



Star Party Etiquette

School Star Parties

This version of Star Party Etiquette is designed primarily for the schools' star party point of contact. It contains the basic guidelines that all students and star party attendees must be familiar with and follow.

- The first rule is to have fun. Move around and visit each telescope.
- Flashlight Usage: Red flash lights are preferred. If you must use a white flashlight, please point it down at the ground while you walk. We would appreciate it if you do not play laser tag with white flashlights around the viewing area. • Listen to the astronomers. They will explain the object they are viewing and provide instructions about using the equipment and ask that you be very careful around the telescope.
- No running in the viewing area. Please watch for the red flashing lights that may mark the legs of the telescope. Some telescopes are computerized and if a leg gets kicked or moved, the astronomer must shut down the telescope and start a new alignment. This results in lost viewing time for everyone.
- List of Objects. If you have a list of objects that your teacher has asked you to view, please let the astronomer know. The teachers normally provide the astronomers with a consolidated list of objects for viewing during the evening. • Signing off on objects viewed. Please do not ask the astronomer to sign off on an object that you have not viewed. Do not get upset when the astronomer says "no" to your request. • Do not touch the equipment without permission. The astronomer may be busy with other students. If the telescope is "empty", call out for the astronomer to assist you.
- Do not monopolize the astronomer's time. School star parties are generally very hectic. There are a lot of objects to be viewed by a lot of students. If you would like to have an extended conversation with the astronomer, come back when there are fewer students waiting to view. The astronomer will be very happy to talk with you. • Viewing Specific Objects. If the teacher did not provide a list of objects for you to view, by all means ask the astronomer if you can view a particular object. If there a few students waiting to view, the astronomer will probably find the object for you. If not, the astronomer may ask you come back later when the other students have finished.
- Supervise Your Children. A lot of our School Star Parties are family affairs, and we appreciate the interest. But, small children require constant supervision around the viewing area. Since the telescopes are normally mounted for adults or middle school students, most astronomers provide step-stools for the younger children. Please be careful when using one of these stools, and do not grab the telescope for stability. Star parties are fun! The guidelines are designed to make you aware of a school star party environment and become second nature after attending a few star parties.