

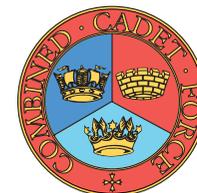
THE AIR CADET ORGANISATION

The success of a modern and progressive ACO must continue to be founded on a binding ethos underpinned by the Core Values of **Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence**. The ethos of the Corps is sustained by all personnel doing their duty with an implacable will to succeed. In accepting their responsibilities all volunteers must be confident that in return the ACO will endeavour to support them in achieving the aims of the Corps.

Teamwork, success and effective leadership flourish in an environment of mutual trust and respect. In this context, we all have a responsibility to our colleagues, be they subordinates or superiors, to do our best to uphold our ethos and embrace the Core Values of **Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence** set out in this booklet. Behaviour or conduct which undermines trust, creates division, or which draws into question the good name of the ACO, damages our ability to meet our aims and objectives. As ACO personnel, we take pride in the traditions of our Corps and we should do all we can to sustain the values which characterise ACO life which, in some respects, are more demanding than those found elsewhere. This is a reflection of our unique role in helping to prepare the young people of the country for taking and accepting their place in society and, in doing so, portrays the training and development they have received whilst serving in the ACO.

air cadet publication *ACP 1*

Ethos, Core Values and Standards in the Air Cadet Organisation



THE ETHOS OF THE AIR CADET ORGANISATION

“The Ethos of the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO) is the distinctive character, spirit and attitude of the Corps which together inspire people to pursue the spirit of adventure while providing a framework upon which to build sound moral principles and develop the desire for achievement and self-improvement and thereby provide example and leadership for the young people of the country”

THE CORE VALUES OF THE AIR CADET ORGANISATION

- ◆ **Respect:** Self and Mutual Respect
- ◆ **Integrity:** Integrity Always.
- ◆ **Service:** Service Before Self.
- ◆ **Excellence:** Striving for Excellence

Key qualities include:

Self-Discipline and Self-Control. Professionals should not indulge themselves in self-pity, discouragement, defeatism or uncontrolled emotion. They have a fundamental moral obligation to the individuals they lead or support to instil a tone of confidence and optimism.

Personal Excellence. Every member of the ACO must strive to achieve and maintain the highest professional and personal standards, thereby enhancing both the competence and cohesion of the Corps.

Excellence in the use of Resources. The resources available to the ACO, both human and material, are limited. All volunteer personnel have an obligation to ensure that all of our equipment and property is put to the most efficient use.

Human resources excellence ensures we train, sustain and retain those who can do the best job for the ACO.

LEADERSHIP

Though not a core value itself, of all the enduring characteristics of the ACO, leadership is at the heart. What sets a good organisation apart from an ineffective one is its ethos and in achieving this, as in all else, leadership is the key. Good leadership inspires, underpins and enables all other qualities, values and capabilities of the Corps. It can transcend limited resources and overcome the greatest of difficulties. It is not solely the preserve of rank: every member of the ACO has the capacity for leadership. It is an innate quality, honed and developed by training, experience and hard work. The best leadership is leadership by example:

Albert Einstein - *“Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only way”*

The responsibility of leaders is to elicit, by example and direction, all the values and qualities possessed by their subordinates, so as to achieve the aims of the ACO. Leaders must develop the qualities of respect, integrity, service and excellence in themselves by practice and study which ultimately will lead to these becoming reinforced through experience. A leader must instil in commanders a confidence in equipment and administrative procedures, and foster mutual trust, respect and understanding. A leader must personally sustain morale and motivation, must know his colleagues and cadets and in turn they must know him or her. A leader must possess special qualities of willpower, intelligence, imagination, humanity, and decisiveness and, above all, the ability to inspire.

his or her own interests to those of the ACO. It imposes limitations on individual freedom, and requires a degree of self sacrifice.

For those in authority, it requires them to discharge in full their responsibilities and their duty of care of subordinates and, more importantly, cadets.

This two-way obligation forms a covenant between the ACO and its personnel. Both share a common bond of identity, loyalty and responsibility for each other that is unwritten and unbreakable. Men and women volunteering for service with the ACO accept that, by putting the needs of the Corps before their own, they will forego some expectations of enjoying their own free time. In return the ACO shows its commitment to those who serve within the Corps by meeting, to the greatest extent possible, their personal aspirations and caring for their welfare wherever possible.

Pride. Pride is a justifiable confidence in ourselves and our Corps based on success, attitudes to life and individual team spirit. We must be able to compare ourselves favourably with any other Youth Service confident in our own expertise and excellence and in the knowledge that we are the best in providing a worthwhile environment for the development of our cadets. We must show a willing and selfless desire to serve the ACO, knowing that the quality of Corps personnel will go far towards winning the day.

Teamwork. Teamwork is essential to the achievement of the mission of the Corps in sustaining a vibrant and effective ACO in an ever changing society. It is about working together in harmony with each member of our Corps and with the other Youth Services. Most importantly, teamwork is about putting the needs of others before our own whenever called for.

Excellence - Striving for Excellence. By striving for excellence we ensure a sustained desire for continuous improvement and innovation which will ensure that the ACO remains second to none in providing a challenging and demanding environment, one in which our cadets can mature and develop into well rounded individuals protected by our Duty of Care. The ACO fosters team spirit founded on good leadership, commitment and self-discipline. We are all professionals in one way or another, but professionalism is more than the skills we develop through training and during our involvement with the Corps. It is about the way in which tasks are undertaken, it is about excellence and it is about taking responsibility and ensuring that a job is well done no matter how difficult the circumstances.

FOREWORD - by the Commandant Air Cadets

As Commandant, I have the honour and responsibility of leading the ACO, which contributes to the provision of aviation and other challenging activities enabling it to attract and retain membership of this country's young people. As the Uniformed Youth Service parented by the Royal Air Force the aims of the ACO are laid down in its Charters. It seeks to provide an environment in which young people are encouraged to take a practical interest in aviation and the Royal Air Force. The ACO aims to provide training which will be useful both in Service and civilian life and to foster the spirit of adventure which is aimed at developing good qualities of citizenship and leadership.

As one of the nation's Uniformed Youth Services the ACO has a proud tradition and a reputation for excellence, second to none. In turn, you, as a member of the ACO, are asked to make a level of personal commitment to the Corps that is not asked of those involved in other walks of life.

To have the will and confidence to serve the ACO you must have complete trust in your colleagues and they must have total confidence in you. You must respect and properly recognise the value of men, women and cadets, at all ranks, who serve in, or who support the ACO. We must all share confidence in the training effectiveness of the ACO and above all sustain integrity as individuals and as a Uniformed Youth Service. This booklet sets out the Core Values and Standards of the ACO which should govern our involvement with the Corps and our approach to other members of society. These values and standards have been developed to underpin our ethos. They form the basis of a covenant between the ACO and its personnel rather than a set of commandments.

While these values and standards are the foundation of mutual trust and respect within the ACO they are also central to our ability to work together with other Uniformed Youth Services, the Regular Services and with everyone else who supports us in our endeavours.

Please read this booklet carefully. If in doubt, always remember that your values and behaviour reflect not only your own personal approach to life but also how our organisation is seen by others.



Air Commodore J P Chitty

THE ETHOS, CORE VALUES AND STANDARDS OF THE AIR TRAINING CORPS

Introduction

The ACO exists to carry out the aims of the Corps and it is these functions which distinguish us from all other Youth Services. To meet the many challenges that we face we have to work closely together and have confidence and trust in each other. The ACO needs people who will respond to a demanding challenge, who aspire to the required standards of excellence, who share a sense of duty and commitment and who understand our core values. We want men and women who are proud to serve the youth of the country and whose personal qualities reflect the values required by the ACO.

The success of the ACO in any endeavour is dependent upon the willingness of its uniformed and civilian cadres to wholeheartedly support the Corps and its aims. This moral component depends upon the character of the men and women involved, effective leadership, a shared set of core values and the commitment that arises from a strong and binding desire to mould the ambitions and desires of the next generation.

Performance of Duty

The success and good name of the ACO depends very heavily upon the conduct of each and every adult member of staff. There are 2 key aspects: the correct professional performance of all duties and the personal conduct of individuals both on and off duty. When fulfilling their duties, all RAFVR(T) officers, Adult SNCOs/Adult Warrant Officers (AWO) and Civilian Instructors (CI) should adhere to and set the highest professional standards.

They should meet their obligations as commissioned officers and members of the adult staff and provide a sound example to cadets and ensure that all ACO training and activities are efficiently and safely delivered. Much of the training provided by the ACO is designed to challenge cadets and to develop their natural instinct for adventure. However, ACO adult staff must continually bear in mind that cadet safety in all its aspects is always paramount. It is therefore vital that members of staff are alert to, and exercise with vigilance, their legal Duty of Care responsibilities for cadets in their charge. It is incumbent on all officers and members of the adult staff to ensure that the highest standards of supervision are met and that

Courage, both physical and moral, forms the bedrock upon which success depends.

Honesty. Honesty is inherent in the ACO and our word must be our bond. All forms of deceit, dishonesty or breaches of trust or confidence constitute a lack of integrity, and therefore call into question whether an individual can be relied upon. Such activity covers a wide spectrum, and includes the perpetration of any criminal offence or any behaviour which raises doubts about an individual's character. For example, if an individual is known to be selfish or dishonest, trust between colleagues will be damaged and tensions created within the team that will eventually reduce its effectiveness to deliver the training programme.

Responsibility. Being accountable for one's actions and decisions, a truly responsible person acknowledges his or her duty and acts accordingly. Equally, responsibility demands that those who are in positions of authority, at whatever level, are fair and consistent at all times. Only then will they earn the respect and loyalty that are essential to good leadership.

Justice. A person of integrity practises just behaviour and treatment. Those who do similar things must get similar rewards or similar punishments.

Service - Service before Self. Service is an act of assistance. It is about professional duties taking precedence over personal requirements and interests and a willingness to serve other people before ourselves. It is a move away from the self-centred attitude often prevalent in our consumer society. Service incorporates the values of loyalty, commitment, pride and teamwork.

Loyalty. From the moment we are commissioned or appointed we are each committed to a loyalty to uphold and preserve the values of the Corps. Those who are placed in positions of authority must be loyal to their subordinates, representing their interests faithfully, dealing with complaints thoroughly, and developing their abilities through progressive training. Subordinates must be loyal to their leaders, their team and their duty. Such loyalty is expected, but it must also be earned through commitment, self-sacrifice, courage, excellence and integrity.

Commitment. Commitment works in two ways. For the individual it means a wholehearted dedication to serve, when possible, wherever and whenever they are required, and what ever the discomfort and to do their best at all times. This commitment is reflected in the award of a commission or appointment in the ACO and in which the individual agrees to subordinate

THE CORE VALUES OF THE AIR CADET ORGANISATION

The are four ACO Core Values:
Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence.

Respect - Self and Mutual Respect

A person should never be judged, nor unfairly discriminated against, on the basis of his or her attributes which place him or her in a particular racial, ethnic, religious, economic, gender-based or disabled category.

Clearly this principle is the foundation of the ACO's Equality and Diversity Policy. We must all do our utmost to promote respect for the law, and for the traditions and customs of our organisation. There are 2 forms of respect:

Self-Respect. To have a proper sense of one's own dignity and integrity. To have self-respect is to value oneself as a human being; as such the concept underpins our attitudes to sexual behaviour, drugs and alcohol. People with self-respect do not behave in ways that would bring discredit upon themselves, the ACO or the RAF. They have high standards of social conduct.

Mutual Respect. Respect for others travels up and down the chain of command, as well as sideways among peers. Genuine respect involves viewing another person as an individual of fundamental worth regardless of their race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background and it extends to the equal treatment of all human beings in all matters. The responsibility of all ACO personnel is to act properly under the law and maintain the highest standards of decency, compassion, respect for others and a sense of justice at all times and to all people, even under the most arduous of conditions.

Integrity. Integrity is the conviction to do what is right even when no one is looking. It is the basis for trust. Integrity is vital in establishing mutual trust and confidence between individuals who may face hardship and challenge and is based on several other moral principles.

Courage. Integrity requires moral courage; that is the courage to do what an individual believes to be right, even though it may be unpopular and the personal cost may be high. Courage to refuse to compromise personal values in the face of opposition, and to sustain the highest standards of decency and behaviour, will earn the respect of others and will build trust.

all laid down safety requirements and procedures are maintained without fail. Officers, in particular, must continually monitor training activities to confirm that risks are sensibly managed and, if there is ever any doubt, they are to err on the side of caution. In discharging their legal Duty of Care all adult staff must take reasonable steps to avoid acts of omission which they could be expected to foresee and which might be likely to harm those in their care or others involved.

A broad variety of personal conduct and behaviour may be regarded as acceptable in differing parts of a wider society. However, commissioned and adult service brings with it an obligation for all members of staff, both on and off duty, to set and live by the highest standards of social and moral conduct. Officers and Adult SNCOs/AWOs frequently wear uniform in public and, as members of their local communities, even when not in uniform, are usually known to be commissioned or hold Adult SNCO or AWO rank. Their social and moral conduct is therefore judged by the public in the context of their uniformed roles.

Furthermore, RAFVR(T) officers have the particular, additional, responsibility of being leaders, teachers and protectors of the young people in their charge.

Their standard of conduct and the example they set are therefore all the more important. RAFVR(T) officers also have more frequent and widespread contact with the public than do regular officers and they must always be aware that they play a very significant role in determining how society judges Royal Air Force officers as a whole. Thus RAFVR(T) officers have the same special and demanding obligations as any regular officer with regard to their standards of behaviour and personal conduct.

No-one is immune from the pressures and temptations which arise in everyday human relationships but any misconduct, whether in sexual matters or in general social behaviour, is a manifest failure to meet the standards required of those who hold a Queen's Commission. If such misconduct suggests that an officer is unable to fulfil his or her obligations to their commissioned status, or to the cadets in their charge, their commission may be terminated even though no breach of military or civil law has been committed. Any social misconduct, including inappropriate behaviour or sexual relationships, on the part of a RAFVR(T) officer, or other member of adult staff, is unacceptable, particularly so if occurring between adult staff and cadets, and would be regarded as extremely serious.

Officers must also resist committing what they may regard as minor misdemeanours where they are tempted to believe that the ends justify the means.

All adult staff are required to conduct themselves with integrity and should they find themselves in an actual or potential situation that could cause embarrassment to others or to the ACO, they must report the fact immediately to their superior officer.

Wing, Squadron and Unit Commanders have the added responsibility of supervising their adult staff and making them aware of any failings that need to be corrected. Where their advice is ignored or serious misconduct or indiscipline has occurred, they must immediately give an appropriate warning in accordance with ACO rules and regulations contained in ACP 20B and AP 1919 or, if necessary, order suspension from duty after consultation with higher authority. Reporting action must then be carried out without delay.

Discipline - Handling of Complaints

One of the most difficult decisions which can face a member of the adult staff is the action to take when confronted with a serious complaint from a cadet. There are 3 categories of complaint which cause most problems. The first is a complaint by a cadet against an adult member of staff. Complaints in this category can range from allegations of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment to serious sexual assault. The second category concerns complaints by cadets against adults unconnected with the Corps. The final type of complaint is that of one cadet making allegations against another.

It is difficult to issue guidelines to cover every situation that may confront adult staff at grass roots level. The ACO relies on the judgement and common sense of the adult individual on the spot, who knows the people involved, to act appropriately and in accordance with the law where relevant.

It is important that when a complaint is made it is dealt with as expeditiously as possible, more especially when the complaint is made against an adult member of staff.

In order to be aware of the complaints procedure all adult staff must read and digest Air Cadet Publication (ACP) 20B, Air Cadet Administrative Instruction (ACAI) No. 211 which gives comprehensive information and guidance on how to handle the 3 most common types of complaint made by cadets in the ACO.

Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable

All organisations involved with caring for young people should, through Principles of Good Practice, have Codes of Conduct to protect against sexual activity occurring within relationships of trust. ACP 20B, ACAI No. 214 outlines the Principles of Good Practice and through its Code of Conduct amplifies who is protected and how. It must be clearly understood that every adult supervisor in the ACO has a personal responsibility for the safety and welfare of cadets. This applies not only to cadets under their immediate command, but generally. The safety and welfare of cadets overrides any other consideration. Once again, the guidance notes are not exhaustive but all adult staff are encouraged to study the aforementioned AI which will assist in ascertaining the correct action to take in individual cases.

The need to maintain acceptable values and standards across the ACO presents a greater challenge now than was the case in the past. The Corps recruits from a society in which there is less deference to authority and a greater awareness of individual rights than in the past. It is also a less cohesive society than before, one in which traditional, shared values are now less effectively transmitted, and concepts such as honour and loyalty are less well understood. For many, the principle that rights and responsibilities are opposite sides of the same coin simply does not exist.

The ACO cannot remain immune from such changes in society, for they are inevitably reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of those who enter into service with the Corps. Its start point should be to reflect the values of the society it serves, varying from these only where it is necessary to do so by virtue of its function and responsibility: namely, conducting training on behalf of the Corps during which its uniformed members will have the responsibility and lawful right to command and control any given situation. It is therefore the moral requirement that leads the ACO to place particular emphasis on the values and standards that are laid down in this booklet. The ACO must be able to explain why those values and standards are sometimes more demanding of the individual than the norm; and why such demands are necessary. It is therefore essential that all new staff and cadets and, indeed, those who are already serving, fully understand and sustain the values and standards set out below. It is important also that the other Youth Services, the Regular Services and also those other non-Service personnel and agencies with whom we deal, are aware of our ethos and our standards.