

Requirements for Volunteers Interacting with Minors on Behalf of Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association (TAAA)

As a TAAA Volunteer working with Minors, I commit to the following requirements: I agree to

1. comply with TAAA requirements (qualifications, behaviors, training) for the type of activity involved as stated in the TAAA Policy on Working with Minors prior to such work.
2. operate as a representative of TAAA only in sanctioned/approved TAAA events.
3. not participate in one-on-one interactions with minors when representing TAAA. All interactions with minors are in the presence of other adults, including TAAA volunteers who have met TAAA requirements for participating in the activity.
4. appropriately handle incidents of abuse. If a TAAA volunteer reasonably believes that a minor or another person at a TAAA event reports that he/she is being or has been subjected to abuse or neglect, the TAAA volunteer immediately insures that the child is presently safe. Additionally, the TAAA volunteer immediately reports the information to the most competent authority at the event. During or immediately after the event, the TAAA volunteer notifies the TAAA supervisor or a TAAA Board Member. Within 24 hours of the incident, the TAAA Member/Volunteer will complete the Incident Information Form: Allegations of Abuse; Behavior of Concern (Appendix N) and submit it to their TAAA Supervisor who submits it immediately to the TAAA Board (taaabod@tucsonastronomy.org).
5. not act in a manner that creates TAAA responsibility for transporting minors. It is appropriate for minors who are not the relatives of TAAA members to be transported to TAAA events by parents, guardians, or agencies (such as schools) that have assumed legal responsibility for transportation rather than by TAAA volunteers representing TAAA. TAAA assumes no responsibility for the transportation of minors.
6. follow all TAAA requirements regarding voice or visual images of minors. Authorized TAAA representatives may ONLY photograph, videotape, digitally record, or in any way take a voice or visual image of a child at a TAAA activity/event if the child is their relative or with signed written permission of the parent or guardian (*using the Photo Release Form for a Minor under age 18*) for a specific identified programmatic TAAA purpose or if the face is not identifiable in the picture. The statement of purpose will include any future distribution/use/storage of the item.
7. follow prescribed procedures for communications with minors. In developing and organizing programs for minors, TAAA members typically interact with parents/guardians or with organizations assuming legal responsibility for the minors. Direct communication by TAAA volunteers representing TAAA with minors through telephone, social media, email, text-message or other electronic means is limited and only occurs with the knowledge and permission of the parent/guardian and TAAA. Written communications are copied to the minor's parent or sponsoring school advisor. Copies of such communications are preserved. Such communications are logged and the log is preserved. Both are readily available upon the request of a TAAA Board Member/supervisor.



8. clearly communicate to parents and agency/school personnel, TAAA medical policies regarding minors participating in TAAA activities or on TAAA property. Minors with medical considerations are invited to participate in TAAA activities/events on TAAA property that are appropriate for their level of ability provided that a responsible adult accompanies them who is knowledgeable of and able to administer to and fulfill their needs. TAAA members and facilities are NOT equipped with medical training, abilities, skills or equipment. A TAAA volunteer will telephone 911 in case of an emergency. Otherwise, parents/guardians/agencies must take total responsibility for medical care/special needs of a minor participating in a TAAA event or activity on TAAA property. This does include behavioral needs of a minor that intensify requirements for individual supervision. Adults accompanying a child with a disability in order to meet special needs of the minor are welcome as long as when overnight stays are involved, TAAA is notified in sufficient time prior to the event and facilities are available.
9. provide telescope observing and science education experiences to minors without physically touching them. TAAA Volunteers plan ahead to set up viewing options and project participation in ways that promote safety and learning without the need for physically touching participants. If minors need physical assistance, (1) ask adults accompanying the child to provide that assistance, and (2) re-plan the activity so that such assistance is not needed in the future. TAAA volunteers come prepared with verbal instructions, visual images and demonstration models to avoid the need to move a child's body parts for safety or to perform the desired activity. The exception is that a TAAA volunteer may touch a child to resolve an urgent safety issue, e.g., if the child is falling. But, the next duty of the TAAA volunteer is to try to find a strategy to avoid that fall re-occurring in the future.
10. behave in a manner that is sensitive to and protective of a child's need for privacy. TAAA volunteers seek restroom areas that are separate from those used by minors. If separate restroom facilities are not possible, promote the greatest degree of privacy and separation from minors that is possible, e.g., there can be separate times that minors and adults use the restroom facilities or there may be a restroom that is available but a further walk so that minors are not using it.
Absolutely ALL changing of clothes or dressing/undressing activities must occur with total separation of minors and TAAA volunteer adults. All tents and sleeping areas must have strict well-defined boundaries by gender/gender-identity and between minors and adults.
11. be appropriately clothed, as are all TAAA volunteers and minors participating in TAAA programs/events. Thus, males and females must wear shirts and neither youth nor adults may be wearing only swimwear, top or bottom (unless such is appropriate to the event location). Shoes and other attire are reasonably chosen to promote safety in remote areas with cacti, bees, wild animals and snakes as well as be appropriate to weather conditions.
12. log information on interactions with and participation of minors. TAAA Volunteers interacting at large events such as TFOB or school/non-profit/public star parties, will keep a count of the number of people interacted with (when appropriate, numbers of minors and adults may be listed separately), and the dates and times and the name(s) of the other TAAA observers who accompanied them. For more intense events, such as programs for minors at CAC/TIMPA, the schedule of activities for the program, dates and times, and identification of participants as well



as ongoing record of accompanying TAAA observers are recorded. Records are supervised/and maintained by TAAA supervisors. TAAA supervisors make an arrangement with a TAAA Board member to store the records in TAAA files, and store them on a regular, timely basis.

13. archive with TAAA, any records, permissions or documentation regarding acquiring pictures, electronic or digital items in working with minors, and/or the actual pictures may be archived with TAAA.
14. when representing TAAA and working with minors, I will not possess, distribute, consume or use any of the following: alcoholic beverages, marijuana or illegal substances; firearms, fireworks or explosives; and pornography or materials containing words or images which are illegal or generally considered to be offensive.
15. when representing TAAA working with minors not to engage in activities which are illegal, or promote or include bullying, hazing, harassment or unlawful discrimination.
16. limit non-present interactions with minors. In messaging such as email, text messages, letters, etcetera, include the parent and a TAAA member on the message. In telephone conversations, inform the minor that you are placing the call on speaker phone and who is present that will be listening to the call. In social media, such as Facebook, do not use any personal/private accounts and do not do any one on one messaging. Preserve copies of these communications. Also, complete a log indicating time/date/method/who was present/who was copied/content or your recollection of the content/ and purpose of the interaction. Minors and parents should be informed of TAAA rules and asked to limit unnecessary non-present communications. Records should be shared with a TAAA supervisor and stored in TAAA archives.
17. ensure that a minor who is a TAAA member has full access to participation in the benefits of TAAA membership, while also following TAAA policies on working with youth. Up to two minor children may, with their parent(s), be part of a family membership. Additionally, minors may individually join TAAA with the written permission of a parent or guardian. Check with a TAAA supervisor to clearly identify when a minor is a TAAA member and how that may change any activity. The TAAA Constitution and Bylaws specify that a person must be 18 years old or older to serve on the Board. Otherwise, it places no restrictions on member benefits of minors.

Volunteer name (printed) _____

Volunteer Signature _____

Date Signed _____

(must be signed prior to event start)

