Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Procedures for Educational Visits

During your visit, Astronomy Section members are there to provide instruction and ensure you have a safe visit. We ask please, that you be attentive to all instructions given by members. We expect the adults accompanying children to provide adequate behavioural supervision and ensure that children are attentive at all times. There should be no running around the site or within the buildings. All behaviour should respect sensitive and expensive equipment, some of which is heavy and can move unpredictably. Extra care should be taken when visiting under dark conditions.

Car Parking
Car parking is available on entry to the Observatory. The surface is gravelled and therefore slightly uneven, but there are no exceptional surface hazards. Care should be taken when entering/leaving as there is a small dip (about 50 cm) on the left hand side as you enter the car cark. There are two motion-sensor lights that illuminate the car parking area. They may occasionally be switched off, so it is advisable to bring a small torch.

There is limited car parking at the observatory, therefore with a large group it is necessary to park at La Houguette School, where there is usually space during the evenings or school holidays.

If walking at night between La Houguette School and the Observatory along the main road (Rue des Paysans, 100 metres) a torch and high-visibility clothing is strongly recommended. There are no street-lights, and the single pavement, which is on the opposite side of the road, is uneven. It is necessary to cross the road twice. There is a 25 mph speed limit in the area because of the proximity of the school, but traffic is known to go considerably faster than that, especially at night. At the school there is a pedestrian crossing, but care is needed, especially in the dark. There is no pedestrian crossing at the Observatory end of the road.

Rue du Lorier is a narrow lane, and there is no pavement. However, there is only a short stretch (about 20 metres) to walk along it from the main road. There is little traffic on it, and the 25 mph speed limit applies.

Rear Grassed Area
As you walk round to the rear, the outside area is grass. It is fairly even, but not entirely flat and it may be damp from rain or dew, wearing suitable footwear is recommended. There are two red lights outside that illuminate some areas of the site, typically these will be on, but they give limited illumination so take care when moving around all external areas in the dark. It takes approximately 20 minutes for your eyes to fully adapt to the dark, after which you will be able to see more, so avoid using a white light torch and be extra careful until your eyes fully adapt to the darkness. The edging to the grassed area has been left to grow to provide habitat to wildlife and contains brambles and nettles.

There are four outdoor concrete pads to provide a flat surface for additional telescopes. On the large concrete pad in front of the main building there is a raised double power socket (about 10 cm height). When small telescopes are in use outside, this socket will typically be covered by the telescope, otherwise, it will be covered with a yellow upturned bin. The three smaller concrete pads might have telescopes on them, if they do there may be trailing power leads from the timber telescope building. If there are, they will have white plastic chairs in a line over the cables. Do not move the chairs.

When moving around any of the telescopes outside please be careful of any associated cables/leads and follow the instructions of the person operating the telescope. Telescopes are motor driven and slew at speed to observing targets, the operator will advise when this is about to happen and make sure everyone is standing at a safe distance. For younger children we have steps that can be used to allow them to reach the eyepiece, the person operating the telescope will provide instruction and may steady the child with a supporting hand.

Main Building

The main building is used for lectures and there is a single door entry from the outside concrete pad with a very slight sill of about 1 cm height. Typically, there will be either white or red light illumination inside. There are no known hazards. Children should not touch the displays on the walls or items around the room on the horizontal surfaces. Members of the public are not generally permitted in the kitchen area to the rear. If dark outside then take care in exiting the main building, allowing for your eyes to adjust to the darkness. On the right hand side immediately inside the door there is a water and CO2 fire extinguisher.

Timber Telescope Building

To enter the telescope building there are two steps up to a single door, which have non-slip safety treads. There is a single white-painted handrail and on the opposite side is the opened door. It is recommended that the handrail is used. There is a non-slip mat at the entrance and non-slip flooring throughout. Typically, there will be a red light on in the telescope building when observing, this is over the doorway and helps to illuminate the entrance/exit, care must be taken on and around the steps. However, occasionally to achieve maximum darkness for observing the red light may be turned off and extra care moving about is needed.

The telescope is motor driven and will slew at speed to observing targets, the operator will advise when this is about to happen. Do not stand between the telescope and two long walls of the telescope building as the gap can be limited when the telescope moves. Do not stand to the south of the telescope (the far end of the telescope building as viewed from the door) as the operator's view in this direction is limited. Instruction on this will be given by the operator.

The telescopes are situated at height to look over the walls and it may be necessary for children to use steps. The person operating the telescope will provide instruction and may steady the child with a supporting hand. Please also see *Observing Protocols* below.

There is a 40 watt heater attached to the telescope column at floor level, it can get warm, but it is typically out of reach for visitors.

The telescope building may serve as an additional classroom, in which case, there might be white or red lighting.

On the right hand side immediately inside the door there is a CO2 fire extinguisher.

Observing Protocols

It is helpful if those waiting their turn to look through a telescope can queue, and then, once they have had a look, move away from the telescope so that the next person can observe. However, we are happy for people to take their time to ensure that they get a good telescope view. There are no eye hazards from observing objects visible in the night sky. We generally guide viewers to the eyepiece of the telescope. Be careful you do not hit your head on the telescopes when moving forward to view and when moving away afterwards. A small

stepladder is available for use when the telescope eyepiece is in a high position, especially for children who may not be tall enough. The ladder should not be too close or too far, the child should be able to stand upright, without unduly leaning forward or backward, and should not mount higher than the second step, holding onto the rail provided on the ladder. The telescope operator may use a steadying hand to support the child.

Please do not touch the telescopes, as this can cause them to go out of alignment, which takes time to re-establish. Please be attentive to guidance from Astronomy Section members at all times.

Solar Observing

Generally, the same rules above will apply. All our telescopes are fitted with appropriate filters to allow safe solar observation. These filters must not be removed or tampered with, and all instructions given by Astronomy Section members must be followed. Children should be advised of the dangers of looking at the sun directly or through optical instruments without the correct glasses or filters. An additional solar observing risk assessment will be provided prior to a solar observing visit and can be found on our website: astronomy.org.gg.

Please note: all our risk assessments/health and safety procedures may be found on our website: astronomy.org.gg

It is recommended that visitors read these before attending the Observatory.