



Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy

This document sets out the code of conduct for expected behaviour of Society members in dealing with young and vulnerable persons. Any member who will have contact with these classes of person must read and acknowledge this code. It is the policy of Sunderland Astronomical Society never to entertain children or vulnerable persons who are not accompanied by a suitable number of parents, guardians or adult helpers.

You should always:

- Uphold the spirit and specific provisions of this Policy.
- Do your best to behave in an open and friendly manner, but avoid being over-familiar in word or action.
- In so far as possible, avoid situations in which you are alone with children or vulnerable people. If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen by other members of the Society or those accompanying adults who are with our guests.
- If a child is hurt or distressed, bring this to the immediate attention of those who are accompanying them. If this is not possible then do your best to comfort and reassure them without compromising their dignity or doing anything to discredit your own behaviour.
- Try to avoid any physical contact or behaviour that could be misconstrued or unwelcome. Physical touch should only be in response to a child's need and should respect their age and individual stage of development.
- It may be appropriate to hold a child's hand, to put a comforting arm around their shoulder or to carry them – for instance if they have fallen. However, you should first explain what you have in mind and ask directly if that is what they want. Otherwise, it may be unwelcome or misinterpreted.
- Where you have to rely on your own judgment, always treat the child's welfare as paramount.

You must never subject any child to any form of harm or abuse. Failure to honour this will be treated as gross misconduct and appropriate disciplinary action will follow. **This means** that it is unacceptable to:

- distress a child by shouting at them or calling them derogatory names.
- slap a child.
- hold a child in such a way that causes pain or shake them.
- physically restrain a child except to protect them from harming themselves or others.
- take part in horseplay or rough games.
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves or an accompanying adult can do for them; this includes going to the toilet with a child.
- allow or engage in sexually suggestive behaviour within a child's sight or hearing, or make suggestive comments to or within earshot of a child.
- give or show anything which could be construed as being pornographic.
- seek or agree to meet children anywhere beyond normal visitor areas.

If you witness or suspect any behaviour which is in contravention of this Policy, you should report this immediately to the Committee. This may call for courage and/or fine judgment on your part and we acknowledge this. Sunderland Astronomical Society will fully support those who abide by this Policy in any situation where you must rely on your own judgment.