



VCR7

VOLUNTEER CADET CORPS REGULATION 7

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1. This document provides all the key information CFAVs in the VCC need to protect cadets from all forms of abuse and to help build a safer environment for both cadets and CFAVs. The VCC will comply with all additional safeguarding policies directed by COMCORE and MoD.

1.1.2. No document, however comprehensive, can cover all the situations in which a CFAV may be required to take action to prevent or respond to child abuse but those who follow the principles and guidelines herein can be confident that they are properly discharging the most important aspect of the VCC's duty of care towards its cadets. Knowledge of this document will give CFAVs the information they need to properly discharge their Child Protection (sometimes called Safeguarding) responsibilities in accordance with the Children Act 1989 (England and Wales), the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (and other appropriate legislation that may be enacted from time to time).

1.1.3. COs of each VCC unit are to ensure that all their CFAVs read this document as well as VCR 9 Codes of Conduct. This document, although directed at CFAVs, may and should be used, along with the Codes of Conduct, to show anybody who might be interested how the VCC discharges its duty of care towards its cadets.

1.1.4. CFAVs may wish to suggest corrections or improvements to this document. There should be no hesitation in submitting suggestions and constructive proposals via the chain of command. It is critically important that the VCC implements and continues appropriate and effective Child Protection procedures.

1.1.5 Refer to Annex A for the VCC Safeguarding Policy Statement.

1.2 Training

1.2.1. All CFAVs have a part to play in the implementation of the VCC's Child Protection policies and procedures, and need to be familiar with this document. All adult volunteers are to conduct recognised safeguarding training at least annually as directed by HQVCC. All new volunteers are to conduct this training within 3 months. Training is to be recorded on Westminster, COs are to assure this iaw COMCORE's safeguarding policy.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1. For the purposes of this Regulation:

- a. A child is anyone less than 18 years old.
- b. A cadet is a child officially involved in VCC activities, whether or not a formal member of the organisation.
- c. The term 'CFAV' used herein shall be deemed to include all uniformed and non-uniformed cadet force adult volunteers (sometimes known as staff) of the Cadet Corps plus those relevant members of HM Forces (including members of Management Boards), irrespective of rank and whether permanently or temporarily attached to the VCC for specific activities.
- d. The term 'parent' also includes those adults with official loco parentis responsibilities (eg: legal; guardians).

CHAPTER 2

RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1. Child abuse is a term used to describe when someone causes some form of harm to a person under the age of 18 years. The abuser is usually someone more powerful than the child. Often it is an adult but it can be another child. Abuse happens when someone either deliberately inflicts harm on a child or does nothing to prevent a child being harmed.

2.2 Forms of Abuse

2.2.1. Some forms of Child Abuse are:

- a. **Physical.** This can involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or drowning.
- b. **Emotional.** This is the ongoing ill treatment of children that affects their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate.
- c. **Sexual.** This is forcing or enticing a child to take part in any form of sexual activity. It may involve inappropriate touching, sexual assault, showing pornographic material, exchange of sexually explicit or inappropriate messages, or encouraging sexual behaviour.
- d. **Neglect.** This is when children experience serious impairment of their health or development because their physical and/or psychological needs are persistently not being met. This may be due to inadequate food, warmth, shelter, clothing, emotional care or medical treatment. Neglect also includes failing to protect a child from a physical danger such as leaving a young child "home alone".
- e. **Bullying.** Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully is often another child. Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, for example being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

2.2.2. All child abuse is emotionally abusive and often more than one type of abuse is experienced at any one time.

CHAPTER 3

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

3.1 Responsibilities for CFAVs

3.1.1. Safeguarding the welfare of children and protecting them from harm is every adult's responsibility. Most child abuse can be prevented. Children will see CFAVs as people they can trust and from whom they can seek help. CFAVs must do something if:

- a. A child tells them, or shows signs that, he or she is being abused in any way.
- b. They have reason to believe anyone is abusing a child.
- c. Someone tells them that a child is being abused.
- d. They become aware that someone who has contact with and access to children has offended against them or poses a risk to them.

3.2 Access to Cadets

3.2.1. For all VCC activities only DBS cleared CFAVs are to be allowed unsupervised access to cadets except on a most irregular and exceptional basis (eg: driving a cadet to hospital in an emergency). It is the responsibility of each CO to ensure:

- a. All people entered as CFAVs have been vetted in accordance with legal requirements and/or best practice.
- b. Only CFAVs are permitted to have unsupervised access to their cadets during VCC activities. For example, when cadets visit a third party activities centre they should be escorted and be under the overall supervision of an adequate number of VCC CFAVs.

3.3 Speaking Out

3.3.1. **CFAV Duty to Speak Out.** Child protection concerns are an exception to the VCC requirement on other occasions to stick strictly to the chain of command. No CFAV should feel bullied or intimidated into not reporting them. CFAVs should normally, where time and circumstances allow, use the chain at paragraph 3.5. However, those who believe that their genuine concerns reported through the VCC chain are not being properly dealt with must take those concerns directly to higher levels of the chain, or to another appropriate agency such as the Police, Social Services or NSPCC.

3.3.2. **Cadet Freedom to Speak Out.** Cadets should feel free to report, at any time, any child care concerns within the VCC to any CFAV, and all COs should ensure there is some means for cadets to do so. For cadets who wish to report their concerns outside the VCC, contact details for a Child Helpline (either one of the national organisations shown at paragraph 9, or a local organisation) are to be prominently displayed.

3.4 Specific Child Protection Responsibilities

3.4.1. The main burden of child protection within the VCC falls on those in direct contact with cadets. To promote and maintain the highest standards of child protection within the VCC, COs hold additional specific responsibilities to:

- a. Disseminate and implement the child protection procedures promulgated within the VCC.

- b. Provide a point of contact to all CFAVs, cadets, and parents/guardians for any child protection issues. Where COs have CFAVs with appropriate skills and/or experience they may wish to delegate the point of contact role, but must ensure that everybody is aware who holds it, and to whom any suspicions or concerns should be reported.
- c. Handle and control all information received concerning child protection issues, and ensure information is assessed promptly and appropriate action is taken.
- d. Make themselves familiar with the organisation of the local child protection arrangements provided by the Police and Social Services and with the procedures for contacting them both routinely and in an emergency.
- e. Ensure that the procedures for contacting the local Police/Social Services are widely promulgated and easily available.

3.5 Support and Advice

3.5.1. The VCC will offer support and advice on child protection issues through the chain of command to COs. This chain should also be used for raising general child protection concerns and issues upwards, through the 2IC/XO, CO and then the CO of each unit's respective parent establishment (COPE). It is important that COPEs are informed of any significant Child Protection issue that may attract external or media interest so that the best interests of those involved can be managed properly.

3.5.2. Where CFAVs with suitable specialist child protection skills and experience are available and are volunteers, COs may include them in their chains of command and will ensure that their positions and the procedure of how to contact them are promulgated.

3.5.3. Child protection issues can, however, be complex and distressing and both adults and, especially, cadets may wish to seek help from specialist services outside the VCC.

3.5.4. In addition to any local services that are listed in the local public directories, the two major national help lines are:

- a. **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline.** Open 24hrs on telephone 0808 800 500. This is a helpline for anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse, including children themselves. Provides counselling, information and advice, and usually staffed by social work counsellors.
- b. **Childline.** Open 24hrs on telephone 0800 1111. A helpline for children and young people in danger and/or distress.

3.6 Good Practice

3.6.1. Good practice will help to protect cadets from abuse and CFAVs from false allegations. CFAVs should always conduct themselves in accordance with VCC Regulations and relevant local Instructions, and follow these guidelines together with the Code of Conduct:

- a. **Do** treat everyone with respect and provide an example you wish others to follow.
- b. **Do** plan activities to ensure more than one person is present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others. If you must be alone with a cadet, ensure that someone else knows why it is happening, what the purpose of the activity is and how long it is expected to take.
- c. **Do** respect a cadet's right to personal privacy.
- d. **Do** provide access for cadets to talk to others about any concerns they may have.

- e. **Do** encourage cadets and CFAVs to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- f. **Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned.
- g. **Do** act promptly on any allegation, suspicion or concern made by a cadet regarding abuse, including those made against CFAVs.
- h. **Do** respect and be sensitive to the individual beliefs, faiths and religions of cadets.
- i. **Do** exercise judgement and common sense.
- j. **Do NOT** spend time alone with cadets away from others.
- k. **Do NOT** take a cadet alone in any form of transport without parental consent, other than in circumstances of extreme emergency or where circumstances arising could place the cadet in danger.
- l. **Do NOT** take cadets to your home.
- m. **Do NOT** permit abusive youth peer activities (eg: initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying).
- n. **Do NOT** participate in physical contact games, or indulge in horseplay, with cadets.
- o. **Do NOT** allow or engage in any forms of inappropriate physical or verbal contact including any inappropriate sexual behaviour or contact.
- p. **Do NOT** allow cadets to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- q. **Do NOT** allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes.
- r. **Do NOT** show favouritism to any individual.
- s. **Do NOT** rely on just your good name to preserve your integrity.
- t. **Do NOT** overreact or jump to conclusions without checking the facts first.
- u. **Do NOT** believe “it could never happen to me!”
- v. **Do NOT** engage in personal correspondence with cadets unless authorised.

3.6.2. Sometimes cadets are related to CFAVs and that may lead to other cadets sharing personal transport or visiting CFAVs' homes as part of that friendship. CFAVs are advised to ensure that they give thought to how they manage these situations to avoid any perception of impropriety or possible opportunity for allegation of misconduct. It is recommended that the ethos of duty of care extends to these situations even though they are outside of the VCC scope of operations.

CHAPTER 4

RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

4.1 Dealing with Allegations, Suspicions or Concerns

4.1.1. It is not the responsibility of any individual within the VCC to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. All CFAVs have the responsibility, if they are suspicious or concerned, to:

- a. Take whatever action is necessary to protect cadets who are the subject of concern.
- b. Report their concerns to the appropriate VCC personnel or external agencies for them to investigate and take necessary action.

4.2 Reporting Allegations, Suspicions or Concerns

4.2.1. The guiding principles for reporting child abuse cases in the VCC are:

- a. The proper authorities for dealing with cases of child abuse are the Police and Social Services. Arrangements differ across the country and COs should ensure everyone knows who to contact locally.
- b. In urgent cases, where the immediate health or safety of a cadet is at risk, all CFAVs must be prepared to make direct contact with the Police/Social Services, reporting at the earliest opportunity to their COs that they have done so. COs must subsequently alert COPEs to the situation.
- c. In all other cases, CFAVs who hear allegations or hold suspicions or concerns are to report them to their Welfare Officer, 2IC/XO or CO at the earliest opportunity.
- d. The responsibility for making reports for non-urgent cases to the Police/Social Services lies at CO level. If they believe child abuse has taken place, they are to report their concerns directly to the Police/Social Services also informing COPE at the earliest opportunity.
- e. Where time and circumstances allow, COs may seek advice from their support chain (ie: consult COPE before approaching the Police/Social Services) but not where undue delay in reporting may be prejudicial to the situation or wellbeing of the individual(s) concerned.
- f. The parents of alleged abused cadets must be informed by the CO that a report is being made to the Police/Social Services unless they themselves are implicated by the report. Such reports are to be made the earliest opportunity.

4.2.2. In cases where CFAVs hear allegations or hold suspicions or concerns in which their CO is implicated, they should inform their 2IC/XO who will immediately inform their COPE.

4.3 Follow Up Action

4.3.1. For reasons of confidentiality the number of people to be informed within the VCC of child abuse cases already reported to the Police/Social Services is to be kept to a minimum. The only people whom COs, or CFAVs where COs are implicated, must inform of these reports are their respective COPEs.

4.3.2. It is also important that suitable documentation is maintained as an audit trail, and that such documentation is kept confidential. This documentation must be kept securely on file indefinitely by HQVCC in case of future action by the relevant authorities.

4.3.3. Subject to advice given by or to be sought from the relevant authorities it may be appropriate for Comd VCC to inform COs of a situation if there is relevant information that, if shared, may provide an overall improvement in the VCC's Child Protection culture (eg: lessons learned). It would normally be appropriate that names of the individuals concerned are not referred to.

4.4 Actions if a Cadet Confides in a CFAV

4.4.1. In the event of incidents, complaints or allegations, or suspected incidents involving cadets, the person in whom the cadet confides should take the following actions:

- a. **Do** stay calm, do not panic, see, listen and hear what the cadet is communicating.
- b. **Do** give cadets time to say what they want.
- c. **Do** reassure cadets that they have done the right thing.
- d. **Do** record in writing (signed and dated) what was said and what you saw as soon as possible.
- e. **Do** warn cadets that although you will act in confidence and as few people as possible will know what has happened, some people will have to be told.
- f. **Do** inform cadets what will happen next, who you will report the information to, and what will happen once it has been reported.
- g. **Do** report the incident.
- h. **Do NOT** inquire into any details of abuse beyond that the cadets has voluntarily said.
- i. **Do NOT** let your shock or distaste show.
- j. **Do NOT** make any negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- k. **Do NOT** make promises you cannot keep.

4.5 Suspension in Child Abuse Incidents

4.5.1. Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by a CFAV the person concerned is to be suspended in accordance with VCC Regulations.

4.5.2. Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by a non-VCC CFAV but who is temporarily assisting (eg: staff of an activity centre which the VCC is attending) the CO (or senior VCC CFAV if the CO is not present) is to take measures to ensure that the person involved takes no further part in VCC activities until the matter is resolved.

4.5.3. Where allegations are made against or there is misconduct by a cadet, it will usually be appropriate to suspend the cadet concerned in accordance with VCC Regulations. Parents are to be informed immediately.

4.5.4. Only rarely will it be appropriate to suspend a cadet who has made an allegation, even if the allegation is later found to be groundless, and COs are to consult their support chain before doing so.

4.5.5. Suspension is not to be deemed as confirmation of guilt; it is a reasonable measure to give all parties protection until the matter is investigated and concluded.

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4.5.6. Once the matter has been investigated and it has been decided to take no action against the individual suspended then the suspension should be revoked. Some management by COs may be necessary to ensure a smooth transition to normality.

CHAPTER 5
ANTI-BULLYING

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. The VCC is committed to providing a professional, safe, caring and friendly environment for all of its personnel, whether they are CFAVs or cadets. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and any incidents of bullying within the VCC will be taken seriously.

5.1.2. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying and if it does occur, both CFAVs and cadets should be able to tell someone and know that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who is aware that bullying is happening is expected to report it. The details of how to report and to whom are specified herein.

5.2 Statement of Intent

5.2.1. This Anti-Bullying Statement aims to ensure that:

- a. A clear statement is given to employees, volunteers and cadets to which they are committed, with the intention of preventing or minimising bullying within the VCC (eg: during inductions).
- b. All employees, volunteers, cadets and their parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- c. All employees and volunteers are informed of the procedures to follow when reporting bullying.
- d. All cadets and parents know what the VCC policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- e. Bullying is taken seriously within the organisation. Any employee, CFAV, attached rank, cadet or parent will be supported and protected from victimisation as far as reasonably possible when reporting bullying.

5.2.2. Reference is made to VCR10 Diversity and Inclusion.

5.3 Definition

5.3.1. Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

5.3.2. Bullying is unacceptable and can be:

- a. Emotional (eg: being unfriendly, excluding, or tormenting).
- b. Physical (eg: pushing, hitting, kicking, punching or any use of violence).
- c. Racist (eg: racial taunts, graffiti, or gestures).
- d. Sexual (eg: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments).
- e. Homophobic (eg: because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality).
- f. Verbal (eg: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, or teasing).

g. Cyber (eg: all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuses of associated technology, ie: camera and video facilities).

5.4 Importance of Responding

5.4.1. Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying and everyone has the right to be treated with respect. CFAVs and cadets who are displaying bullying behaviour should learn to develop more acceptable behaviour.

5.4.2. CFAVs have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to incidents of bullying.

5.5 Procedures if Bullying Occurs or is Suspected

5.5.1. **CFAVs.** All CFAVs must adhere to the following:

- a. All bullying incidents should be reported to an appropriate CFAV in the chain of command.
- b. In all cases of serious bullying or repeated incidents of bullying, the incidents should be recorded in writing and kept on file.
- c. Any allegations or complaints of bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- d. For all serious incidents, follow the reporting procedures defined herein. If necessary report the matter to the police.
- e. For all other incidents follow the relevant organisational disciplinary procedures for CFAVs and cadets.

5.5.2. **Cadets.** Cadets who are being bullied are encouraged to follow the following guidelines:

- a. Tell the Welfare Officer (or if Welfare Officer is involved, another CFAV). Cadets may ask a friend to tell them instead.
- b. Try to ignore the person or persons displaying bullying behaviour.
- c. Walk quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way.
- d. If you are different in any way, be proud of it (remember it's good to be an individual).
- e. Be aware of possible situations where bullying could happen.
- f. If you are in danger, get away.

5.5.3. **Parents.** Parents are requested to report bullying or suspected bullying as follows:

- a. Parents and guardians are encouraged to work in partnership with the CFAVs of the unit attended by their child to achieve positive relationships with it.
- b. Parents and guardians should contact the CO (or the Welfare Officer if the CO is involved) if they suspect that their child may be involved in bullying behaviour or is showing signs of being bullied.

c. For all serious cases of bullying, parents and guardians will be asked to take part in discussions about supporting the action being taken by the VCC, even if this involves reporting the incident to the police.

5.6 Awareness of Bullying Behaviour

5.6.1. If any member of VCC personnel becomes aware of someone else being bullied they should:

a. Try to persuade the victim to formally report it. Remember, the victim may be too scared or lonely to tell. If the victim is not prepared to report it, the individual who is aware of the bullying should tell someone.

b. Not stand and watch, but get help or tell someone.

c. Show disapproval of any bullying encountered.

d. Give sympathy and support to individuals who have been bullied.

5.7 Conclusion

5.7.1. The emphasis is on prevention. Under no circumstances is bullying tolerated in the VCC. The VCC will actively support all appropriate initiatives with regards to anti-bullying.

5.7.2. Further support, information and advice can be obtained from:

a. Welfare Officers in each unit.

b. Advisory Centre for Educations (ACE): 0808 800 5793.

c. Children's Legal Centre: 0845 345 4345.

d. KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline: 0845 120 5204.

e. Parentline Plus: 0808 800 2222.

f. Youth Access: 020 8772 9900.

g. Bullying Online: www.bullying.co.uk.

h. Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NETWORKING

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In recent years, the rise of social networking websites in the United Kingdom has been significant. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, as well as personal blogs, are just a selection of hugely popular sites that are visited regularly by web users.

6.1.2 Whether it is staying in touch with friends or uploading images of a holiday, social networking is a tool which has become increasingly important in the way users share information, their thoughts and photographs, and keep in touch with friends, family and former colleagues. Effective use of social networking can enhance the reputation of the VCC and boost recruitment and reputation as the visibility of these areas can form an inspiring and vibrant platform.

6.2 Purpose

6.2.1 The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that:

- a. The VCC is not exposed to legal, governance or reputational risks.
- b. Protect individuals from harm and unwarranted allegations.
- c. Our CFAVs and cadets are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking sites could bring the organisation into disrepute.
- d. Our CFAVs are aware of where social networking can help raise the profile of the Cadet Corps and boost recruitment.

6.3 MOD Guidelines

6.3.1. Guidelines published by the MOD (DMC-PR-05-07-02 dated 5 Aug 09) make clear that members of HM Armed Forces, UKCF and MOD personnel, can make full use of sites such as Facebook and YouTube as long as they:

- a. Follow the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere.
- b. Always maintain personal information and security.
- c. Are thoughtful about the information they share online.
- d. Get appropriate prior authorisation, when required, from their chain of command.

6.4 Correct Use of Social Networking

6.4.1 The potential that social networking gives to a youth organisation is huge. It brings flexibility within communication, simple accessibility and effective services within new technologies. However, for all of the positives it is important to ensure that using a social networking site is balanced out with the duties and responsibilities that CFAVs and cadets undertake.

6.4.2. The requirements herein aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst also providing a framework of good practice.

6.5 Social Networking Considerations

6.5.1 A member of the VCC who wishes to use a social networking site should ensure that their usage and the information that they publish is:

- a. **Credible.** Accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- b. **Consistent.** Cordial, honest and professional at all times.
- c. **Responsive.** Share knowledge as appropriate.
- d. **Integrated.** Where possible, align online participation with offline communications.
- e. **Representative.** Everyone, whether a CFAV or cadet, is an ambassador for the VCC.
- f. **Appropriate.** Never discuss anything beyond their remit or bring the VCC into disrepute (ie: Armed Forces policy is not the business of cadets).
- g. **Legally Sound.** Ensure that social networking activity is legal; even in jest defamation is a serious issue.

6.5.2. Always remember that online participation results in comments being permanently available and open to being republished in wider media. Stay legal and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply. Comments and actions are not only representative of the VCC, but also the wider Naval Service and MOD. This means that VCC personnel should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the VCC unless authorized to do so.

6.6 Issues and Risks

6.6.1. Social networking sites can present serious risks if not used in a safe and responsible way. As with most new technologies, key issues centre on content and contact risks.

6.6.2. One of the key benefits of social networking sites are that they encourage people to be creative users of the internet, publishing content rather than being passive consumers. They can express themselves with an online personality, use all the applications the site has to offer, chat and socialize with peers, and share multimedia content such as music, photos and video clips with others.

6.6.3. However, there are concerns that cadets and/or CFAVs may upload content that is inappropriate, offensive or even illegal to their online spaces, posting material that could damage their reputations or the reputations of others. Equally they may post inappropriate comments to the profiles of others, which can result, even inadvertently, in bullying, libel or humiliation of others. Another key area of concern is the permanency of content posted online; once published online a photo or video clip can be freely copied and circulated and will potentially exist forever.

6.7 Content Risks

6.7.1. Many cadets maintain very detailed online profiles, including a large amount of personal information, photos and accounts of daily routines which could lead to them being identified or contacted in person. The contact risks of other forms of new technology are well documented, and those that seek to harm or exploit children and young people will use social networking sites as another way to contact and groom potential victims. Updating sites from a 'smart phone' for instance can lead to geo-tagging; cadets in particular should be aware that, potentially, they can be traced.

6.7.2. Most social networking sites contain privacy settings, allowing a profile to be set to private and only viewed by approved contacts, but these are not always used. A further risk includes the amount of time that people spend on social networking sites to the detriment of relationships with family, friends and peers in the real world.

6.8 Official Social Networking Guidelines

6.8.1 The following guidelines must be followed by all CFAVs and cadets in the VCC:

a. It is **inappropriate** for CFAVs to be 'friends' on a social networking website with cadets. Therefore, CFAVs should not have a cadet on their friends' list. This also applies to cadets adding a CFAV as a 'friend'.

b. Heightened care must also be taken if a cadet aged 18 years or over decides to continue their career with the VCC as a CFAV. At this point, the professional nature of the relationship has changed and the new member of CFAVs is advised to remove cadets from their friends list, advising them as to the reason why and quoting this policy to avoid any ill-feeling. The only exception is for members of the same immediate family or with permission from the CO (ie: the friends concerned are of a close age and the assessed risk is low).

c. On social networking, contact between CFAVs and cadets must be made in a visible area of an official site or group. Contact online must not be made on personal pages or away from open forums. Official Facebook sites may be set-up to enable discourse in a transparent manner. CFAVs and cadets **are allowed** to be 'fans' of the same group, such as an official VCC page. Any social networking communication that is made in a public facing group must be highly appropriate.

d. A member of the VCC must not bring the organization into disrepute, either through comments or actions online.

e. All personnel should be aware that social networking has led to a number of high-profile and localized episodes of bullying and exclusion, as well as sexual grooming in the UK, particularly amongst young people. Any member of the organization found to be taking part in such actions may face disciplinary/administrative procedures and could have their service terminated. Where appropriate, referral to the appropriate enforcement authority will take place.

f. Before posting any VCC related imagery, personnel are advised to consider whether they are likely to bring the organization into disrepute. Publishing photographs, videos or information on CFAVs or cadets on the internet, including social networking sites, must be in accordance with VCR7 Child Protection and VCR9 Data Protection.

g. All members of the VCC should be aware that texting on mobile phones between cadets and CFAVs and vice versa is **not permitted** unless for official business (ie: to check the timings of an activity or to register absence) where other means of communication are not possible. This includes the use of mobile phones to record photographic, video or audio material without prior permission of the subject(s).

h. Contact the Welfare Officer or 2IC/XO with any queries on these matters.

6.8.2. The top five ways of using social networking effectively:

a. Promote the VCC and all of the activities and achievements that cadets and CFAVs do.

b. Spread the word about latest events and what is coming-up in the calendar to boost recruitment.

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- c. Create a 'group' page to help advertise what is going on in a unit or sub-unit. This allows CFAVs to have visible contact with cadets without being a social networking 'friend' or making direct email contact.
- d. Inform users when VCC units meet and whether new cadets are being recruited.
- e. Share the latest pictures from an official event with other VCC personnel.

6.9 Further Information

6.9.1 Further information and guidance on specific social networking aspects can be obtained from the Welfare Officer, 2IC/XO or CO.

CHAPTER 7

MOBILE TELEPHONE ACCEPTABLE USE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1. Most young people now own a mobile telephone to keep in contact with family and friends. However, unrestricted use of a mobile telephone is inappropriate when cadets are undergoing VCC activities for the following reasons:

- a. The device may get lost or damaged if carried when conducting physical activity.
- b. Where cadets are accommodated at a unit or an overnight camp, accommodation arrangements between the sexes are segregated. Experience has shown that if cadets retain their mobile telephones they use them to communicate between accommodation areas overnight.
- c. Uncontrolled calls to home may be made when cadets are homesick or worried. Responsible CFAVs may therefore be unaware of the problem until the parent/guardian makes contact with staff. Cadets should be reminded to report any problem or concerns to a CFAV who can take appropriate action.
- d. Many mobile telephones also provide the facility to take photographs and video, and can therefore pose a risk of the production and transmission of inappropriate material.

7.2 Statement of Intent

7.2.1. The VCC is aware that many parents/guardians see mobile telephones as vital tools in supervising their child's behaviour giving them peace of mind and making young people feel safer. This policy is aimed at cadets and their parents/guardians, and is intended to clarify the VCC's stance on the use of mobile telephone whilst undergoing cadet activities. It also applies to all members of the VCC. Any breach of this policy will be deemed to be a breach of the Codes of Conduct.

7.3 General Principles

7.3.1. The general principles of the VCC Mobile Telephone Acceptable Use policy are:

- a. Personal mobile telephones may be used by cadets when travelling to and from units and camps/exercises. Whilst at these facilities they are to be held by a nominated staff member, for issue only when appropriate.
- b. Private telephone communication, by voice or text, is not permitted whilst attending cadet training at a camp etc unless prior permission has been given by a member of staff.
- c. Private telephone communications by voice or text, are not permitted between CFAVs and cadets, unless specifically regarding VCC arrangements and then only if other more appropriate means are not available.

7.4 Safeguarding of Mobile Personal Devices

7.4.1. The following routine will help keep mobile telephones safe and ensure that they are not misused:

- a. Cadets are allowed to bring mobile telephones for use while travelling between home and the unit or camp/exercise.

- b. Telephones should be collected by staff on cadets' arrival for safe keeping, retained in a secure location and issued only if/when required.
- c. Parents/guardians should be given the contact number of the unit or camp/exercise so that contact can be made with staff if necessary.

7.5 Unacceptable Use

7.5.1. It is unacceptable:

- a. For CFAVs to make private telephone calls, send videos, photographs, images or text messages to cadets or vice versa.
- b. To make and/or send obscene or offensive telephone calls, videos, photographs, images or text messages.
- c. To make and/or send malicious telephone calls, videos, pictures or text messages.

7.5.2. All CFAVs and cadets must comply with the above policy; failure to do so will breach the Codes of Conduct and will be dealt with accordingly.

7.6 Driving

7.6.1. All CFAVs and, if appropriate, cadets are also reminded to comply with the law regarding the use of mobile telephones whilst driving. Drivers are not to use a mobile telephone or similar device (eg: handheld radio) whilst driving VCC or MOD vehicles or on VCC activities.

CHAPTER 8

INTERNET AND EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1. The VCC encourages all units to have access to the internet. Not only is this necessary to allow access to VCC web sites and, where applicable, the web-based WESTMINSTER application, but it can be beneficial to cadets both educationally and recreationally.

8.1.2. Access to the web gives the added benefit of being able to send and receive emails for the speedy conduct of VCC business.

8.2 Statement of Intent

8.2.1. This Regulation has been produced to provide guidance on what is and is not acceptable for users of VCC internet and IT resources. It applies to all CFAVs and cadets in the VCC and is to be considered part of the conditions of membership of the VCC. Any breach of this policy will be deemed to be a breach of the Codes of Conduct.

8.3 Internet

8.3.1. For the purposes of this document the 'internet' is defined as services offered across the web including web service, chat rooms, bulletin boards, news groups, file sharing and instant messaging software.

8.3.2. The general principles of acceptable internet use in the VCC are:

- a. The internet is only to be used in connection with bona fide VCC related activity.
- b. Use of the internet by CFAVs and cadets is encouraged where such use supports the aims and objectives of the VCC.
- c. It is the responsibility of COs to ensure that use of the internet is monitored for security and management reasons. Users may also be subject to limitations at the discretion of COs.
- d. Parental controls are to be applied to all computers that are used by cadets.
- e. All use of unit computers by cadets will be under the strict supervision of an appropriate and competent member of VCC staff at all times.
- f. The use of computing resources is subject to UK law and any illegal use will be dealt with appropriately. The police have a right of access to recorded data in connection with the investigation of crime.

8.3.3. It is unacceptable to:

- a. Visit internet sites that contain illegal, obscene, hateful or other objectionable materials.
- b. Make or post indecent remarks, proposals or materials on the internet, including racist or sexist jokes and defamatory comments.
- c. Upload, download or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to any other parties unless such an up or download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence.

- d. Connect to the internet without adequate virus protection and firewall measures on the accessing computer.
- e. Accept invitations (or request) to be “a friend” on social networking internet sites (cadets to CFAVs or CFAVs to cadets). Whilst the VCC cannot police this activity, it is not encouraged or endorsed. Any volunteers breaching this may be subject to further appropriate action.

8.3.4. Users Should:

- a. Record any instances where they have accessed inappropriate sites by accident. For example, this may be through mistyping an address or spam email link.
- b. Log out of the computer when they have finished their work.

8.3.5. Whilst internet access for cadets at units benefits them both educationally and recreationally (especially those who have no other access to the internet), it is the responsibility of the CO to ensure that they are not exposed to risk or danger whilst on line.

8.3.6. Some of the areas of risk that cadets may be exposed to are:

- a. **Chatrooms.** Sex offenders are increasingly using the internet to make contact with children and young people.
- b. **Unsuitable Materials or Sites.** Children and young people may be exposed to pornographic materials or to race or hate sites. Unsuitable material is not easily detected until the information has been downloaded.

8.3.7. Cadets should be made aware of this policy when using VCC internet and IT resources and they should also be advised of how to stay safe when online. Internet safety tips for cadets can be found at Chapter 5 herein; this should be displayed in areas where cadets have access to VCC internet and IT resources.

8.3.8. COs should also be aware of whom to report to if a cadet informs them that:

- a. Someone has been making them feel uncomfortable or worried whilst online. COs should report this by visiting the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.gov.uk.
- b. They have seen illegal online content (ie: images of child abuse, criminally obscene images, criminally racist content) whilst online. COs should report this by visiting the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.

8.3.9. The VCC accepts that the use of the internet is an extremely valuable business, research and learning tool and is necessary to allow the use of Westminster. However, misuse of such a facility can have a detrimental effect on other users and potentially the VCC's reputation. As a result, COs are required to invoke parental and spam filtering controls to reduce the opportunities of inappropriate use.

8.3.10. COs are also encouraged to put in place procedures to monitor:

- a. Internet sites visited.
- b. Extent of transactions being made from computer facilities within their Unit and they should take action to specifically monitor all activity if there is a suspicion of improper use.

8.4 Email

8.4.1. The general principles of acceptable email use are:

- a. Use of email at VCC units by members of the VCC is permitted and encouraged for communication, training and educational purposes. This also supports the aims and objectives of the Cadet Corps and the operational business of VCC. Email is also to be used in a manner that is consistent with VCC standards and is now an accepted part of normal cadet activities.
- b. VCC unit email accounts are to be used solely for VCC business. It is a matter for COs to consider limited personal use if this is deemed acceptable.
- c. The CO may reserve the right to directly access unit email accounts in order to monitor appropriate use and for an authorised legal or disciplinary investigation.
- d. Use of VCC email accounts may be subject to strict limitations at the discretion of the CO.
- e. The distribution of any information through a VCC email account may be subject to the scrutiny of the CO. The VCC reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.
- f. The use of any computing resources is subject to UK law and any illegal use will be dealt with appropriately. For example, the police have a right of access to recorded data in crime investigation.
- g. Email messages are treated as potential corporate messages of the organisation.
- h. Units reserve the right to redirect the email of staff who have left for legitimate purposes. Users are responsible for ensuring personal emails are stopped.

8.4.2. It is unacceptable to:

- a. Solicit emails that are unrelated to cadet activities or for personal gain.
- b. Send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person.
- c. Use email for sensitive or emotional messages or offensive content.
- d. Represent personal opinions as those of the VCC.
- e. Upload, download or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to parties outside of the VCC or the unit.
- f. Waste email time on non-VCC business.
- g. Exchange personal email addresses (cadets to CFAVs or CFAVs to cadets).

8.4.3. Users are advised to:

- a. Keep emails brief and use meaningful subject lines.
- b. Re-read messages before sending to check for clarity and to make sure that they contain nothing which will embarrass the organisation or make it incur an unauthorised liability.
- c. Understand how to use cc and bcc: only cc people who really need to receive the email.
- d. Use file compression techniques for large documents or send them using an alternative method.
- e. Archive effectively; use folders and delete any messages no longer needed.

- f. Don't overuse the "URGENT" flag as it will lose its value.
- g. Never reply to spam.
- h. Take care in drafting emails, taking into account any form of discrimination, harassment, VCC representation, and defamation of data protection issues.
- i. VCC unit emails are a form of corporate communication and therefore should be drafted with the same care as letters.
- j. Be careful when replying to emails previously sent to a group.
- k. Ensure terminals are locked or logged out and not left unsupervised: a malicious user could send messages in another name.
- l. Avoid 'Mail Storms' (long discussions sent to a distribution list); consider verbal communication or use a bulletin board.

8.4.4. The VCC accepts that the use of email is an extremely valuable business, research and learning tool. However, misuse of such a facility can have a detrimental effect on other users and potentially on a unit or the VCC's reputation.

8.4.5 As a result:

- a. COs are to maintain the right to access user email accounts in the pursuit of an appropriately authorised investigation.
- b. The specific content of any appropriate transactions will not be monitored unless there is a suspicion of improper use.

8.4.6. All members of the VCC are obliged to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to UK law and the VCC Codes of Conduct.

ANNEX A

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

1. It is the primary responsibility of all CFAVs to safeguard the moral, psychological and physical welfare of their cadets regardless of sex, religion, race, social background or disability by protecting them from any form of physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect.
2. All cadets have the right to protection from all forms of abuse and harm when engaged in VCC activities and when in contact with members of the VCC.
3. All CFAVs have a duty of care, which makes them responsible both for safeguarding cadets from abuse and harm and for responding swiftly and appropriately when suspicions or allegations of inappropriate behaviour arise.
4. The VCC aims to ensure that all cadets are kept safe from harm while they are in its care by:
 - a. Providing parents and cadets with information about what we do and what they can expect from the VCC.
 - b. Making sure that all CFAVs are carefully selected and given training appropriate to their supervisory roles.
 - c. Providing a means for cadets and parents to report their concerns if there is anything they are not happy about.
 - d. Appointing a Welfare Officer to act as the Child Protection point of contact in each unit.
5. The VCC also aims to protect its CFAVs against false allegations by:
 - a. Establishing rules for an appropriate balance of male and female adult supervisors in relation to the gender of cadets in a unit.
 - b. Establishing the correct ratios of CFAVs to cadets for best practice.
 - c. Ensuring where possible that a single CFAV is not alone with any cadet for any length of time or placed in situations where his/her conduct can be misconstrued.
 - d. Ensuring that only those people who are properly entered and listed members of the CFAVs have unsupervised access to cadets.
 - e. Developing a culture of thinking safely and acting safely.
 - f. Ensuring CFAVs and cadets know the correct and appropriate means to report allegations of suspected abuse.
6. The duty of care to provide suitable and sufficient Child Protection also extends to children who are not cadets but are in some way associated with or under the jurisdiction of the VCC (eg: children from other youth organisations with whom the VCC may engage in activities from time to time).

ANNEX B

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR CADETS

1. Never give out personal information to online friends (eg: name, address, nickname, passwords and mobile telephone numbers).
2. Never send personal photographs or videos; anyone can change it and/or share it.
3. Never arrange to meet a stranger that has been contacted online without parent/guardian's permission, and then when they can be present.
4. Never accept emails or open files from people not really known or trusted as these may contain viruses or worse, an inappropriate or illegal image or video.
5. Do not believe, reply or forward spam or junk emails.
6. Don't always believe what is said online; some people lie.
7. Tell an adult (eg: your parents/guardians, CO or other CFAV) if someone online is behaving in such a way as to make you feel threatened or uncomfortable. This can also be reported to:
 - a. Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.gov.uk.
 - b. Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.
8. Do not accept invitations (or request) to be "a friend" on social networking sites (ie: Facebook) with CFAVs.