

## 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 TG Forms 21, 22 and 23.

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 TG Forms 21, 22 and 23, 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 Air Cadets (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.