

The Federation of Astronomical Societies



Safeguarding Children & Young People

Template Policy

Version 2

April 2026



Document History

Date	Author(s)	Version	Comments
April 2026	Clare Lauwerys John Stapleton	2	Complete Rewrite.
03-Feb-2020	Paul Daniels	1.3	Re-imported into FAS template, re-formatted, changed most 'Federation of Astronomical Societies' into FAS.
05-Jan-2020	Graham Bryant	1.2	Updated as post GDPR Implementation
22-Apr-2018	Paul Daniels	1.1	Documents combined and re-formatted
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1. Don't Panic!

This document may seem long but it contains useful appendices as well as the policy template.

2. Important Legal Disclaimer

This document is a general safeguarding template for information and guidance only. It is not legal advice.

The Federation of Astronomical Societies is not a law firm, safeguarding authority, regulated professional body, or statutory agency. Safeguarding duties vary depending on an organisation's legal structure, activities, jurisdiction, and risk profile. This template does not guarantee compliance with:

- Applicable legislation
- Statutory guidance
- Charity law
- Local authority safeguarding procedures
- Regulatory reporting obligations

Each adopting organisation is solely responsible for:

- Reviewing and adapting this template
- Obtaining independent professional advice where appropriate
- Ensuring compliance with relevant law
- Implementing safeguarding procedures effectively

Use of this template is entirely at the adopting organisation's own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the issuing organisation disclaims all liability arising from reliance on this document.

Organisations are strongly advised to seek independent advice, particularly if they:

- Engage in regulated activity
- Undertake unsupervised work with children
- Employ staff or volunteers in safeguarding roles
- Are responding to a safeguarding incident

Although voluntary associations are not statutory bodies, they owe a duty of care to participants and must take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm.

3. Plain English Summary

This is guidance, not legal advice.

You must adapt it to your organisation.

If unsure - especially if working directly with children or charity or dealing with a safeguarding concern - seek professional advice.



4. Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

[Society Name]

Version:

Effective Date:

Review Date:

Purpose

[Society Name] is an unincorporated association run by its elected committee. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that the welfare of the child is paramount.

This duty of care is particularly important in astronomy activities, which often take place in low-light, remote, or isolated environments.

We are committed to protecting children and young people through a preventative, proportionate, and child-centred approach.

Safeguarding responses will always prioritise the safety and best interests of the child.

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Drawing the Line Report Dec 2009
- Prevent Duty Guidance

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Committee members
- Members and volunteers
- Representatives of the Society
- Society activities including meetings, observing sessions, star camps, outreach events, school visits, and trips
- Online platforms, messaging groups, and digital communication
- One-to-one contact arising from Society activity

This includes activities in dark or remote locations, transport to events, and overnight stays.

Children remain the responsibility of their parent or guardian at public events unless formally registered in a supervised activity.



Definition: Child

A child is any person under the age of 18.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of health or development
- Ensuring safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable best outcomes

Safeguarding Principles

We act in accordance with:

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- Prevention — taking action before harm occurs
- Proportionality — least intrusive response consistent with safety
- Protection — supporting those at risk of significant harm
- Partnership — working with parents and statutory agencies
- Accountability — clear roles and transparent decision-making

These principles apply equally to in-person and online interactions.

Types of Abuse

Abuse may be deliberate or unintentional, single or repeated. It includes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Online or cyber abuse
- Grooming
- Child sexual exploitation
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Domestic abuse exposure
- Radicalisation
- Gender Based Violence/Violence Against Women and Girls

Safeguarding in Astronomy Contexts

Astronomy societies operate in environments with risks, including:

- Low-light and isolated observing locations
- Overnight star camps
- Mixed-age groups

- Public events with open access
- Transport and lift-sharing arrangements
- Online discussion spaces

These factors require additional awareness and proportionate risk management when children are present.

Governance (Unincorporated Association)

The committee is collectively responsible for:

- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ensuring safer recruitment practices where required
- Assessing whether any activity constitutes regulated activity
- Ensuring appropriate supervision arrangements
- Reviewing safeguarding risks at events
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Reviewing this policy annually
- Ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements
- Ensuring safeguarding is a standing agenda item at least quarterly

Committee members may bear personal responsibility if safeguarding is handled negligently.

New committee members will receive a safeguarding briefing as part of their induction.

Charity Note:

In a registered charity, safeguarding oversight is a trustee duty and may require reporting to the Charity Commission.

Safer Recruitment & Regulated Activity

To ensure the safety of children and young people, the Society will implement "Safer Recruitment" practices for roles involving significant contact with under-18s.

Defining Regulated Activity

The Society must determine if a volunteer's role constitutes "Regulated Activity" as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. A person is in Regulated Activity if they perform any of the following tasks for the Society:

- **Unsupervised Teaching or Coaching:** Providing instruction or guidance to children.
- **Care or Supervision:** Being responsible for the welfare of children during Society events.
- **Frequency Threshold:** These activities are "regulated" if they are carried out **frequently** (once a week or more) or **intensively** (4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight).

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- **Enhanced DBS Requirement:** Any member or volunteer identified as engaging in Regulated Activity must undergo an Enhanced DBS check (with a check against the Children's Barred List) before commencing the role.



- **Role Assessment:** The Committee, led by the DSL, will maintain a list of roles within the Society that require a DBS check and ensure these are reviewed annually.
- **Overseas Residents:** For members who have lived abroad, the Society may require equivalent criminal record checks from the relevant country.

Recruitment Process for Youth-Facing Roles

For specific roles dedicated to working **with** young people (e.g., a Youth Outreach Officer), the Society will:

- Require a written application or expression of interest.
- Conduct an informal interview with at least two committee members.
- Verify the individual's identity and right to volunteer.
- Take up at least one character reference.

Ongoing Suitability

- Possession of a DBS certificate does not remove the need for ongoing supervision and the application of Safer Working Practices.
- Members in Regulated Activity must notify the DSL immediately if they are involved in any police investigation or receive a conviction/caution that may affect their suitability to work with children.

Charity Note:

In a registered charity, safeguarding oversight is a trustee duty and may require reporting to the Charity Commission.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

DSL: [Insert Name & Contact]

Deputy DSL: [Insert Name & Contact]

Responsibilities:

- Receive and record safeguarding concerns
- Assess immediate risk
- Contact Children's Social Care where appropriate
- Contact police where a crime is suspected
- Maintain confidential safeguarding records
- Keep a decision log for all safeguarding actions
- Brief the committee on safeguarding matters (without breaching confidentiality)
- Escalate significant concerns to the Chair

The DSL has delegated authority to contact statutory services without committee approval.

If a concern involves the DSL, report to the Chair.



The DSL should not be overruled on safeguarding decisions except by the Chair. The Chair must seek professional advice in such incidences. If the Chair is unavailable or implicated other senior members of the committee may step in.

Safer Working Practices

The Society will:

- Provide safeguarding awareness to committee members
- Include safeguarding in event risk assessments
- Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations
- Ensure activities take place in open or observable environments
- Moderate online spaces
- Prohibit private one-to-one digital messaging between adults and children. If a child initiates contact the adult must not respond. The parent/carer and DSL should be informed
- Ensure supervision arrangements are appropriate to activity risk
- Manage transport arrangements safely
- All society-sanctioned digital communication platforms (e.g., WhatsApp groups, Discord servers) must have at least two administrators who are committee members to ensure transparency and oversight

A lone-working protocol must be used if supervising children at remote sites.

Reporting Procedure

Recognise – Record – Report

Immediate danger: Call 999.

Record:

- Exact words used
- Observations (fact vs opinion)
- Date, time, and your name
- Any immediate actions taken

Report:

- Inform the DSL immediately and within 24 hours
- Do not investigate
- Do not promise secrecy

If in doubt, report to the DSL. Do not wait for certainty. Concerns must be reported within 24 hours, sooner if possible.

Allegations Against Members or Committee

Where concerns involve a member or committee member:



- Precautionary suspension may be applied
- Suspension is a neutral safeguarding measure
- Internal investigation will not replace statutory processes
- Statutory agencies will lead any criminal or child protection investigation

The Society may restrict participation while concerns are assessed.

Confidentiality & Records

- Safeguarding information must be:
- Shared only on a need-to-know basis
- Stored securely and separately from general membership records
- Digital records must be password-protected and access limited to the DSL and Chair.
- Records will be retained for a minimum of 7 years or until the child reaches 25, whichever is longer.
- Low-level concerns will be reviewed annually to identify patterns.
- Destroyed securely when no longer required.

Statement of Lawful Basis for Processing Safeguarding Data

The Society processes personal data relating to safeguarding concerns, including special category data and data relating to criminal convictions or allegations, under the '**Substantial Public Interest**' condition as defined in **Paragraph 18, Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018** (Safeguarding of children and of individuals at risk).

This processing is necessary for the purposes of:

- Protecting the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of an individual.
- Identifying and preventing abuse, neglect, or harm.
- Fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to report serious concerns to statutory agencies.

Safeguarding records are kept separate from general membership files, are stored securely with restricted access, and are retained in accordance with our defined retention schedule (7 years for adults, or until age 25 for children) to ensure accountability for future enquiries .

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

Legislation changes

An incident indicates improvement is required

Society activities significantly change

The DSL must present an annual safeguarding summary to the committee (with no personal data).



Appendix A – Safeguarding Implementation Checklist

Governance

- DSL appointed
- Deputy DSL appointed
- Policy reviewed and minuted
- Safeguarding added as a standing agenda item

Safer Recruitment

- Regulated activity assessed
- DBS requirements reviewed

Risk Management

- Safeguarding included in event risk assessments
- Remote/night-time risks considered
- Online platforms moderated

Records

- Secure storage agreed
- Retention period understood
- Access restricted to DSL/Chair

Insurance

- Public liability insurance active
- Insurer notified if required



Appendix B – Parent & Young Person Safeguarding Summary (2-Page Version)

Our Commitment

We are committed to creating a safe, respectful environment for children and young people.

If you feel unsafe or worried at an event, speak to any committee member and ask for the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If Someone Is in Immediate Danger

Call **999**.

If You Have a Concern

- Listen calmly
- Do not promise secrecy
- Report immediately

DSL Contact: [Insert]

We do not permit private online messaging between adults and children.

Parents remain responsible for children at public observing events unless formally registered in a supervised session.



Appendix C – DSL Guidance Sheet (Internal)

Immediate Assessment

- Immediate danger? → 999
- Serious crime suspected?
- Threshold for Children’s Social Care?

Record Keeping

- Include:
- Date/time
- Reporter
- Exact words
- Observations
- Actions taken

Do not conduct parallel investigations.

Consult local authority safeguarding team if unsure.



Appendix D – Confidential Safeguarding Incident Form

Strictly Confidential: This form must be stored securely and separately from general society records. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

1. Reporter Details

- **Name of person completing this form:** [Insert Name]
- **Date and Time of report:** [Insert Date/Time]
- **Role within Society:** (e.g., Member, Volunteer, Committee)

2. Incident Details

- **Date and Time of incident/disclosure:** [Insert Date/Time]
- **Location:** (e.g., Observing site, online platform, star camp)
- **Name of Child:** [Insert Name]
- **Parent/Guardian Name:** [Insert Name]
- **Risk Level** (Low / Medium / High) For DSL completion if unsure
- **Other witnesses**
- **Evidence collected** (e.g., screenshots, photos, messages)

3. The Concern

- **Exact words used:** (If a disclosure was made, record the person's words verbatim. Do not interpret).
- **Observations (Facts):** (Describe physical marks, behaviour, or environment witnessed).
- **Observations (Opinion):** (Distinguish clearly from facts; e.g., "The individual seemed more withdrawn than usual").

4. Immediate Action

- **Actions taken:** (e.g., Called 999, separated parties, provided first aid).
- **Were any other agencies contacted?** (e.g., Police, Adult Social Care).

5. Submission

- **Reported to DSL:** [Insert DSL Name]
- **Date/Time reported to DSL:** (Must be within 24 hours of the concern).



Quick Reminder for the Reporter

- **Do not investigate:** Your role is to record, not to prove.
- **Do not promise secrecy:** Explain that you must pass this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure their safety.
- **Secure Storage:** Once completed, this form must be handed directly to the DSL or stored in the agreed secure location.

Risk Level Guidance

- **Low Risk**
Concern involves inappropriate behaviour, boundary issues, or welfare concerns with no immediate risk of harm.
No crime suspected. Monitor and refer to DSL.
- **Medium Risk**
Child/Young Person may be experiencing abuse or neglect, but no immediate danger at the time of reporting.
Possible pattern of behaviour, coercion, or escalating concern. DSL assessment required.
- **High Risk**
Immediate risk of serious harm, ongoing abuse, or serious crime suspected.
Emergency services may need to be contacted (999).

Appendix E - DBS Role Assessment Matrix

Activity / Role	Frequency/Context	Risk Level	DBS Requirement
General Committee Member	Administrative duties only; no direct youth supervision.	Low	No check required
Guest Speaker	One-off talk with parents/teachers present.	Low	No check required
Public Outreach Volunteer	Occasional help at public events with parents present.	Low	No check required
Youth Section Leader	Leads weekly or monthly sessions for under-18s.	High	Enhanced DBS Required (Regulated Activity)
Star Camp Supervisor	Responsible for youth safety during overnight events.	High	Enhanced DBS Required (Regulated Activity)
Remote Site Keyholder	Meets 1-on-1 with new youth members for training.	High	Enhanced DBS Required
Online Forum Moderator	Moderates digital spaces where children are active.	Medium	Enhanced DBS Recommended (Best Practice)

Appendix F – Links for Additional Information

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- [Drawing-the-Line-Report-Dec-09.pdf](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)
- [About us - Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK](#)
- [Regulated activity with children in England and Wales - GOV.UK](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales](#)