contact the **out-of-hours Emergency Service: 0845 600 4555**

If this out of hours line is engaged you will be put through to an answerphone. Leave your name and number and you will be called back as quickly as possible.

- **Police: 0845 045 4545**

Concerns can be raised with the local police who will provide further advice.

Approved by Committee January 2016

Hampshire Astronomical Group

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