



Highlands Astronomical Society (HAS) Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Highlands Astronomical Society (HAS) fully supports the aims of the **Highland Child Protection Committee (HCPC)** and is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children (those under the age of 18) and vulnerable individuals who interact with the Society. HAS adheres to all relevant safeguarding guidelines issued by **Disclosure Scotland** and the HCPC.

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, and visitors involved in activities where children or vulnerable individuals may be present.

The Society's **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is **Pauline Macrae** who will report to the Committee.

2. Safeguarding Responsibilities

2.1 Membership & PVG Scheme

- All HAS members engaged in **regulated work** with children **must be members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme**.
- The Society will ensure that all individuals in such roles complete the necessary **PVG checks** before engaging in activities.
- Volunteers and members will receive **training on safeguarding** best practices where appropriate.

2.2 Reporting Concerns

If any HAS member, volunteer, or attendee has **concerns about a child's welfare** or suspects inappropriate behavior, they must follow this reporting process:

1. **Immediately report** concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead Pauline Macrae**
2. If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, concerns should be reported to a **HAS Committee Member**.
3. **Confidentiality must be maintained** – concerns should not be discussed informally.
4. If a child discloses any information of concern, listen carefully but do **not** ask leading questions. **Do not promise confidentiality**; explain that information may need to be shared for their safety.
5. In urgent cases where a child is at immediate risk, contact:



- **Police Scotland:** 101 (or 999 in an emergency)
 - **Highland Child Protection Committee:** 01463 703483
 - **Social Work Department (Raigmore):** 01463 704204
 - **Out-of-Hours Social Work Emergencies:** 08457 697284
6. Document the concern in a **Child Protection Incident Report Form** and submit it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3. Safeguarding Measures at HAS Events

3.1 Monthly Meetings & YoungStars Group

- Children aged **8-14** attending the **YoungStars Group** before monthly meetings **must** be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- **One-on-one situations between adults and children should be avoided.**

3.2 Public Outreach & Daytime Events

- A **minimum of two adults** must be present at all outreach events.
- Young volunteers must be accompanied by a responsible adult and must never be left in **one-on-one situations** with an adult.
- **Solar Observing Sessions:**
 - We also require that a parent or guardian must be present when their child is attending HAS events.

3.3 Evening & Observatory Events

- All evening events (e.g., school visits, public observing nights) require **at least two adult supervisors**.
- **Young attendees (under the age of 18) must be accompanied by a responsible adult** for the time they are attending the events.
- Supervisors will take extra care to **minimise physical contact** during events held in darkness to prevent misunderstandings.

3.4 Online Safety

- HAS members must **not** engage in private, one-on-one online communication with young attendees.
- The Society's **social media pages and communication platforms** must be monitored to prevent inappropriate interactions.
- Any concerns about online interactions must be reported following the **standard reporting procedure**.



4. Policy Compliance & Review

- All PVG Scheme members are required to **read and acknowledge** this policy.
- Copies of this policy and safeguarding guidance will be available in the Society's **Document Library** at www.spacegazer.com.
- This policy will be reviewed **annually or sooner if safeguarding legislation changes**.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Pauline Macrae

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Next Review Date: October 2026