

## AIR CADET PERSONNEL REGULATIONS

### PERSONNEL INSTRUCTION NO 501

#### TERMS OF ENROLMENT/APPOINTMENT AND CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR AIR TRAINING CORPS CADETS

##### INTRODUCTION

1. This instruction outlines the detailed terms of enrolment/appointment and conditions of membership for Air Training Corps (ATC) cadets and amplifies the information published in AP 1919 (Regulations for the Air Training Corps), Chapter 4, and JSP 814 (Policy and Regulations for MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces), Chapter 5. The ATC is a national uniformed youth organisation sponsored by the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Air Force, with uniform being worn in accordance with current regulations.

##### TERMS OF SERVICE

2. The ATC promotes equal opportunities and cadet membership is open to all young people regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic origin or religion. A person may join the ATC as a cadet at age 13 and up to his or her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. In exceptional circumstances, a cadet over the age of 17 who has resigned from the ATC may apply to re-join; however, reinstatement is subject to the Regional Commandant's approval. ATC cadet service will cease on the cadet's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, for continued service beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday cadets must normally have met the following criteria (but see paragraph 13 below concerning cadets who have not met the all of the pre-requisite criteria):

- a. Passed the Basic Adult Staff Induction Course (BASIC) and obtained a valid enhanced criminal records check in accordance with ACP 4 (Child Protection Policy and Guidelines), Chapter 7.
- b. Achieved the Leading Cadet classification.
- c. Possess a specific skill that adds value to the ATC, such as:
  - (1) **Flying and gliding;** VGS Staff Cadet, AEF Staff Cadet, GS (solo), Flying Scholarship, Pilot Navigation Scholarship, Gliding Instructor.
  - (2) **Shooting;** any training or supervisory qualifications.
  - (3) **Adventure training;** any recognised instructional or supervisory qualifications.
  - (4) **Ground training;** qualifications or skills in first aid, food handling, radio communications, BTEC in Aviation Studies or Public Services, musical instruments, leadership, information technology.
  - (5) **Sport;** qualifications in coaching a specific sport or a Community Sports Leader's qualification.

3. Cadets aged 18 and 19 are known as "Staff Cadets" and wear an epaulette inscribed with "Staff Cadet" and their NCO rank badge, as appropriate.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CADET NCOS AND STAFF CADETS

4. The role of the cadet NCO and staff cadet is encapsulated in the following definition:

“It is a fundamental principle of the ATC that Cadet NCOs and staff cadets should use the knowledge, responsibility and experience they have acquired to train and lead younger cadets and thereby contribute to the discipline and ethos of the squadron. They should also contribute to the organisation and infrastructure of their unit. This contribution should increase with age, experience and ability. Cadets are to be encouraged to attend NCO training and leadership courses to develop their skills. Cadet NCOs and staff cadets are role models for younger cadets and, as such, they must be of good character and be able to set and maintain the high standards which the Corps demands.”

Job specifications for cadet JNCOs and SNCOs are defined in Annex A to ACTO 7. These responsibilities are commensurate with their status as a cadet and do not command specific responsibilities or imply Terms of Reference. Staff cadets should be given as much supervisory and organisational responsibility as their rank, individual ability, experience, qualifications and personal qualities allow. This will develop the staff cadet’s potential, meet their aspirations as young adults and allow staff to assess their potential as future adult staff. However, cadet NCOs or staff cadets are not to be charged with the overall accountability for the conduct of an activity; that is always to rest with a fully appointed Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV).

5. Staff cadets, except when undertaking supervisory duties, should, where possible, be accommodated in alternative accommodation to younger cadets. Where available, this may be in junior ranks accommodation, including transit accommodation.

## CADETS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, DISABILITIES AND/OR CHRONIC CONDITIONS

6. It is the policy of the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO)<sup>1</sup> to accept as cadets those with specific learning difficulties (see ACP 29 (A General Information and Support Guide to Specific Learning Difficulties)), disabilities and chronic conditions, within the bounds of safety to themselves and others. CFAVs are not able to provide special supervision of young people requiring constant care and, therefore, parents/carers will be responsible for providing additional carers if required.

7. Whilst encouraging the maximum participation possible of young people with special needs and chronic conditions in ACO activities, it is recognised that the acceptance of individual cadets must be at Sqn CO’s discretion, depending upon the facilities and staff available in squadrons, as well as an individual applicant’s particular needs or conditions. It is emphasised that the ACO has general legal liabilities under the headings of criminal law, duty of care (to CFAVs, cadets and the public), child protection and health and safety. However, the ACO has no legal liability or obligation to provide a particular level of support for a cadet with a specific learning difficulty, disability and/or chronic condition, other than in a health and safety/general duty of care context.

8. Before accepting such an applicant into a squadron, the CO is to:

- Establish with the applicant’s parents/carers the boundaries of the applicant’s involvement in ACO activities and their own involvement in the cadet’s activities and ensure they understand both. Discussions of this nature with parents/carers need to be conducted sensitively and should ideally be conducted by the Sqn CO supported by a Wing Staff Officer (WSO) (or OC Wing in very difficult or sensitive cases).

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (as amended by the Equality Act 2010).

- Obtain a written report (at the parents'/carers' expense where applicable) on the young person from the applicant's doctor stating clearly the limits to be placed on their activities and any special precautions to be taken.
- Consider whether or not a formal risk assessment is required by the Regional Health and Safety Adviser.
- Ensure that all appropriate persons in the squadron are made fully aware of the circumstances of, and any treatment prescribed for, any cadets with disabilities or chronic conditions, and actions to be taken in an emergency.

9. Before a cadet with specific learning difficulties, disabilities and/or chronic conditions attends any training course or activity away from their squadron, the Sqn CO is to establish that:

- The cadet is capable of meeting the requirements of the course or activity.
- The CFAV in charge of the course or activity is fully aware of the cadet's limitations or circumstances and any treatment prescribed and is happy to accept them.

If the Sqn CO (or subject matter expert) has doubts of the cadet's ability to undertake the course or activity, a medical report is to be obtained (at parents'/carers' expense if appropriate). The Sqn CO's (or subject matter expert's) decision is final.

## CADETS WHO BECOME PREGNANT

10. Health and safety considerations are paramount when dealing with pregnant cadets. Therefore, in the interests of the mother-to-be and/or her unborn child, pregnant cadets will only be permitted to continue attending ACO activities as long as there is no risk to the health of either.

11. When pregnancy becomes known, the cadet must tell her Sqn CO. The Sqn CO will notify the ACO HS&E Adviser and arrange for a risk assessment to be created in accordance with JSP 375, Volume 2, Leaflet 36. These actions will determine if any additional measures are required to protect the pregnant cadet and/or her unborn child during ACO activities. In the interests of all concerned, these important control measures are likely to limit the activities in which a pregnant cadet may participate and must be implemented. A cadet may resume her full cadet membership at the end of her pregnancy, if she wishes; however, if she returns within 6 months or is breastfeeding, a further risk assessment will be required. Clearly, the situation will require to be monitored throughout and any changes of circumstance that may affect the risk assessment must be communicated to the ACO HS&E Adviser.

## PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

12. **Promotion of cadet NCOs.** Sqn COs can promote cadets up to the rank of cadet flight sergeant. For promotion to cadet corporal, a cadet should ideally have attained Leading Cadet classification. For promotion to sergeant a cadet should have at least 3 months experience as a corporal and have attained Senior Cadet classification. These classification attainments may be reduced by one stage by the Sqn CO in exceptional cases such as an urgent need to fill an establishment vacancy or a deserving high quality but slow learning cadet.

13. **Appointment of Staff Cadets.** Six months prior to reaching their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday a cadet may apply through their Sqn CO for an extension of service to their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. In all cases the Sqn CO is to complete Pers Form 40 (Application for an Extension of ATC Cadet Service over 18 Years of Age) and submit it to Wg HQ. The form requires details of how and when the pre-requisite criteria (at paragraph 2 above) have been met. The Sqn CO is to state whether the cadet is recommended for appointment as a staff cadet or not. A WSO is to recommend to the OC Wg

whether or not an extension of service as a staff cadet should be granted. The OC Wg will review the application and approve the appointment as a staff cadet, or not, as appropriate. If a cadet has not met the all of the pre-requisite criteria OC Wg may, at their discretion and on a case by case basis, appoint a cadet as a staff cadet providing the cadet has passed BASIC and obtained an enhanced criminal records check before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If at any stage in the process a previous recommendation is reversed then the reason is to be given in the appropriate 'Comments' section. The Pers Form 40 may be disclosed to the cadet's parents or carers under the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information Act.

a. **Criminal records checks for staff cadets in England and Wales.** Cadets aged 18 and over in England and Wales may continue to attend ACO activities provided that their PersForm 40 has been approved by OC Wg and their completed CRB application has been submitted to DBS (EA(D)S Cheadle Hulme; however, they are not to be permitted unsupervised access to cadets under the age of 18 until their clearance has been confirmed. Cadets who have not completed a CRB application form before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are to be excluded, without prejudice, from all ACO activities until they have applied.

b. **Criminal records checks for staff cadets in Scotland and Northern Ireland.** Because of the differences in the law in Scotland and the sensitivities in Northern Ireland, cadets in Scotland and Northern Ireland Region who have not received an enhanced criminal records check clearance before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday are to be excluded, without prejudice, from all ACO activities until clearance is received.

14. **Appointment of Cadet Warrant Officers (CWO).** The Sqn CO is to initiate recommendations for promotion to the rank of CWO, through Wing HQ to HQ ACO in accordance with ACP 20, PI 503 (*currently ACP 20B, AI 272*). Cadets must be aged 18 years or over and appointments may only be made to fill establishment vacancies. On approval a Certificate of Appointment will be issued by Commandant Air Cadets.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

15. **Duty to report arrest, police/social services investigation, court proceedings or any other child protection concern.** Any cadet who is arrested, issued with a warrant for arrest, is under investigation by the police or social services or who is officially informed that a charge is to be preferred against them, is convicted of a criminal offence or receives a police caution, warning, reprimand or fixed penalty notice, or is the subject of any child protection concern (eg by a professional body, primary employer or educational establishment), is to report the circumstances to their Sqn CO at the earliest opportunity. Reports are to be passed, through the chain of command, to HQ ACO (SO3 Safeguarding) and such action may lead to exclusion of the cadet from ACO activities and ultimately to dismissal for serious misconduct. Exclusion in such circumstances is a neutral act, without prejudice, and is not an administrative nor disciplinary sanction nor an indication of guilt, but ensures that no situation can arise that may cause further concern and allows a period of time where further information may be received and, if appropriate, to allow the statutory authority (typically the police or social services) to carry out their duties.

16. **Acquaintance with orders.** Cadets should acquaint themselves with all orders and instructions issued for their observance (eg the ATC Cadet Code of Conduct at Annex A); they are also to conform to the established customs and practices of the Corps. Once appointed, staff cadets are to adhere to the provisions of ACP 4 (ACO Child Protection Policy and Guidelines).

17. **Discipline.** Maintenance of discipline is the responsibility of all CFAVs and senior cadets, the latter under the immediate supervision of CFAVs.

18. **Administrative action and sanctions/penalties against cadets.** The following administrative action and sanctions/penalties are available to Region, Wing and Sqn management

against cadets who have contravened the ATC Cadet Code of Conduct, or committed a criminal offence, although not necessarily in the order stated. In all cases, Sqn COs, WSOs or OCs Wgs should consider what is the most appropriate and proportionate response to a breach of the Code and take action accordingly. Advice should be sought from HQ ACO (Personnel Casework Team), through the Wg Ex O, where there is doubt regarding the most appropriate and proportionate response:

- Counselling.
- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- NCOs – reduction in rank.
- Exclusion from ACO activities for a set period of time.
- Dismissal for serious misconduct (recommended by OC Wing and approved by the Regional Commandant) – see paragraph 24e below. All recommendations for dismissal are to be staffed by the Wg Ex O to the HQ ACO Personnel Casework Team for specialist advice (and the procurement of legal advice if necessary) before being submitted to the Regional Commandant.

All administrative action/penalties/sanctions are to be fully documented for audit purposes. Further details on administrative action and sanctions/penalties are at Annex B.

19. **Complaints.** Complaints, disagreements and disputes should be resolved informally at the lowest possible level if at all possible. A cadet who thinks him or herself wronged may report the matter direct to the Sqn CO. If a cadet thinks he or she has been wronged by his or her Sqn CO the complaint may be reported to the OC Wg and, if still unhappy with the outcome, to the Regional Commandant. The Regional Commandant is the final arbiter on all grievances raised by cadets. See also ACP 20, PI 502 (*currently ACP 20B AI 271*), for breaches of any aspect of the ACO's Equality and Diversity policy.

20. **Cadet freedom to speak out.** Any child protection concern can be an exception to the normal ACO requirement on other issues to follow the routine chain of command. Every member of the ACO is required by ACP 4 to report any suspicions or evidence of abuse or harm concerning a child whether it is within or outside the ACO and no-one should feel, or be made to feel, uncomfortable, bullied or intimidated by doing so or being coerced into not reporting them. Cadets should feel comfortable and free to report, at any time, any child protection concerns within or outside the ACO to any member of staff and all commanding officers are to endeavour to create a culture to ensure there is some means for cadets to do so. Cadets should know to whom they should report concerns and also what is likely to happen as a result – they must have confidence that they are being listened to. In addition to support within the sqn, contact details for the NSPCC ChildLine (0800-1111) (<http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/default.aspx>) are to be prominently displayed.

21. **Membership of other organisations and cadet forces.** Cadets are permitted to be members of more than one organisation (eg cadet force or University Air Squadron) at the same time, providing the commanding officers of the units are aware, agree and that this is not at the expense of young people on a waiting list. Although Flight Staff Cadets can also serve in a supplementary capacity on a Voluntary Gliding Squadron (VGS) at the same time as being members of an ATC squadron, cadets cannot be members of more than one ATC sqn or CCF contingent at the same time.

22. **Transfer from another cadet force.** Cadets may transfer to the ATC from another cadet force with the agreement of the appropriate Sqn CO. The Sqn CO is to assess the cadet's capabilities, taking into account age, bearing, experience and training in the other cadet force and judge at which stage of training it will be appropriate for the cadet to begin in the ATC. Cadets transferring from the CCF(RAF) should be transferred on Bader and given full credit for passing Part 1 (First Class) and/or Part 2 (Leading Cadet) qualifications. Wg HQ is to be notified of the details so that the requisite classification may be authorised.

23. **Transfer of cadets between air cadet units** A cadet is to be encouraged to transfer to another squadron (or to a CCF(RAF) Section) if there is any change of residence, school or employment or the squadron is disbanded. The cadet is also to be assisted if wishing to transfer for any other good reason. If a cadet is transferred to another unit, consent forms must be transferred to the new unit.

24. **Circumstances in which individuals cease to be cadet members of the ATC.** An individual will cease to be a cadet member of the ATC in any of the following circumstances:

- a. At his or her own request.
- b. On reaching the age of either 18 or 20, depending on whether the application for an extension of service has been granted in the former case, in accordance with paragraph 2 above.
- c. When joining the Armed Forces, or their Reserves or Auxiliaries.
- d. If he or she has not attended a parade for 2 months, unless there are extenuating circumstances, eg exclusion without prejudice.
- e. On being dismissed for serious misconduct. A Sqn CO or Wg Ex O may recommend the dismissal of a cadet for serious misconduct (using Pers Form 41). Recommendations for dismissal in respect of cadets under the age of 18 must include confirmation that the cadet's parents or carers have been informed in writing of the reasons for potential dismissal and given the opportunity to refute any allegations. A cadet aged 18 and over who is recommended for dismissal is to be given the opportunity to respond to the recommendation in writing before submission to the Regional Commandant. On such dismissals, the Record of Service book is to be withdrawn and forwarded to Wg HQ for retention. When a cadet is a member of both an ATC squadron and a VGS, all relevant information is to be shared with both units.

25. **Lord Lieutenant's cadets.** Cadets may be selected as Lord Lieutenant's Cadets under arrangements detailed by the area RFCA and the appropriate Regional Commandant but must be able to complete their term of appointment before reaching the age of 20.

## TRAINING

25. **Ground training.** ATC ground training consists of a wide range of theoretical and practical activities which are to follow the authorised ATC Syllabus of Training laid down by HQ ACO in various ACTOs and is to be carried out in accordance with these orders.

26. **Flying training.** The general regulations governing the provision of flying for ATC cadets and cadets of RAF Sections of the CCF are to be found in ACTOs.

27. **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.** The ATC is an Operating Authority of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Cadets are to be given every encouragement to participate.

28. **Training for staff cadets.** The BASIC is held at Wing level under the standardisation of the Regional Training Officer. This course is designed to introduce staff cadets to the responsibilities of adults and supervisors and includes an element on child protection.

Annexes:

- A. ATC Cadet Code of Conduct.
- B. Guidance on administrative action/sanctions against cadets.

## AIR TRAINING CORPS (ATC) CADET CODE OF CONDUCT

*This Code of Conduct has been developed in conjunction with Air Cadet Organisation (ACO) safeguarding, child protection and complaints policies and procedures. It should be read and used in conjunction with said ACO policies and procedures.*

### DEFINITION

1. For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, an ATC cadet is a person under 20 years of age involved in air cadet activities, whether or not a formally appointed member of the ATC (eg a junior cadet).

### INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF INTENT

2. The ACO is committed to safeguarding all children and young people in its care. The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that all cadets within the ATC are fully committed to making the ACO free from discrimination, violence, bullying, aggression, abusive behaviour and language and observing certain general principles of conduct when involved in air cadet activities. Parents/carers/guardians should note that the ACO does not act *in loco parentis* for cadets under the age of 18 and parental responsibility remains with cadets' parents, guardian or carers in accordance with Section 2 of the Children Act 1989 (England and Wales), Section 106 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Sections 5-7 of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The only exception to this is in the event of a cadet requiring very urgent medical treatment, including any emergency operation, when parents, guardians or carers are unable to physically give consent and they have delegated this responsibility at Section 4 of RAF Form 3822 (Air Training Corps Consent Certificate) or on CC Forms 1, 3 and 4.

3. This Code of Conduct is aimed at all cadets within the ATC, in order to provide a clear understanding of the standard of behaviour expected of them during their involvement with the ATC. It will not only safeguard cadets but also Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) in a position of trust. Parents/carers of cadets under the age of 18 should also be invited to read this Code of Conduct so they are aware of the rules with which their child agrees to abide by when joining the ATC.

### ATC CADET CODE OF CONDUCT

4. Upon becoming a member of the ATC all cadets are committing themselves to following this Code of Conduct and **all cadets are required to:**

- Set an example they would wish others to follow and treat everyone with equal respect and dignity.
- Respect and be sensitive to individuals' beliefs, faiths and religions.
- Respect each others' rights to privacy.
- Not make fun of anyone else because of their colour, race, religion, abilities or disabilities.

- Keep others informed of where they are and what they are doing whilst engaged on ACO activities.
- Attend squadron parade nights at the specified times on a regular basis, unless leave of absence has been previously authorised by the Sqn CO.
- Not leave an air cadet activity without permission from an adult member of staff.
- Abide by all air cadet orders when undergoing air cadet activities.
- Work as part of a team.
- Listen to fellow cadets and adult members of staff.
- Report any concerns they have about the way a fellow cadet is being treated either during an air cadet activity or at home, to an appropriate adult member of staff.
- Show understanding and sensitivity to others.

5. During their time in the ATC, **cadets must never:**

- Bully fellow cadets or adult members of staff.
- Enter into a personal relationship with an adult member of staff.
- Permit or accept abusive or discriminatory behaviour or peer-led activities (eg initiation ceremonies, bullying, taunting or abusive/indecent/obscene text, emails and social networking forum postings).
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact (eg physical, verbal, sexual, including horseplay).
- Allow or encourage other cadets to engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact.
- Use inappropriate, demeaning or foul language towards others, (verbal, in writing, by phone, texting, email or via social networking sites/forums).
- Make sexually suggestive comments (verbal, in writing, by phone, texting, e-mail or via social networking sites/forums).
- Consume alcohol or misuse drugs or other substances when undertaking ACO activities.
- Attend any ACO building, establishment or activity whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances.
- Smoke in public whilst in uniform.
- Undermine or criticise others (verbal, in writing, by phone, text message, e-mail or via social networking sites/forums).
- Put themselves or others in compromising or potentially dangerous situations.
- Promote their own religious or political ideals or beliefs to anyone.

- Let allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse go unreported.
- Trivialise abuse.

6. In addition to the above, **cadets should be made aware of their responsibilities** if they wish to leave squadron premises or an ACO activity whilst it is still ongoing.

- Cadets must inform the Sqn CO or CFAV leader explaining why they wish to leave.
- The Sqn CO or CFAV in charge of the activity should discuss with the cadet their reasons for wanting to leave to see if any issues need to be resolved/addressed.
- If it is agreed that the cadet still wishes to leave the activity, and the cadet is under the age of 18, the Sqn CO or CFAV in charge of the activity should make contact with the parents/carers/guardians of the cadet to make arrangements for their journey home (ie the parent/carer/guardian to collect their child or obtain their permission for their child to make their own way home). Once a cadet has left the squadron premises or activity the ACO has no responsibility for the cadet's welfare, if these provisions have been met.
- The Sqn CO or CFAV in charge of the activity should discuss with the parents/carers/guardians of a cadet under the age of 18 the reasons why their child wanted to leave the squadron premises or activity – to see if any issues need to be resolved/addressed and to discuss when the cadet will next attend the squadron.
- Similarly, if a cadet under the age of 18 wishes to leave the ACO permanently the Sqn CO should contact parents/carers/guardians to discuss the reasons why they wish to leave and whether there is anything that can be done to encourage them to continue in the ACO.
- If the cadet still wishes to leave the ACO permanently the Sqn CO should proceed with the termination of membership documentation.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

7. In addition to the responsibilities of cadets, **it is the responsibility of their parents/carers/guardians** to ensure that the CO of their child's squadron is informed of:

- Any special needs pertaining to their child.
- Any medical condition pertaining to their child by completing the details on the medical declaration section of RAF Form 3822A (Air Training Corps Consent Certificate) or CC Forms 1, 3 and 4, and of any changes arising in the future.
- Any medication their child may be taking – and to ensure that they have a supply if necessary.
- How their child will travel to and from the squadron, ie will they deliver and collect their child from the squadron, or will their child make their own way to and from the squadron?
- Any special care arrangements, ie if parents are separated who has permission to authorise their child's involvement in ACO activities? A court order may have to be produced (if necessary, specialist legal advice may be obtained through HQ ACO (SO2 Personnel)).

## WHAT HAPPENS IF A CADET DISREGARDS THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

8. Should a cadet disregard or contravene the Code of Conduct above, administrative procedures and sanctions/penalties for cadets will be initiated (see Annex B).

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

9. If any cadet or their parents/carers/guardians has a complaint, they have a right to have it considered quickly and effectively, and to have any grievance resolved, if possible, at the earliest opportunity.

10. The following outlines the complaints procedure and how they are handled within the ACO.

- If the complaint is about a matter within a local squadron, the Sqn CO should be contacted. The Sqn CO is responsible for all activities at the squadron and organised by the ACO and complaints should normally be directed at him/her in the first instance.
- If parents/carers/guardians do not wish to discuss the matter with the Sqn CO; or if the CO cannot deal with their concerns; or if the complaint is more serious; or if it concerns general squadron management issues, then the relevant Wing Staff Officer (WSO) or OC Wing should be able to assist. Contact details for local management are available from the Wing Headquarters. Contact details for Wing Headquarters can be found on the ACO internet website: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets>
- If the complaint concerns wider ACO matters than those of the local squadron, parents/carers/guardians should contact Wing Executive Officer.
- The ACO expects everyone involved with the ACO to acknowledge receipt of any formal complaint within 7 working days and to aim to resolve all complaints within 30 working days. However, this may take longer depending on the nature of the complaint. If the timescale needs to be extended, parents/carers/guardians should expect to be kept informed of progress on a regular basis.
- Complainants should understand that all those involved with the running of local squadrons are volunteers who undertake their air cadet roles in their spare time. Consequently, it may take time for them to give parents/carers/guardians a substantive reply to their concern or complaint.
- A record of all complaints made at a squadron will be maintained by the Sqn CO along with the outcome. This record will be subject to audit on an annual basis by Wing inspecting staff.
- If parents/carers/guardians of cadets have concerns about how the original complaint was handled, they should contact the Regional Commandant who is the final arbiter with regard to cadet complaints.

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS**

11. Those wishing to make a complaint or allegation should identify themselves when doing so. Concerns raised anonymously are far less likely to lead to effective consideration of a complaint because they limit the opportunities to check or clarify the information on which the complaint is based.

## **A GUIDE TO COMMANDING OFFICERS ON MANAGING BEHAVIOUR AND MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE AMONG CADETS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. As the uniformed youth service sponsored by the Royal Air Force, the ACO is a disciplined organisation for both cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) and discipline must therefore be maintained because:

- The outward image that is presented by the ACO through such activities as drill and ceremonial is founded upon discipline. The ability to give and accept orders, respect for rank and precedence, smartness of appearance and a willingness to put one's own interests to one side for the benefit of the team are important aspects of this.
- A principal aim of the Air Training Corps is to foster the spirit of adventure and develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship in cadets. As responsible citizens, the prevention of unacceptable/disruptive behaviour and the promotion of good behaviour help achieve this aim.
- Many of the activities of the ACO such as flying, adventure training and shooting require an ordered approach to ensure safety but also in order to get the most out of these activities and enjoy them to the full.
- All adult members of staff have the potential to influence the behaviour and conduct of cadets. This guide is designed to assist them in using their influence positively and effectively.

2. This guide is intended mainly for use at squadron level. Where incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur at an ACO activity which is not squadron led (ie, camp, training course, etc) then the CFAV in charge of the activity or training centre should make a written report to the CO of the cadet's squadron who will deal with the matter in accordance with this guide, seeking further clarification from Wing HQ if necessary. The CFAV in charge of the activity or training centre should not take any formal action against the cadet but may debar him or her from elements of the programme or elect to send the cadet home. If the cadet is sent home then normal travel arrangements should be made and parents/guardians informed in advance.

### **THE PREVENTION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

3. The best way to prevent unacceptable behaviour is to reinforce good behaviour. The emphasis should be on reward and incentive rather than the use of sanctions. Rewards are important and help cadets to see that good behaviour is valued. The most common reward is praise; a simple acknowledgement is a very powerful motivator. CFAVs are not to assume that cadets automatically know how to behave whilst taking part in ACO activities; they will not always be aware of the standards of behaviour cadets display at home, at school or in any other parts of their life. Neither can they be expected to fully understand all of the influences that act upon a child's behaviour or development.

4. It is also important to consider whether disruptive or unacceptable behaviour during an activity is related to the activity itself. Young people who are not fully engaged become bored and distracted very easily and this can lead to a breakdown of discipline. Clearly defined and mutually

understood boundaries can prevent unacceptable behaviour. The boundaries are explained clearly in the ATC Cadet Code of Conduct, which should be issued to cadets and parents/carers/guardians during induction. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that a mutual understanding exists and that cadets feel a sense of ownership. A suggested way of achieving this is set out in Appendix 2 to Annex B.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

5. Where the actions of a cadet are causing concern then the Sqn CO/OIC should always consider inviting the parents or guardians to the sqn for a discussion. This may or may not coincide with administrative/disciplinary sanctions. The Sqn CO/OIC should outline those concerns and try to agree a way ahead.

## **DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

6. It is important that squadron management:

- Explain unacceptable behaviour to cadets clearly and effectively.
- Demonstrate that fair, consistent and proportionate penalties will be applied to instances of unacceptable behaviour.
- Discuss and agree on actions to be taken by cadets, CFAVs and parents/guardians to avoid unacceptable behaviour re-occurring.

7. 'Unacceptable behaviour' can be broadly defined as a breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct. Such breaches can vary in their degree of seriousness and it is important that CFAVs apply common sense and moderation. A mild rebuke may be all that is required. However, contraventions of the Cadet Code of Conduct are never acceptable and should be dealt with firmly.

8. Where incidents of unacceptable behaviour warrant only a mild and/or immediate rebuke this would be considered to be counselling or a verbal warning, but both should be recorded. Where the breach is of sufficient gravity to warrant formal action then it must be reported to the Sqn CO/OIC who should decide on a course of action. Guidance is given in the following tables on whether such breaches are considered minor, moderate or serious and on what actions should be taken. However, rarely are such instances cut and dried and the actions to be taken are subject to local management discretion. If in doubt, the advice of the OC Wg, WSO or Wg Ex O should be sought. All counselling and warnings (whether verbal or written), as well as any penalties imposed, should be recorded for an accountable audit trail.

**Table 1 - Minor Breaches**

Minor breaches of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the Sqn CO. Engage with parent/guardian if the cadet is under 18 years of age. A breach may include: poor behaviour, absence from place of duty, creating a disturbance, minor dishonesty, smoking, use of inappropriate language, etc.

<b>First occurrence</b>	Verbal warning	To be recorded.
<b>Repeated occurrence</b>	Verbal warning	To be recorded. May be combined with the loss of a privilege or not being permitted to take part in a squadron activity.
<b>Consistent repeated occurrences</b>	First written warning	
<b>Further occurrences</b>	Further written warning	For NCOs, consider demotion or exclusion from the squadron for a set period, or both. Inform WSO/OC Wg.

**Table 2 - Moderate Breaches**

Moderate breaches of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the Sqn CO. Engage with parent/guardian if the cadet is under the age of 18. A breach may include leaving the squadron without permission, minor bullying, verbal abuse, brawling (not resulting in injury), lying or dishonesty, disobedience of an order. In the case of repeated occurrences the WSO should be consulted.

<b>First occurrence</b>	Verbal warning	To be recorded. May be combined with the loss of a privilege or not being permitted to take part in a squadron activity.
<b>Repeated occurrence</b>	First written warning Letter to parent/guardian (if under 18)	For NCOs, consider demotion or exclusion from the squadron, or both. Initial exclusion period should be for 2 weeks but may be extended to one month by the CO/OIC depending upon the nature of the breach. Inform WSO/OC Wg/Wg Ex O.
<b>Consistent repeated occurrences</b>	Further written warning Letter to parent/guardian (if under 18)	Consider further exclusion from the sqn for up to 3 months. Consider dismissal in consultation with Wg Ex O and OC Wg.

**Table 3 – Serious Breaches**

A serious breach of the Code of Conduct should be dealt with by the Sqn CO and WSO. Engage with parent/guardian if the cadet is under the age of 18. A breach that would be considered serious might include vindictive and/or sustained bullying, fighting or assault resulting in injury, vandalism, theft, etc (*but see note below*).

*(NB Where it is considered that a criminal offence has been committed then the following does **not** apply. The matter should be reported to the police and the Wg Ex O (for onward reporting action through the Regional Commandant to HQ ACO), the cadet should be excluded, without prejudice, immediately and parents/guardians informed if the cadet is under 18 years of age. No further action is to be taken until confirmation is received that the police investigation is complete. In these circumstances, the HQ ACO Personnel Casework Team must be informed.)*

<b>First occurrence</b>	First written warning Letter to parent/guardian (if under 18)	Consider demotion for NCOs or exclusion from the sqn or both. Exclusion period may be for up to 6 months.  May also consider recommendation for immediate dismissal in consultation with OC Wg and Wg Ex O.
<b>Repeated occurrence(s)</b>	Final unequivocal written warning Letter to parent/guardian (if under 18)	Consider demotion for NCOs or further period of exclusion.  Consider dismissal in consultation with OC Wg and Wg Ex O.

## COUNSELLING AND VERBAL WARNINGS

9. Counselling and verbal warnings should be conducted in private by the Sqn CO and never in front of other cadets, although the cadet should be given the opportunity to have a “friend” present if he or she wishes. There must also be another CFAV present, ideally of the same gender as the cadet. This meeting should not be conducted in an overly-formal manner. Cadets must not be overawed or intimidated by the process and their age and development should be considered. Cadets should be put at ease and the nature of the misdemeanour explained. The cadet should be given every opportunity to explain, apologise or offer mitigating circumstances. Open questions may be used to establish or clarify facts but there should be no interrogation (aggressive questioning), threats, tricks or coercion.

10. Parents/guardians of cadets under the age of 18 should be informed in advance and invited to attend. If this is declined, that fact must be recorded.

## **WRITTEN WARNINGS**

11. Written warnings should:

- State clearly the nature of the misdemeanour or misbehaviour.
- In the case of repeated misbehaviour, refer to previous warnings issued.
- Detail any penalties awarded.
- State the consequences of further misbehaviour.

12. A copy of the written warning should be handed to the cadet in the presence of an observer. The content should be explained so that the cadet fully understands its implications. The cadet is to sign a copy to certify that he or she has received it and this must be retained on file. For cadets under the age of 18, a copy should also be posted or handed to the parents/guardians together with a covering letter if necessary.

13. The number of warnings issued is at the discretion of the Sqn CO or WSO; however, repeated warnings do not work, become ineffectual and their value diminishes. Three written warnings over a 2-year period should normally be the maximum before dismissal is considered. Example texts for written warnings are given at Appendix 1 to Annex B.

## **PENALTIES/SANCTIONS**

14. It is entirely appropriate for breaches of the Code of Conduct to be penalised. The penalty/sanction must always be proportionate to the misdemeanour and may be in the form of exclusion, demotion, loss of privileges, etc. Penalties should always be recorded in the Squadron Administrative Sanction Record (SASR).

15. If a cadet under the age of 18 is under consideration to be dismissed from the ACO, a meeting should be arranged with the cadet and the parents or guardians to inform them of this and the reasons behind it. If they choose not to attend they should be informed of the decision in writing. The decision of the Regional Commandant is final.

16. When a cadet responds positively to disciplinary/administrative action then that should always be acknowledged.

## **SASR**

17. A brief record of all administrative action taken and any penalties or sanctions awarded should be recorded and retained in the SASR for a minimum of 2 years. A suggested layout for the SASR is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Rank, Name &amp; Initials</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
12 Jan 12	Cdt D R Jones	Brawling	First written warning Letter to parents/guardians (if under 18 years of age)
12 Jan 12	Cdt E S Smith	Brawling	First Written Warning Letter to parents/guardians (if under 18 years of age)
15 Mar 12	Cdt A Allen	Late on parade (3 <sup>rd</sup> occurrence)	2 <sup>nd</sup> verbal warning
1 Jun 12	CdtCpl S Saint	Bringing alcohol into sqn. (2 <sup>nd</sup> occurrence)	3 months exclusion 2 <sup>nd</sup> written warning Letter to parents/guardians (if under 18 years of age) Demoted to Cdt
12 Jun 12	CdtSgt P Brown	Serious bullying of Cdt T M Green (2 <sup>nd</sup> occurrence)	Letter to parents/guardians (if under 18 years of age) Dismissed for serious misconduct
4 Jul 12	CWO A Green	Civil conviction for a serious sexual offence	Dismissed for serious misconduct.

18. The SASR is to be examined and signed during visits by the WSO and made available to the inspecting officer during the annual formal inspection.

#### Appendices:

1. Example texts for written warnings.
2. Engaging with cadets on the Code of Conduct.

## EXAMPLE TEXTS FOR WRITTEN WARNINGS

1. Written warnings should be produced on squadron letterhead paper and signed by the Sqn CO. For cadets under the age of 18, the original should be handed or posted to the parents/guardians and a copy retained on file.

2. The following are examples only, as each case may require a different approach; however, a written warning must, at the very least:

- State clearly the nature of the misdemeanour.
- In the case of repeated misbehaviour, refer to previous warnings issued.
- Detail any penalties awarded.
- State the consequences of further misbehaviour.

*Cadet Corporal Marshall*

*On 12 April 2012 you were once again late on parade. This is now a regular occurrence; you have failed to identify a reason for your consistent lateness and you received a verbal warning on 21 March 2012.*

*The Cadet Code of Conduct, requires cadets to regularly attend ATC parade nights at specified times. You are clearly failing to do this. You are therefore warned that, unless you show a significant improvement in your punctuality, consideration will be given to further administrative action, which could result in you being demoted to Cadet.*

*Sqn CO*

*Cadet Harrison (and Cadet Brown, if necessary)*

*On 5 April 2012 you were involved in a brawl with Cadet Brown during a parade night. Fighting during an ACO activity is a breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct, and is not tolerated.*

*Consequently, you are warned that any further breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct will be dealt with firmly and consideration will be given to excluding you from the ATC for a period of time or even for the submission of a case to the Regional Commandant recommending your dismissal from the Air Training Corps. Your behaviour will be closely monitored by the staff for a period of 3 months.*

*Sqn CO*

*Cadet Sergeant Smith*

*On 5 April 2012 you were seen smoking in uniform on the corner of Tomkins Street and Dale Lane. This was on a parade night and during a break.*

*This action amounts to 2 clear breaches of the Cadet Code of Conduct:*

- *Smoking in public whilst in uniform.*
- *Leaving the squadron without permission.*

*To your credit you have admitted the offence and apologised; however, as a Cadet Sergeant I expect you to set a good example to other cadets and you have clearly failed to do that. Consequently, you are warned that your behaviour will be monitored very closely by the staff for the next 3 months and any further breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct will be dealt with firmly and may result in you being excluded from air cadet activities.*

*Sqn CO*

#### *Cadet Flight Sergeant Brown*

*You have previously been warned about your behaviour towards younger cadets, which was construed to be low-level bullying. It has been brought to my attention that you have continued to pick on Cdt Bloggs, calling him names and encouraging others to do the same. You are warned that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Any further breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct will result in further administrative action being taken against you, which could include demotion, exclusion or consideration of a recommendation for dismissal from the Air Training Corps. Your behaviour will be closely monitored by the staff for a period of 3 months.*

*Sqn CO*

#### *Cadet Green*

*You have previously been warned about a suspicion that you brought some alcohol on summer camp. It has now been brought to my attention that you were seen with alcohol during the recent adventurous activity where you stayed overnight. This is a serious breach of the Cadet Code of Conduct and will result in you being excluded from air cadet activities for a period of 1 month. You are also warned that such behaviour will not be tolerated and any further breach will be dealt with by further administrative action, which may result in a recommendation being made to the Regional Commandant for your dismissal for serious misconduct. Your behaviour will be monitored very closely by the staff for a period of 3 months.*

*Sqn CO*

## **ENGAGING WITH CADETS ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. The Cadet Code of Conduct, clearly defines the standard of behaviour expected of young people during their involvement with the ATC.
2. It is important that cadets and CFAVs fully understand the Code and the reasons for it, ie to establish a mutual understanding of what behaviour is acceptable and what is not tolerated. The following is a suggested method of achieving that:
  - Set aside one session a year for this task.
  - Gather all of the cadets and staff together.
  - Prepare a board or flipchart on which to record suggestions.
  - Ask cadets to think about behaviours that they feel are unacceptable within the squadron and then feed these thoughts back to the group. Encourage cadets to mention any examples of behaviour that made their time at the unit less enjoyable. Record all of these ideas on the board. (If you have sufficiently competent and mature senior cadets you might consider letting them take the lead).
  - With each example of unacceptable behaviour, discuss why it is unacceptable - is it dangerous, is it hurtful or upsetting to others, does it disrupt training, does it bring the squadron or the Corps into disrepute, might it result in cadets leaving the squadron? Allow an open discussion with questions and criticisms.
  - Compare the list with those set out the Cadet Code of Conduct, and discuss anything that was not included in the cadets' list. Ask the cadets why these items might be included.
  - You might discuss the particular requirements of a disciplined, uniformed, youth organisation like the Air Training Corps and ask the cadets to explain why discipline is particularly important in such an organisation.
  - Talk about teamwork and how disruptive behaviour damages not only themselves but the team that they should be proud to be a part of.
  - Ask the cadets how breaches of the code of conduct should be dealt with and talk through some of the penalties that might be awarded. Ask the cadets' views on these and the possible effects.
  - Ensure that all cadets have copies of the code of conduct.
3. By effectively engaging with cadets and involving them in this activity, you are gaining 'buy in' and agreement on clearly defined boundaries and expectations. The intended outcome should be that the cadets themselves are investing in the high standards of the Air Training Corps.

**APPLICATION FOR AN EXTENSION OF ATC CADET SERVICE  
BEYOND 18 YEARS OF AGE**

**1. Cadet details and achievements.**

<b>Surname</b>		<b>Initials</b>	
<b>Cadet Rank &amp; Bader Ref N°</b>		<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Sqn N° &amp; Name</b>		<b>Date Enrolled</b>	
<b>Requirements</b>		<b>Details</b>	
<b>Classification achieved (minimum Leading Cadet) and date</b>			
<b>Passed BASIC and date achieved:</b>			
<b>Enhanced CRB/Disclosure Scotland/Access NI check confirmed and date of clearance:</b>			
<b>Specific skills that add value to the ACO and training/supervisory qualifications achieved</b> <i>(in accordance with PI 501, paragraph 2c):</i>			

**2. Squadron Commander's recommendation.**

<b>Date of Submission</b>		<b>Recommended for Staff Cadet</b>	<b>Yes - No</b>
<b>Rank, Initials, Name</b>		<b>Signature</b>	

**3. Wing Staff Officer's recommendation.**

<b>Date of Signature</b>		<b>Staff Cadet Service Recommended</b>	<b>Yes - No</b>
<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Rank, Initials, Name</b>		<b>Signature</b>	

**4. OC Wing's Approval.**

<b>Date of Signature</b>		<b>Staff Cadet Service Approved</b>	<b>Yes - No</b>
<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Rank, Initials, Name</b>		<b>Signature</b>	

**DECLARATION ON APPOINTMENT AS A STAFF CADET**

*(to be retained by Wing HQ)*

As an adult cadet in the ACO your normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children ('regulated activity' in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, the Exclusions and Exceptions (Scotland) Order 2003, the Police Act 1997, the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007), the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. You are therefore required to sign the following declaration:

- a. I hereby declare that I have not been disqualified from working with children or subject to a Disqualification Order within the meaning of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.
- b. I understand that this appointment is conditional upon the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced criminal records check. I also give my consent for the ACO to make appropriate enquiries to any other relevant authority.
- c. I agree to inform my Sqn CO if a criminal charge is to be preferred against me or if I am convicted of any criminal offence (excluding minor road traffic offences), become the subject of a police, social services, professional body or educational establishment child protection related investigation after I am appointed. I understand that failure to do so may lead to my immediate exclusion from ACO activities and/or dismissal in accordance with current ACO regulations.
- d. I agree to abide by the provisions of Air Cadet Publication (ACP) 4 'Child Protection Policy and Guidelines' and I understand that personal relationships between cadets of any age and adult members of staff are strictly forbidden.
- e. I certify that the information contained in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I realise that false information or wilful omissions may lead to my immediate dismissal from the ACO.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROTECT-STAFF**  
*(when complete)*

PERS FORM 41

**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DISMISSAL OF A CADET FROM THE  
AIR TRAINING CORPS**

<b>Forename &amp; Surname:</b>			
<b>Cadet rank:</b>		<b>Squadron/Wing:</b>	
<b>Brief details of misconduct (to be completed by the Sqn CO or Wg Ex O)</b> <i>(attach supplementary information if necessary):</i>			
<i>When this section has been completed, the form is to be sent to the cadet (or cadet's parents/guardians, if under 18 years of age) to facilitate a response within 10 working days. Any response is to be made available to the chain of command.</i>			

<b>Comments and recommendation of Sqn CO or Wg Ex O:</b> <i>(this is to include confirmation that the cadet (or cadet's parents/guardians, if under 18 years of age) have been informed in writing of the reasons for the recommendation for dismissal. Any written rebuttal of the allegations is to be attached to this recommendation).</i>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Rank &amp; Name:</b>
<b>Unit:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Recommendation of OC Wing:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Rank &amp; Name:</b>
<b>Wing:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**PROTECT-STAFF**  
*(when complete)*

PERS FORM 41

<b>Comments/Decision of Regional Commandant:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Rank &amp; Name:</b>
<b>Region:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Post decision action:</b>
<b>Region HQ:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HQ ACO (SO3 Safeguarding) and Wg Ex O to be informed of Rgnl Comdt's decision</li><li>• Letter to be sent to cadet (or parents/guardian, if under the age of 18) informing them of Rgnl Comdt's decision (may be delegated to Wg Ex O)</li></ul>
<b>Wing HQ:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sqn CO to be informed (action on Bader, etc, if applicable)</li><li>• Confirmation obtained from Sqn CO that RAF Form 3822, uniform, etc, has been returned (if applicable)</li></ul>