

Irish Astronomical Association

Child Protection Policy

We, the members of the Irish Astronomical Association, are committed to protect children from harm. The Council and Association members accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which may cause children harm in relation to our activities.

Whilst this Policy is still under construction and awaiting additional guidance from the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS), we will, in the meantime, endeavour to safeguard children by:

1. Adopting a child protection policy through a Code of Practice.
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and Associates of the Association.
3. Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare and safety of any children engaged in the Association's activities by encouraging parents to accompany their children.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and practice at regular intervals. We will publicise our policy where possible and publish it on the IAA website.

IAA Code of Practice For the Protection of Children

The Association holds events during the day and at night. These activities may involve the Association members instructing the general public in the use of astronomical equipment. These conditions pose their own problems but some guidelines to be used are as follows:

1. Ensure that the children are with a responsible adult, preferably their parents at all times. We will encourage children and their parents to stay together.
2. Endeavour to man displays and /or telescopes in pairs to protect and assist each other.
3. Avoid physical contact with a child at all times. Use step ladders or request the parent to allow the child access to the telescope eyepieces, for example. Where possible when using telescopes or binoculars, set the tripod to "child height".
4. Avoid being on your own with a child during an event, for example in the portable planetarium during a show, or when outside at night. Always encourage the parents or accompanying adult to stay with and watch the child.
5. Never behave in such a way that is threatening, abusive or upsetting to a child, or any other member of the general public.
- 6 If a problem occurs, then contact another member of the Association immediately, preferably an IAA Council member.

7 If any member of the Association is alerted to an incident, the incident must be reported immediately, or as soon as is possible, to any member of the IAA Council. This IAA Council member will bring it to the attention of the full IAA Council immediately. If necessary, on the opinion of the Council, the IAA Secretary,

President, or other Council member will refer the allegation to the appropriate authorities (PSNI, Social Services etc.)

The use of Photographic Images

Where possible we will seek the consent of parents or adults where images of children are to be taken and possibly used in publications. The IAA Council will use best endeavours to ensure that no improper images are taken at any time.